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The Otterbein Miscellany - Spring 1985

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THE OTTERBEIN MISCELLANY

THE IMAGE OF WORK IN THE PROLETARIAN
NOVELS OF THE THIRTIES

John K. Coulter

IRVING'S *THE SKETCH BOOK*:
THE FAILURE OF SUCCESS

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HISTORY ON TRIAL:
THE CASE OF THE COADJUTOR'S CHALICES

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EXEGESIS AND INTERPRETATION IN
BIBLICAL STUDIES

Paul L. Redditt

WANTING, DESIRING, AND VALUING

Mitchell Staude

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Spring, 1985

Foreword

The *Otterbein Miscellany* is published once or twice a year 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 on invitation only.

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Dedication

This edition of the *Miscellany* is dedicated to the memory of Professor John K. Coulter, who passed away in March of 1984. Jack, as he was familiarly called, served on the Otterbein faculty as a member of the English Department for nearly three decades. He was one of the persons who was responsible for the founding of the *Miscellany* and who offered his encouragement over the years to help keep it going. For this edition, Professor James R. Bailey, chairman of the English Department, has edited a manuscript which Jack originally presented as a lecture before a body of students and colleagues. In it we hear the voice of a man who in all his undertakings was a dedicated workman.

The Editor

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The Image of Work in the Proletarian Novels of the Thirties

John K. Coulter

This paper will examine the image of work and of the work-place in a group of American proletarian novels of the 1930s, particularly those novels dealing with strikes and labor as a social category. During these Depression years a strong movement among novelists described the experience of industrial workers, as the productive machine tried to adjust itself to difficult economic conditions. This literary movement, coinciding with the numbing strain placed on our national self-confidence and our faith in our economic system, with the first organized or partially organized reaching out of international communism from the Soviet Union, struggled through the resultant fears and angers about patriotism and the definition of the "American system," and challenged everyone's sense of himself, that of the writer, the critic, the audience. No works or writers of the first rank arose from this relatively short-lived experiment in collective literature, but some very able people made interesting and important efforts in proving the question of the relationship between literature and the social conditions from which it arises.

Before I address the novels themselves, let me sketch in an environment that gives my look substance and direction. I grew up under the tutelage of a story-telling father, hearing the various parts of his canon over and over with constantly shifting emphases, theses, at times even story elements adjusted to immediate purposes. Two of his stories, oft repeated and alluded to, gained near mythic status in my mind. The first, always told as a factual, historical account, is this: a young, discontented, not very successful Valparaiso University chemistry student, former (WWI) Marine rifle instructor, caught between an adolescent reluctance to dissipate and adulthood, threshing about for some employment in a strike-ridden steel mill town (Gary, Indiana), hired on as a rifle-carrying guard for the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation during a violence-filled strike, the first and bloodiest of several aimed at gaining recognition for the United Steel Workers. (This must have been about 1923 or 1924.) Assigned a station atop the three-story Administration Building at the main gate of Gary Works, he spent about an hour, like Beowulf surveying the depredations of Grendel among the thanes in the meadhall, watching the milling, rock-throwing strikers fronting a line of barricades and a host of beclubbed and armed company police.

He mulled over his assignment: allow no forced entry to the Administration Building. Then abandoning his rifle at his post, he scurried down the fire-escape and scrambled over the barbed perimeter fence to join the proletarian horde on the outside. (The strike was broken a few days later by bayonet-wielding federal troops. The corporation had won. Union recognition had to wait another six or eight years.)

The second story, less singular in its character and plotline, came in many more forms. But centrally it is an *action*, as Aristotle uses the word, a *complete action*. The setting is an air-conditioned metallurgical laboratory, long, narrow, equipment-filled, though of no very clearly delineated form, windows lining three sides, the whole centered in a row of great, open-hearth furnaces, temperatures sharply contrasting between the white coolness of the lab and the Inferno of the "floor," inner cleanliness and outer smog and gloom. The dramatic personae are the begrimed workers, stripped above the waist to dirty long-underwear or, often, to sweat-glistening flesh, sharply muscled, crude of speech, obscene of gesture, noisy, aggressive. But hearty, too, lusty, given to much laughter, rude joking. Very "manly." This, of course, represents the industrial era and sounds nearly foolish as we move into the information age. But then the Sunday afternoon football ritual sounds foolish too, and as E.M.W. Tillyard suggests in his *Elizabethan World Picture*, an age's unthought image of itself and its surroundings runs many years behind its intellectual understanding. The protagonist in my story is the chemist, an observer-participant, cleanly dressed, amused, distanced somewhat from the drama about him but also integrally involved. The theme (this is not tragedy) is age-old and God-given: it is good.

I think of these private myths when I read of Teiresias' command to Odysseus who is seeking a way to mollify Poseidon for the offence which caused the seagod to so plague Odysseus' homeward journey from Troy. Teiresias said that Odysseus, long oar on his shoulder, must go inland so far the residents would mistake the oar for a winnowing-fan, i.e., he must give up his self-definition as a seafarer, and only then could he make obeisance to the god. Gods demand high prices.

These tales, taken together, point to the subject of my study: the image of work and of the workplace. What role Marxism played in American self-questioning of the early thirties, given our Depression, is a question perhaps unanswerable, but the central and defining issue of the "proletariat" must be addressed. It is this: whose is the work place? In the inner recesses of an industrial society, so deep in the minds of the people as to be beyond stated and argued beliefs, beyond even conscious thoughts about truths and realities, as the very soul of

such a people, who owns the work place? Whose is the factory, the machine, the energy and motion of a productive system? What constitutes ownership?

In 1833 in *Sartor Resartus*, just fifteen years before the 1848 uprisings which Marx thought to be so significant as proletarian movements, Thomas Carlyle insisted that, instead of "the folly of the impossible Precept, *Know thyself*," one needs to ask "this partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work-at*." Studs Terkel, in his *Hard Times: an Oral History of the Great Depression*, quotes Charles Stewart Mott, once one of the central figures in putting together the General Motors Corporation and hence a man of Croesian wealth, speaking at ninety-four, after about twenty years as the benefactor of southern Michigan in which role he held a near imperial throne of philanthropy. Mott, referring to Governor (later U.S. Supreme Court Justice) Frank Murphy, who during the momentous Flint G.M. strike in 1936 had refused to use the national guard to recapture the auto factories from sit-in strikers, charged that this head of civil authorities "certainly lacked a lot of things that would have been good . . . He didn't enforce the law. He kept his hands off. He didn't protect our property." What Governor Murphy *did* do was to let circumstances define property rights. By forcing General Motors, and hence the industry, to accept a labor contract in order to repossess its factories, he effectively limited industrial ownership. In recognizing the union, G.M. eliminated from its own options in responding to a strike a crucial weapon, the mass replacement of workers. Mott, befuddled as the old tyrant was, was quite right in maintaining that property rights had been abridged.

This abridgement signalled the intrusion of another value, perhaps a higher cause, given the climate of the times: that of work itself, of the individual man as a productive being even in an industrial setting. Carlyle says that "our works are the mirror wherein the spirit sees its natural lineaments." Hence his incorporation of work as the centerpiece of one's self definition. His "Captains of Industry" are in his view the real heroes and masters of society. Carl Murray Bates, the stonemason in Terkel's *Working*, summing up his attitude toward his work, says, "There's not a house in this country that I haven't built that I don't look at every time I go by . . . If there's one stone in there crooked, I know where it's at and I'll never forget it . . . [It's] immortality as far as [I'm] concerned. Nothing lasts forever . . . [even] Bedford limestone deteriorates one-sixteenth of an inch in every hundred years . . . [but] that's getting awful close." Carl Bates "owns" his work place, no matter whether Charles Stewart Mott understands.

Literary critics and writers during the 1930s tried repeatedly, without much agreement, to define sharply "proletarian literature."

The term was first given currency by its use in 1930 by the Kharkov Conference of Revolutionary Writers, a purely Marxist Soviet source, after which it was routinely employed in the U.S., but not clearly defined, by Michael Gold in *The New Masses* and by John Reed Clubs in their attempts to develop a Marxist literature in a capitalistic country. Two major general definitions developed, though there were many variations of each and though a good many writers strongly resented the use of the term at all. First, as Walter Rideout in his *The Radical Novel in the U.S., 1900-1954*, summarizes, " 'proletarian' would seem to describe fiction written by a member of the working class about, presumably, working-class characters and experiences"; second, the word refers to any fiction which depends upon "the conscious ideology of the author [and] whether he attempted, whatever his class origin, to work out in his fiction a Marxist analysis of society."

In this paper I shall not reworrry these definitions. I will instead seek out the Carlylean idea of the productivity of work as a basis for inner ownership. "Awake, ye noble workers, warriors in the one true War," says Carlyle. "... Ye know at least this, That the mandate of God to his creature man is: Work!" I shall look for comments about the man whose defining days begin at the industrial time clock just as the physician so binds "doctor" to his name that he omits it neither at the P.T.A., nor at the swimming pool, nor the church. And I shall ask what in industrial work is crucial to the worker.

The first novel I want to look at is Robert Cantwell's *The Land of Plenty*, a strike novel published in 1934, generally thought one of the two or three best of the breed. The standard plotline for the strike novel is this: a strike occurs; several opening chapters justify the strike by focusing on unfair salary and unsafe working conditions; the workers organize themselves after the spontaneous strike-beginning; tension builds as we await the owners' response; civil authorities, unfairly influenced (usually bought), enter on the side of management; the strike fails, leaders are killed (or go to rigged courts or go directly to jail); the need for a violent overthrow of the system is affirmed. But Cantwell is a better writer than to use this and a more thoughtful man (subsequent to his brief career as a novelist, he served long and well in the Luce organization, an editor of one time and another of *Fortune*, *Time* and *Life* magazines and then for two years as literary editor of *Newsweek*.) His plot is divided into two parts: Part I, entitled *Power and Light*, describes the events of a midnight shift in a veneer factory in the U.S. northwest (doors seem to be the chief product) when because of power failure, the plant goes dark and machines stop. Part II, called *The Education of a Worker*, carries the story on after a series of firings of key workers at the end of the night

of confusion which brings into the open, to "the light," if you will, the "power," not of electricity as the metaphor proclaims but of workers and management as they wrestle over the subject of who "owns" the mill and what their relation to the mill is. The workers are educated; it is a bitter lesson they learn.

Several qualities of Cantwell's work must be pointed out. First, beyond the division of the whole into two "actions," he addresses his story by seeing the action of each chapter through the eyes and hence the point of view of a different character. It is particularly important that we gain some depth of understanding of Cantwell's characters because, his overall purpose being sociological, the prime danger for such a work is the lack of the truth of individuation. This is indeed the major failing of proletarian novels as a group. The individuals never manage to rise above the generalization of class. I shall say more about his characters later.

Second, Cantwell creates the class conflict in sufficient complexity to catch a reality and to raise his criticisms of the economic system at work. Cantwell suggests that the structure of the American factory has a basic flaw: ownership absolutely rigid in its demands upon management that profits be realized. The plant managers, given no leeway in adjusting this absolute requirement to the vagaries of the particular situation, tried not to produce veneered doors (in this instance), but to avoid responsibility for failure. They find themselves separated from the production workers physically in the metaphor of the story but functionally in its meaning, and helpless to manage the crisis of the power failure. Ironically the breakdown occurs on the 4th of July. The dark and quiet factory, situated on a tidal flat a mile from the town, looms in the lights of the fireworks celebration and starkly proclaims the failure of the managerial system.

The workers in Cantwell's veneer factory are of two kinds: the majority are just order followers who are not meaningfully involved in the purpose of the plant. When the saws are running, they work. When the power fails, they sit down. The second kind of workers, fewer in number, are the key. They are competent, fully masters of the work, and self-motivated. They image a medieval master craftsman mentality. But they also are uncooperative with management. When Walt Hagens, their leader, was asked why he didn't tell the incompetent foreman how to manage the crisis, he replied: "Hell, Carl didn't want to know what to do. He just wanted me to be responsible." Then, turning away he added with contempt: "Carl couldn't understand anyway." Thus, productive workers and effective management have to be separated, Cantwell maintains, and the problem seems systemic.

One other factor needs to be mentioned. Marx, in the *Communist*

Manifesto, speaks of a class of worker that is hardly worth saving because it is so ill motivated, "social scum," he terms them. Cantwell has a group of workers who, through their irresponsibility and self-centeredness, precipitate disaster among those managers and workers who might have come together to avoid a complete breakdown. In our heavy industry today there seems to be an attempt to bridge the separation between responsible management and labor and to overcome the intrusive effort (effect?) of the weakly principled.

Another novel of the lumber mills of the Pacific Northwest, Clara Weatherwax's *Marching! Marching!*, illustrates other common features in labor novels. There are long passages, set pieces, describing the mill at work. (Cantwell has some of this.) Here the problem is not incompetent management but rather unfeeling, greedy management. Unsafe working conditions and a speed up which leads to exhaustion and crippling are the villains. Physical possession of the mill itself is not a problem, for though the workers are locked out, management makes no effort to run the factory with scabs as had been the case in *Land of Plenty*.

The plot line (of *Marching! Marching!*) follows the creation of a Workers Council and focuses on the necessity of a strike and the arguments for and against worker organization. The charge of communism is raised and refuted, and a struggle over which role civil authority is to play becomes central.

The novel is not really about a production factory. Instead it deals with an organizing working force which might have been Marxist though it wasn't. Instead it has the tone of an industrial union bent on striking a deal if it can get management to bargain, an early CIO. There isn't an attempt to seize control of a factory.

Mary Heaton Vorse's *Strike*, however, is quite different. Here is one of the six novels, all very similar, based on the 1930 Gastonia, North Carolina, textile strike, and it is almost purely an account of political and civil turmoil. It has nothing at all to do with a productive industry or with an individual fulfilling himself through work. In this story a strike begins as the novel opens and continues throughout. No view of the inside of the factory is seen, and almost no mention is made of what the factory produces. Instead, the story deals with a political battle in which the work-place is only a tool. Marx says in the *Manifesto* that the bourgeoisie could force the petty bourgeoisie, the small shopkeepers and other people who directly serve the proletariat, into the proletariat itself, thus producing in the end only two significant classes. All the novels that focus on Southern textile mills describe the workers as really hill people who have been drawn by the possibility of wages from their poverty-stricken life in the mountains. But these are not industrial workers, and Marx's idea that

they would be pressed to this definition seems not here to function. Though they work in the mills, they maintain their identification as a complete mountain society (and they frequently retreat in family groups to the old life in the hills).

Mary Vorse tells her story through the eyes of a northern labor organizer who has been sent South to help these textile workers make a union. From his view, the labor organizer tries to understand these people, but he does not succeed. He finds them too unlike the proletariat to which he is accustomed. He does not understand that, beyond their dissatisfaction with inhumanly low wages, their basic complaint is that the factory owners (and managers — there is not separation in this simpler view) have taken as their right the machinery of the law, the courts, the established commercial and even religious worlds. The workers, truly outsiders to this urban life, find their own family and communal structure ignored as though it did not exist. Their revolt is, therefore, really a political one. They don't, of course, win. In the 1930s workers never win, but they don't really lose either. As independent people who have another life, that in the hills, they are not so helpless as lumbermen who have no other alternative. The textile mill stories tell of a running battle between two worlds too different to meld but too independent to allow either a complete victory. It is interesting that in these stories the machine is in no way the villain. As we know, the running sore created by this conflict is still open in many Southern communities today. And unions are still generally unwelcome.

The most successful of the proletarian writers at understanding the relationship between the industrial worker and his factory world was Albert Holper, primarily a chronicler of urban Jewish ghetto life who hated being labeled proletarian. In *The Family*, published in 1933, he presents a picture of the growing power of labor unions, as well as an account of the relationship of man and the machine.

Oddly, as the plot works itself out, the labor union, though it serves as a strong counterforce to the owners, does not bring resolution. This comes only with the individual worker's insight into the nature of his job. Worker and owner and foundry join in the created world which all inhabit. But it is a hard world. This combination — and particularly the presence of the machine — makes inordinate demands on the individual. In his following book called *The Chute* Holper underscores this. A story of work-life in a mail-order house in Chicago seen through the eyes of a young boy, the dominance of the machine is made clear. This five-story building, filled with the stock of the Golden Rule Mail-Order Company, is dominated by a central chute down which items are sent to the packaging and mailing room. The gigantic maw, its insatiable appetite and the disembodied voices

booming out "Hurry! hurry!" from below focus time and place on itself. The rushing employees, madly trying to satisfy this ogre, find their lives, their thoughts, passions, energies all shaped and commanded by this machine.

In the critical definitions of proletarian literature, the missing element which makes them all incomplete is this, man and machine, man versus machine. The age of the 1930s was so conscious of the political-economic battle between communist and capitalist theories that the underlying struggle — the industrialization of all man's institutions, indeed of man himself — is easily overlooked and underestimated. This is the central picture of the proletarian novels. If man is to be defined as a producer, and surely both theories so see him, man is himself in a real sense a machine. And this fact his sentient self must suffer.

Irving's *The Sketch Book*: The Failure of Success

James R. Bailey

I.

Irving in 1819: Poised for Success

When Washington Irving began to publish *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in June 1819, the times were not yet propitious for an American seeking to be a professional writer. Despite America's lively tradition of colonial writing and the publishing successes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers such as Anne Bradstreet, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, the new republic offered few rewards to those who viewed authorship as other than an avocation. The fitful careers of Edgar A. Poe, Charles Brockden Brown and Irving in the early nineteenth century illustrate the hardships for the would-be man of letters; and although Irving, in terms of immediate reward and critical attention, fared better than his contemporaries, he published for nearly twenty years before, with *The Sketch Book*, earning the income and reputation that established him securely in the literary profession.¹

When the first of the seven numbers of the original edition of *The Sketch Book* appeared simultaneously in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, Irving, who was living in England, had reached a crux. With his contributions to *Salmagundi* (1808) and the publication of *A History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809), he had established himself as a wit and a writer of promise and even as an arbiter of literary fashion in New York. But in the subsequent decade Irving had published little that was noteworthy. He had reason to be anxious about the reception of *The Sketch Book*, for its failure would likely mark the end of his literary career.²

Personal and professional concerns weighed heavily on Irving during his fallow period between *A History* and *The Sketch Book*. From 1807 through 1817, he lost by death both parents, his fiancée, and a sister.³ He also found little professional direction during this period. His brothers, endeavoring to give freedom for writing, made him a largely inactive partner with a fifth interest in the family business, but the freedom led to few literary productions.⁴ Two years of editing the *Analectic Magazine* for Moses Thomas afforded Irving the opportunity to experiment with reviews, critical essays and biographical sketches and impressed upon his mind that he was ill-suited for magazine editing.⁵ Irving's decision to return to Europe

in March 1815 followed the failure of the *Analectic* and a short period of service as an aide-de-camp in the New York State Militia near the end of the War of 1812.⁶ Irving's plans for casual journeying from England to Italy or Greece were dissolved by news of the probable collapse of the family business. In Liverpool, he did what he could to restore order to the branch his brother Peter was responsible for and to try to improve the health and spirits of Peter, but bankruptcy overtook the business in 1818.⁷ Despite the thrill of visiting Walter Scott at Abbotsford and occasional evenings at the theatre in London, Irving experienced an emotional nadir in the years just preceding *The Sketch Book*.⁸ It is hardly an exaggeration to say that necessity brought forth *The Sketch Book*. Irving's emotional health and his professional future were at stake.

In 1819, then, Irving's campaign lay before him, and he waged his battle for literary fame with the successive numbers of *The Sketch Book*. In addition to the primary concern with making a commercial success, which by implication meant reaching a larger readership and hence also being received favorably by reviewers, Irving confronted important artistic considerations in writing *The Sketch Book*. Whether he consciously foresaw them, challenges to his craft and opportunities for artistic growth awaited him. In a general sense, *The Sketch Book* would test whether Irving could grow from a clever provincial writer to a national or international literary figure. Could a writer, American bred and trained, find materials and write a style with cosmopolitan appeal? Could a writer who had earned an early success with forms and styles essentially of the eighteenth century invent or adapt forms that would appeal to a modern, which is to say Romantic, readership?⁹

From the early reports, Irving won his battle: the book was a commercial success and largely a critical one, especially with American reviewers. (See Section III for a summary of critical reaction.) With his victory secure, Irving was able to continue his literary career to become the first really popular American writer. *The Sketch Book* may well be his best known book, and certainly its most important tales, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," are the two creations by Irving to enter the popular consciousness. However, even that achievement is lessened by the fact that most people know those two tales out of context rather than as part of *The Sketch Book*, a fact that questions the integrity of the book. In a larger critical view, it seems that Irving won some minor skirmishes but failed in the battle. *The Sketch Book* marked a climax in Irving's career, and although he wrote for forty more years, he advanced only occasionally beyond his achievement in *The Sketch Book* and indeed failed to live up to its promise.

But that later judgment is one neither Irving nor his public could anticipate in 1819 when *The Sketch Book*'s first readers began to delight in Geoffrey Crayon and his moods. As they laughed and wept over Crayon's sketches, they may have sensed that Irving was experimenting with form and style but they would have needed the completed book before them in order to appreciate the experiments the author was essaying. Irving's achievements in *The Sketch Book* were not inconsequential, and the book still deserves critical attention.

II.

The Sketch Book: Design and Themes

With critical hindsight, today's reader sees that the overall design of the work, its organic quality, is crucial to appreciating Irving's artistry in *The Sketch Book*. The complete title cued the reader as to the nature of the book: *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* With this, Irving indicated the loose and variable nature of the contents, which would emphasize descriptions of different scenes from life, and he indicated that an important unifying device was to be the relationship of the sketches to a central consciousness, that of a fictional traveler, Crayon. The book, then, was to break with the author's past, with the topical satire of *Salmagundi* and the mock history of Knickerbocker. The new work was to be an open-ended project, a more ambitious and difficult undertaking. Its problem was how to offer a variety of fare to please many palates and yet create a whole with advancing themes.

The device of a fictional narrator and the kind of character that Irving creates in Crayon are noteworthy. Whereas the burlesque *A History of New York* is the property of the quirky, old-fashioned Dutchman, Knickerbocker, the sketches of Crayon are clearly the property of a contemporary American traveler, identified as a gentleman. The Crayon persona is more nearly a projection of Irving's own personality than is the Knickerbocker persona (who is, after all, in the tradition of eighteenth-century literary jokes). Knickerbocker is a source of fun, both as a grotesque invention and as a narrator who fails to get the satiric point of the tale he tells. Crayon is witty but also often melancholy; he is a Romantic man of feeling, and it is through using this persona as the central consciousness in *The Sketch Book* that Irving moved his writing closer to the prevailing literary taste.

As to the fictional framework, Crayon is the genteel American moving throughout England, learning about the ancestral home by visiting literary and religious shrines, by soaking up local color in cities and villages and by observing society and its manners. Crayon's voice is characteristically polite and deferential although he may

speak in an American tone about international relations and indulge in the American fondness for a tall tale. Crayon is essentially a bland creation, his companionable congeniality spiced with a bit of satire, a fair amount of wit, and, for later readers, perhaps an excess of pathos. Irving's artistic control is such that he projects on Crayon none of the stress and personal anxiety that he was experiencing before and during the composition of the book. The only sign of the author's personal hardships is the gentle melancholy that imbues Crayon's sensibility.

The most curious quality about Crayon, given the time at which Irving wrote and his need to attract a wider American readership,¹⁰ is his anglophilia. In the original edition, only two of the twenty-eight pieces are distinctly American in setting and character; all of the others are English. Moreover, Crayon presents his English sketches with a tone of approbation, seldom suggesting that life in the old monarchy might be less appealing than in the new republic. Irving, however, intuited correctly the mood of his American readership, apparently eager to have an insider's view of British scenes and to be moved by accounts of rural funerals.

Before evaluating Irving's design in *The Sketch Book*, one needs to acknowledge that the work changed as Irving revised it for subsequent editions. The book's publishing history is complex but what needs emphasis here is that the first American edition differed considerably in contents and order from the Author's Revised Edition (1848), the last version that Irving oversaw and hence the basis for most reprints since. The discussion here begins with the author's intents as evident in the first edition and notes Irving's changes in the English edition and the 1848 edition.¹¹

The first edition, published in seven numbers beginning in June 1819 and concluding in September 1820, contained twenty-eight sketches (excluding a preliminary prospectus) in a nearly symmetrical fashion: number one comprised five pieces; number six comprised three, with the remainder comprising four each. From the beginning, Irving did not establish a plan to follow meticulously ("The following writings are published on experiment; should they please they may be followed by others," he wrote in the original prospectus).¹² However, he did arrange a fictional framework to guide the whole work — firm enough to show the direction in which the narrator-traveler would take the reader, loose enough to allow for shifts in directions and contents, depending upon public response. Irving's artistic sense and businessman's acumen were at work: since he, not an editor or publisher, had control of the project, he could expand or contract its size and shape as he chose.¹³ If early numbers failed, he could withdraw without further investment; otherwise, he could continue

publishing separate numbers so long as his materials and talent supported them. And success of the numbers would help him attract a publisher to bring out a second edition and perhaps an English edition.

With an eye to providing a varied but balanced fare, Irving fabricated an initial number that offered an introduction to Crayon in "The Author's Account of Himself," a descriptive narrative in "The Voyage," a serious "literary" essay in "Roscoe," a sentimental sketch in "The Wife," and a fantastic tale in "Rip Van Winkle." A strong number, indeed, built to a rousing finish with the story that won Irving more fame than any other single piece.

The following three numbers exhibited much the same kind of generic balance, with variations in tone and effect. In number two, Irving led off with a controversial topic, the relationship of England and the United States, in "English Writers on America"; he switched from patriotism to a quiet look at manners in "Rural Life in England" and then to a sentimental anecdote in "The Broken Heart" before finishing with a satirical literary sketch, "The Art of Book Making." In number three, he used a similar mix of tones but with greater emphasis on the literary past as subject: "A Royal Poet" puts forth an antiquarian literary subject; "The Country Church" is a humorous sketch about rural society; "The Widow and Her Son" is an unabashedly sentimental anecdote; "The Boar's Head Tavern, East Cheap" re-establishes a light mood as Crayon goes in search of Falstaff's London. Number four has much the same tonal variety but is dominated by its final piece, the narrative "The Spectre Bridegroom," a felicitous parody of a Gothic tale. Preceding the tale are a literary fantasy in "The Mutability of Literature," a pathetic description in "Rural Funerals," and the brief "The Inn Kitchen," the function of which is to introduce (in the manner of Scott in his Waverley novels) the spectral tale.¹⁴

In the last three numbers, Irving introduced greater variations. Number five departed from the usual pattern in having a unified, continuing subject, Christmas customs, for all four pieces and in being in the narrative mode, more or less, throughout. Even so, the number has generic variety (the essay of manners in "Christmas," the description of character types in "The Stage Coach"), and the narrative of the holiday that Crayon spends at Bracebridge Hall is really less important than the finely detailed drawing of customs and personages (the Old Squire; the Dickensian Master Simon). Were it not for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in number six, all of the materials after the Christmas number would seem anti-climactic, and even so, the last two numbers are slacker than the previous five. To go with the finely controlled comic description and narrative of Ichabod

Crane's story, Irving lines up only the mild satirical allegory, "John Bull," and the weepy narrative, "The Pride of the Village," for number six. The final number suffers even greater imbalance of genre and tone. "Little Britain," the conclusion to the first edition, is a charming, whimsical narrative about London but is weakened by following two rather standard tourist pieces, "Westminster Abbey" and "Stratford-on-Avon," between which comes the derivative "The Angler." Irving's initial design of offering in each number variety and balance among subjects, genres and tones had fallen apart before he completed the last numbers.

Irving had a firm artistic grasp on his materials in the first numbers but he let it slacken over the months he gave to preparing his manuscripts and fretting about their progress from London to New York. Irving, who began to revise the first numbers even before the last were published, was artist enough to see flaws in the seven numbers taken as an integer, and he corrected some weaknesses in the two volume English edition and the single volume Author's Revised Edition. He improved balance by moving forward one travel piece, "Westminster Abbey," and by saving "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" for a strong finish. This arrangement also strengthened symmetry by putting one major narrative ("Rip Van Winkle") early in the book, another ("The Spectre Bridegroom") at about midpoint, and the longest and best written narrative at the conclusion. These improvements were somewhat negated by the decision to include in later editions two essays ("Traits of Indian Character," "Philip of Pokanoket") reclaimed from the *Analectic* and used in *The Sketch Book* with no effort to relate them to Crayon or to the book's design.¹⁵

The Sketch Book, for all its multiplicity of subjects and shifts in tone, is a qualified success because of Crayon's presence and the author's skill in using a variety of genres and fitting pieces together in a larger design. Irving added coherence to the miscellaneous nature of the book by working a few major themes throughout, most importantly the theme of mutability. A favorite theme of English Romantic poets, the mutability theme as Irving develops it plays with the paradoxes of time and change, with irreconcilable forces of growth and decay, of loss and gain through time. Many of Irving's images of mutability suggest how time transforms us without our consent or awareness. The book's premise, with a traveler from the New World reflecting on scenes from the Old World, lent itself to the mutability theme, and Irving executed both serious and comic turns on the theme.

The mutability theme is initiated through several images in the first number, first of all in a serio-comic epigraph from Lyly's *Euphues*

that describes a snail who wanders away, leaving its home behind, and so is transformed into a toad. Then, in "The Author's Account of Himself," Crayon explains his desire to travel: "My native country was full of youthful promise; Europe rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every moldering stone was a chronicle."¹⁶ Valuing age over youth and cultural ripeness over a scene offering only promise, Crayon will pursue his Old World origins, despite knowing that he may like Lyly's traveler in *Euphues* be "transformed into so monstrous a shape that he is faine to alter his mansion with his manners and to live where he can, not where he would."¹⁷

In a sense, Crayon is traveling backward through time, to find the origins of the mutant, the American, and Irving, tongue-in-cheek, exploits this side of his theme (while also anticipating his serious statement in "English Writers on America" about the pretensions of English travelers). Still offering an account of himself, Crayon explains his desire to see the great men of Europe:

. . . for I had read in the works of various philosophers, that all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number; . . . and in this idea I was confirmed by observing the comparative importance and swelling magnitude of many English travellers among us; who, I was assured, were very little people in their own country. — I will visit that land of wonders, thought I, and see the gigantic race from which I am degenerated.¹⁸

This satiric thrust may be recalled by the reader when Crayon later offers sentimental English vistas featuring quaint villages and rural churchyards. Hardly the land of giants.

Irving's images advance the mutability theme, especially the suddenness with which fortune changes to misfortune, in "The Voyage": here the voyagers, enjoying the ocean's calm monotony, are reminded of human vulnerability by an anonymous wreck: "It proved to be a mast of a ship that must have been completely wrecked; for there were the remains of handkerchiefs, by which some of the crew had fastened themselves to the spar to prevent their being washed off by the waves. There was no trace by which the name of the ship could be ascertained."¹⁹ The literal image suggests a metaphoric application that varies the comic edge of Lyly's epigraph. Like the transformed snail and the anonymous travelers lost at sea, the wandering Crayon may lose his distinctiveness, his Americanness.

In "Roscoe" Irving put aside the comedy of the opening and the melodrama of "The Voyage" but adhered to the mutability theme. "Roscoe" is in praise of heroic response to mistreatment by fortune, with the hero exemplified by William Roscoe, a successful writer who

failed in business.²⁰ Crayon visits Roscoe's mansion, now deserted: "It was like visiting some classic fountain that had once welled its pure waters — a sacred shade, but finding it dry and dusty with the lizard and toad brooding over the shattered marbles."²¹ The image of a ruin, no longer serviceable to humans but now evocative of strong feeling, is one of many Irving uses in *The Sketch Book* to suggest an American's elegiac response to an older, culturally richer world in which vitality is ebbing. Crayon is typically more interested in England's past than its future.²²

In successive numbers of *The Sketch Book*, Irving continued variations on the mutability theme, often through images of loss and ruin and narratives about inexplicable and uncontrollable reversals of fortune. Sentimental versions of the theme include "A Broken Heart," "The Widow and Her Son," and "The Pride of the Village," all of which advance the idea of feminine fragility, irreparably injured by emotional betrayal or loss. These, along with "Rural Funerals," abound in sad images of lives ended before fulfillment.

Keeping an eye on the playful side of his theme as begun in the opening number, Irving explores the humorous consequences of time and change in "The Art of Book Making," "Little Britain," "The Mutability of Literature," the Old Squire and Master Simon sections of the Christmas sketches, and especially in "Rip Van Winkle." The latter, though not actually typical of the humor in *The Sketch Book* and unusually fine in its narrative art and thematic complexity, is the best example of Irving's playfully ambivalent treatment of change and progress.²³

Pivotal to the tale's meanings is what has happened during Rip's twenty-year sleep in the Kaatskills, a period spanning the Revolutionary War and the founding of the republic. The ne'er-do-well is a loyal British citizen, willing to drink the health of his king, when he falls asleep, but he awakens to find that his personal and public life have been "improved," the former by the death of his shrewish wife, the latter by the transformation of the colony to a state in a new nation. By chance, Rip returns on election day and is puzzled by seeing the new society at work. By the old tavern, now the Union Hotel with its picture of George III crudely repainted as General Washington, Rip sees a crowd of unfamiliar citizens:

The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquility. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder with his broad face, double chin and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle speeches. Or Van Brummel the schoolmaster doling forth the contents of an

ancient newspaper. In place of these a lean bilious looking fellow with his pockets full of hand bills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens — elections — members of Congress — liberty — Bunker's hill — heroes of seventy-six — and other words which were a perfect babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.²⁴

And after the villagers hear Rip's magical story, accepting or rejecting it according to their temperament, they quietly "returned to the more important concerns of the election."²⁵

However, Rip, soon regaining his role in the village through his daughter's help, is much less concerned with republican virtue and vice than with the cessation of "petticoat government." Rip's character, the denouement suggests, is little altered by his experiences or by time which has, however, improved the old man's situation, since Rip, "... being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle, with impunity," is viewed as a patriarch, as a relic that now evokes nostalgia rather than contempt.²⁶

As to the matter of progress in the new age, Irving lets the story remain ambiguous. The narration proceeds through Rip's perceptions, and certainly he has doubts about progress wrought by the Revolution. The former colonists have become American citizens, a concept Rip does not understand, and their chief activity is quarreling over party affiliations. Moreover, the image presiding over them is merely the old king touched up to look like the new president. The changes discernible to Rip are in manners, not in substance, and do not necessarily indicate progress. But finally Irving leaves to the readers, as to the new generation of Rip's village, the options of accepting Rip's story and judgments or dismissing him as a harmless lunatic and a relic of another time.

Just as Irving chooses not to resolve the theme of mutability in Rip's story, so finally he leaves unresolved the theme in *The Sketch Book*. His method is to offer kaleidoscopic views rather than a final vision. With a twist of the instrument, the author reveals the pathos of the funeral procession for the maiden in "Rural Funerals," then the whimsical scene in which a forgotten book quizzes Crayon about the reputation of the upstart Shakespeare in "The Mutability of Literature," and then in "Little Britain" the comic lament for a place whose manners are destroyed by the rivalry of the Misses Lambs and Trotters. Although Irving suggests much about mutability (e.g. love is the only antidote for mortality but at the same time is the most perishable of feelings, imagination and art are a means of denying change and decay, the New World must surely overtake the Old but that shift in power is not automatically progress), he avoids a definitive thematic treatment and in the process enriches the book.

For today's reader, *The Sketch Book* and its reception by its first audience raise some interesting contradictions. It has earned the reputation of being one of the first important literary works in America's national literature; it was popular at its first appearance and it was well received by American reviewers. Yet *The Sketch Book* is oddly English in its materials and its emotional appeal, and the modern reader's curiosity is piqued by the fact that Irving reached so many American readers with a book that showed much more about American attitudes toward England than it revealed about American life. Fashions in literature, such as the Byronism that encouraged posturing amidst romantic landscapes, may account for the immediate popularity of Crayon's sentimental scene painting, but surely the American readers of the 1820s and '30s responded to more than that in *The Sketch Book*. One hypothesis is that the United States, having asserted itself against England in the War of 1812, was emotionally ready for a sentimental view of the motherland, especially a view in which images suggested, as many of Irving's did, a place of past glory, of quaint customs, of beautiful scenes which fed the emotions without challenging the intellect. Another possible explanation is that by the 1820s and '30s, Americans, rather dazed by a period of economic growth and geographical expansion and in reaction to rapid social changes, felt a need to stabilize their world, to anchor themselves emotionally and intellectually. A work such as *The Sketch Book*, connecting the nation with its ancestral origins, often sentimentally, and dealing with mutability but in a much less threatening way than the actual conditions about them, fed the needs of the readership.²⁷ Irving had written in *The Sketch Book* not the best work that he could have but the right book for the times.

III.

The Critical Response

Contemporary reviewers in the United States and Great Britain had much to say about *The Sketch Book*. Americans differed from their fellow reviewers in London and Edinburgh by rather consistently over praising the work; nevertheless, most reviewers were positive about Irving's new work although they seldom agreed as to which pieces, aside from the tales of Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane, were best in subject and style.

The contemporary reviews remind us of the literary and political scene of the 1820s, and many, especially the long essays in magazines, tell us as much about the temper of the times and the biases of the writers as they do about Irving's artistry. American and British reviewers often touched on the same points but their responses are sufficiently different to make it useful to consider them separately.

R.H. Dana's essay in *The North American Review* (September 1819), although longer and more detailed than the usual American review and although it deals with only the first two numbers, can illustrate typical concerns. Dana addresses first of all the state of American writing and is eager to call attention to works that may boost the reputation of a national literature. He identifies Irving as author of some of the *Salmagundi* papers and *A History of New York* and gives several pages to the early works, justifying the backward glance by noting "the intention we have all along had of noticing most of such American books, whether of a later or earlier date, as may add to our literary character."²⁸ Then, mindful of objectivity, he adds: "We shall examine a work without any home feelings — our only business is with its merits and faults," continuing with a warning against literary chauvinism and a reminder of the paucity of American books with literary merit.²⁹ Dana discusses at length what may improve the quality of American writing; he suggests the need for an educated middle class — "men of improved intellects who are laboring in the different callings of public life" — and for better education (i.e. education less dependent on classical writers and that exposes readers to recent writers).³⁰

Returning to *The Sketch Book*, Dana finds Irving's style less pleasing than in earlier writing. "It was masculine — good bone and muscle — this is feminine, *dressy*, elegant and languid," Dana observes and then lists some questionable diction and figures.³¹ In noticing individual pieces, Dana, like other reviewers and the consensus of posterity, identifies "Rip Van Winkle" as a favorite. He finds the sentimental "The Broken Heart" to be "... loathesome in effect."³² Dana is typical in choosing to comment on "English Writers on America," agreeing with Irving's call for more responsible reporting by English travelers and finding the essay written "... in a just, liberal, manly spirit, worthy of its author."³³ Dana concludes by emphasizing his larger concern in the essay — the correction of taste in America so its literary character can grow.

Dana's essay is a more thoughtful and careful evaluation of Irving's work and its relation to the literary scene than many other critical notices. The tone of American reviews often suggests puffery rather than serious criticism. The need to find a praiseworthy national literature clouded critical judgment.³⁴

On the whole, British reviewers gave more thoughtful and balanced reactions to *The Sketch Book* (they also usually had the advantage of having the complete English edition before them); however, the British reviewers brought their own biases to the work, biases most frequently unmasked when the essayists addressed the

idea of an American literature and the specific essay, "English Writers on America." A review-essay in a British magazine begins typically with a consideration of why America has produced so little in belles-lettres and then introduces Irving as one American writer with literary merit. The review usually comments on "English Writers on America," praises "Rip Van Winkle," and offers extracts or entire sketches to illustrate Irving's style and subjects.³⁵ The British review is more likely than the American to criticize Irving's use of English materials and his handling of them. Interestingly, the British reviews divide sharply in finding individual English sketches charming or tiresome, but they are virtually unanimous in praising the two tales with American settings and characters. It seems the British readership was as eager to have American stories as Americans were to read genteel sketches about England.

The essay calling forth the most emotional responses from all reviewers was "English Writers on America," an equivocation on Irving's part since he urges Americans to pay no heed to what English travelers say about the state of American society at the same time he urges the English to act responsibly as the "fountain head from whence the literature of the language flows," a situation making England the source of much information accessible to Americans.³⁶ The essay also carries an implicit threat in its contrast of a virile, young United States with an aging England. Although Irving's intention was to encourage conciliation, his tone is sometimes hectoring.

The British Critic's review (June 1820) of volume one of *The Sketch Book* contains the most vocal response to "English Writers on America."³⁷ Whereas other critics often seconded the call for conciliation and ignored the more blustery passages in the essay, the *Critic* saw a red flag and charged. Much of the review is an eloquent chastisement of the United States for fighting against England in the War of 1812. Since by all ties the United States should have sided with England "against the usurper of France," but since the States put commerce before honor, "the Americans have no right to the friendship and good opinion of Englishmen."³⁸ Americans, the *Critic* continues, should not complain of the writers of Great Britain "but of those miserable demagogues who have so long guided public opinion on the other side of the Atlantic."³⁹ However, in spite of the rhetoric, the reviewer does not disagree with Irving's basic claim that English writers often treat America unfairly, and with a burst of nineteenth-century imperial pride, the *Critic* hails the day "when the English language, and English literature and laws, will cover so large a portion of the habitable globe."⁴⁰ In another response, the reviewer in the *Quarterly Review* (April 1821), although falling short of the

eloquence and indignation of the *Critic* and generally agreeing with Irving on "English Writers on America," urges America to lose its "over-weening self-conceit" and to cease bragging about its constitution, especially while allowing slavery within its republican bounds.⁴¹

One should note, however, that even while British periodicals sometimes used essays to address subjects only secondary to Irving's achievements in *The Sketch Book*, the critics generally seriously reviewed the book (*The British Critic* gave separate reviews to volumes one and two) and were more balanced in their comment and more constructive in their criticism than American reviewers. For example, the *Quarterly Review* praised "Rip Van Winkle," "The Spectre Bridegroom," and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" above all else and concluded that Irving was best with narration, a judgment Irving might have taken more seriously.⁴² John G. Lockhart, writing in *Blackwood's* (July 1820), suggested that Irving's future lay in writing a novel of American manners, a course that was probably precluded by Irving's residency in Europe from 1815 to 1832.⁴³ Despite its lecture on America's failings, the *Critic* praised many individual pieces in both volumes and suggested Irving should rely less on the sentimental strain, a piece of constructive criticism echoed by other reviewers. For all the literary chauvinism expressed by the British reviewers, they gave serious attention to *The Sketch Book*, often hailing it as the first ray in the dawning of an American literature and frequently providing relevant criticism.

IV.

The Sketch Book: 160 Years After

The Sketch Book is a significant American book, the success of which came at an important time in its author's career. Because of the collapse of the family business, Irving needed a financial success if he were to continue in the literary profession; and because of the grief he felt from the family failure and his personal losses in the preceding period, Irving needed the emotional lift that could come from popular and critical approval of his work. Given these circumstances and the fact that *The Sketch Book* followed his youthful success with *A History of New York* by a decade, *The Sketch Book* was crucial in Irving's career. Thus, in the 1820s, he had reason to be pleased with the book's reception, and indeed for the rest of his life and beyond, the book's popularity endured, going through countless printings.

Beyond the importance of the book to the author's economic and emotional well-being, it was a significant artistic achievement, perhaps a greater achievement than Irving himself understood. *The Sketch Book* is more than its parts. Through developing Crayon as persona, through artfully arranging diverse materials (i.e. Irving's

skillful balancing of essays of place, sentimental narratives, fanciful tales, etc.), and through advancing major themes such as mutability, Irving created an innovative book, one that moved his literary art beyond *A History of New York*, essentially a continuation of eighteenth-century form and style. *The Sketch Book* is informed by a sensibility and style that are Romantic. And even though *The Sketch Book* has many connections with English literature and stylists, it is a work quite different from any previous American book. Critics who saw *The Sketch Book* as a beacon, potentially heralding a new age in American letters, were not amiss.

Irving, however, eventually failed to fulfill the promise signified in his book. Although he employed some of the formal innovations in his next two books, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) and *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), his artistic advancements were slight and the works seemed imitative and lifeless. He experimented further with thematic grouping; he continued to use Crayon as persona in *Bracebridge Hall*; he searched further for antiquarian and folk materials such as those that pleased readers of *The Sketch Book*, but his accomplishments were less. Only years later did he achieve a similar success with *The Alhambra* (1832) when he found materials that engaged his imagination.

Why Irving failed to seize the promise of *The Sketch Book* and develop artistically is a difficult and perhaps unanswerable question. Perhaps it was a matter of the temperament (one of those Lords of Life Emerson identifies in "Experience") of an amiable man, content to do less than his best, and often drifting into hack work. Such is certainly the picture that Stanley Williams paints in his detailed biography. It is true that Irving lacked discipline, was easily distracted, and was most productive when necessity ruled him as in the case of *The Sketch Book* or when circumstances buffered him from the social world.⁴⁴

But beyond the matter of temperament is the question of the artist and his materials. An American living in Europe for long periods, Irving was a regular observer of scenes, a recorder of anecdotes, and a reader of old volumes in search of ideas for his writing. He was not, given the results, especially discriminating in selecting subjects, and in retrospect, he seems to have been an artist with an exceptional sense of form and style who seldom found the materials to complement that sense. This is perhaps another way of saying Irving's real failure was in imagination and discrimination. The fame of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" adds an ironic emphasis. These tales, traditional materials adorned in scenes and recollections from Irving's youth, have eclipsed not only the rest of *The Sketch Book* but virtually everything else he wrote. The tales illustrate the excellence of

Irving's prose when subject, form, and style merge in the complementary whole. Irving failed to understand that in these tales and in the entire design of *The Sketch Book* he had created the foundation upon which to build his career as the foremost writer of the new nation.

Notes

¹The standard biography is Stanley T. Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935), a meticulous work but colored with Williams' dislike for his subject. Irving published early essays in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1802 but became more seriously involved in writing when his brother William and their friend James Kirke Paulding produced the *Salmagundi* papers beginning in 1807. One should note that Irving vacillated for several years about choosing a career.

²Irving did write for magazines during the period after *A History of New York* and before *The Sketch Book*, chiefly for the *Analectic Magazine* which he edited in 1813-14. See Williams, *Life*, I, 136-138.

³Irving courted Mathilda Hoffman when he was twenty-five and she was seventeen; she died of consumption in 1809 at seventeen. Nineteenth-century commentators liked to stress the effects of this bereavement upon his life and career, a stress not borne out by Irving's journals and letters. See Williams, *Life*, I, 103-107.

⁴Williams, *Life*, I, 124.

⁵Williams, *Life*, I, 140. Irving later refused offers to edit magazines, including one from Scott. The *Analectic* failed through the bankruptcy of its publishers, not from Irving's role as editor.

⁶Williams, *Life*, I, 142. Irving offered his services to Governor Tompkins after the burning of Washington and carried on "clerical warfare" until the governor no longer needed him.

⁷Williams, *Life*, I, 150-155. International political and economic conditions hurt the family business; also, Peter, who had a penchant for speculation, badly managed the business in England.

⁸Irving worked on the pieces of the book during 1817-18. See *Notes While Preparing the Sketch Book Etc.*, ed. Stanley T. Williams, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1927).

⁹The task of writing and publishing *The Sketch Book* was complicated by Irving's being in England and his printer, C.S. Van Winkle, being in New York. Irving's brother, Ebenezer, and a friend, Henry Brevoort, helped with negotiations, oversaw the work, and served as liaison.

¹⁰Williams, *Life*, I, 189. Irving negotiated an English edition only after the success of the American numbers.

¹¹For a description and explanation of the important editions, see *The Sketch Book* as edited by Haskell Springer for *The Complete Works of Washington Irving* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), the edition for the Center for Editions of American Authors. Citations to the text are from this edition.

¹²Haskell, ed., *Sketch Book*, p. 300.

¹³Irving gave Brevoort in New York license to make changes in the numbers but the only substitutions came from the author. See Williams, *Life*, I, 172-175.

¹⁴John Clendenning, "Irving and the Gothic Tradition" in *1860-1974: A Century of Commentary on the Works of Washington Irving*, ed. Andrew B. Myers (Tarrytown: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1976), pp. 379-387, discusses the use of sportive Gothic in "The Spectre Bridegroom."

¹⁵Irving also added to the Author's Revised Edition a new preface, "London Antiques," which served as a prologue to "Little Britain;" the fragment "Sunday in London," and "L'Envoy," which had concluded the English edition.

¹⁶*Sketch Book*, p. 9.

¹⁷*Sketch Book*, p. 8.

¹⁹*Sketch Book*, p. 12.

²⁰Irving met Roscoe in 1815 when Roscoe was at the height of his fame. He wrote *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* and *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*. British reviewers of *The Sketch Book* were often surprised at Irving's choice of Roscoe as a subject.

²¹*Sketch Book*, p. 19.

²²Mary Bowden in *Washington Irving* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981) discusses major images and themes in *The Sketch Book* and strains to demonstrate a Jeffersonian agrarian bias in the imagery.

²³"Rip Van Winkle," especially its sources, has more critical literature than anything else by Irving. For a clear account of Irving's debt to German folklore in his tale and his artistic use of the source, see Henry A. Pochmann, "Irving's German Sources in *The Sketch Book*," *Studies in Philology*, 27 (1930), 477-507.

²⁴*Sketch Book*, p. 37.

²⁵*Sketch Book*, p. 40.

²⁶*Sketch Book*, p. 40.

²⁷Lorman A. Ratner, "American Nationalism Fifty Years After the Revolution" in *Washington Irving: A Tribute*, ed. Andrew B. Myers (Tarrytown: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1972), p. 44.

²⁸*North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*, 9 (1819), 323. An unsigned review attributed to R.H. Dana by Haskell Springer in *Washington Irving: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1976).

²⁹*North American Review*, 323.

³⁰*North American Review*, 328.

³¹*North American Review*, 348.

³²*North American Review*, 352.

³³*North American Review*, 354. The reviewer in *The Western Review and Miscellaneous Magazine*, 2 (1820), 244-254, also approved of the essay, saying it "abounds in just sentiments and liberal feelings."

³⁴Williams, *Life*, I, 174-175, 188-191, summarizes many contemporary reviews. Springer, *A Reference Guide*, lists reviews and gives synopses.

³⁵Without an international copyright agreement to hinder them, English publishers began reprinting items from the first numbers in 1819, thereby encouraging Irving to prepare an English edition.

³⁶*Sketch Book*, p. 47.

³⁷Unsigned review, *The British Critic*, NS 13 (1820), 643-654.

³⁸*British Critic*, 647.

³⁹*British Critic*, 647.

⁴⁰*British Critic*, 648.

⁴¹Unsigned review, *Quarterly Review*, 25 (1821), 52-54.

⁴²*Quarterly Review*, 66-67.

⁴³*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (1820), 367-368. An unsigned review of the 2nd edition of *A History of New York* but also with comment on *The Sketch Book*. Attributed to Lockhart by Springer, *A Reference Guide*.

⁴⁴A case in point is the composition of *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), which Irving worked on assiduously in Madrid, using the library of Obadiah Rich and enjoying the patronage of American diplomat, Alexander Hill Everett. See Williams, *Life*, I, 302-325.

History on Trial: The Case of the Coadjutor's Chalices

Sylvia Vance

There is a fundamental ambiguity in the very name of the discipline I want to discuss — history. On the one hand it is the events of the past; on the other, it is the recounting of those events. This duality is readily reconciled at a level of common sense. When I ask a history class of mine what *is* the task of the historian, I frequently get the answer “To tell us what really happened.” And of course the students are right, though I sometimes delight in showing them, in instances from my own research, how clouded an issue “what really happened” can be. My favorite small-scale example has to do with Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, the mid-seventeenth-century coadjutor of Paris (that is, the ecclesiastical assistant to the archbishop) and whether or not he proposed in January 1649 that the silver services of the churches of Paris be melted down in order to pay troops rebelling against royal authority during the Fronde. If true, this would constitute a serious charge against a high ecclesiastical figure (Gondi subsequently during the rebellion became a cardinal — the cardinal de Retz). While I was working on Gondi's (that is, Retz's) memoirs, I became intrigued by the question of the validity of this charge formally made against him by the young Louis XIV and his prime minister Mazarin in July of 1655, as they sought to invoke the pope's discipline against this important rebel who had served what turned out to be a losing cause.

Seeking out the evidence in many letters, memoirs, and pamphlets of that period, I found conflicting sorts of statements from people known to be Retz's enemies — that, for example, Gondi had offered the treasury funds of the cathedral chapter, or that he had offered the chalices and the crucifixes — but none agreed on the time or the place or the terms of the offers. Retz himself, in his later memoirs (written in the 1670s) understandably says nothing of any such proposal of his. One essentially neutral source, D'Ormesson, a well-respected associate of the Paris Parlement, says in his memoirs simply that at the Parliamentary session of 21 January 1649, “Monsieur le Coadjuteur offered his silver service.” Such phrasing suggests that it was his own personal silver he was offering, not that of the churches. Did Coadjutor Gondi offer to have the ecclesiastical silver melted down to

pay troops? I don't know; I maintain that the positive evidence is a bit suspect, and I don't think we can yet say "what really happened" in this regard in January 1649. The winners frequently structure the record, blatantly or more subtly shaping the story.

Story — history. In French they are the same word, and we are back to our fundamental duality. In recent years, the discipline of history has been characterized by many expansive developments — quantification of historical data, expansion of perceived spatial ties to world-wide proportions, the relating of subjective experience to external events, and the exploration of latent history (those developments which their own age did not perceive happening). But its most lively debate is one that has called into serious question how objective, how "true" the narrative of historical accounts can be. And I think that the sometimes acrimonious scholarly conflict has served to show that it makes a great deal of difference which aspect of the duality in the definition, in the word "history," is being stressed. How greatly is "what really happened" inevitably compromised in the telling?

It is not the first time by any means that the objective truth of history has been questioned. In fact, Retz wrote his memoirs in the perspective that as a seventeenth-century nobleman he distrusted what the professional "vulgar" — that is, bourgeois — historians wrote. Their account was, said Retz, much too neat, too arranged, in a word, too literary. History is really disorder and confusion and contradiction. And by the way, Retz can be considered an authority on historical contradiction; in his own day he was charged with having changed sides six times during the Fronde rebellion.

You as readers may be wondering by now why I, with a doctorate in French literature, am discussing the discipline of history. My doctoral program had been designed with a field in early modern European history because I knew from the beginning of that work that I wanted to examine the realm where literature and history can be seen to encounter each other. *Mirabile dictu*, I persuaded the graduate committee to agree. So, along with the wealth of French literature and history, I studied the analytical strategies of both disciplines in order to apply them to seventeenth-century French memoirs. A lifelong fascination with French literature and French history was formally expressed in a dissertation, completed in 1980, on the memoirs of the cardinal de Retz.

It was while I was searching for a fruitful way to amalgamate analytical techniques from both disciplines that I encountered the work of Hayden White, most importantly, his 1973 *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. This important book had been characterized by a review in *Diacritics* —

typical of many — as “more than a study of philosophies of history — a methodological manifesto, a more sustained argument for a *deep-figural* hermeneutic than has been worked out anywhere before now.” Since then, in the past ten years, his work, continued in articles and in the book *Tropics of Discourse*, has also brought forth such charges as that he, in company with the semioticians, “means to offer a more radical form of subversion, a veritable Götterdämmerung of reason, in which history’s (destroyed) purpose is (then) restored by its capacity to play a hero’s role.”¹

In short, Hayden White has been, and remains, controversial. To see why, I’d like to examine with you briefly what his analytical technique is, and how it served me in analyzing Retz’s memoirs, as one approach to them. Then I will trace the high points of a carefully reasoned critique of such approaches as that of Hayden White made by Maurice Mandelbaum in his *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge*. Both men write from an effort to (as the French would say) situate the discipline of history. I think that the structures generated by the two writers show very clearly the ambiguity of the word that names it. White emphasizes what is involved in “telling us”; Mandelbaum focuses our attention on the importance of “what really happened,” and he defends the truth and objectivity (in a precise sense) of historical knowledge. I think that we can agree that Hayden White has indeed undermined objectivity in that precise sense, for the sake of what he has envisioned as philosophically more compelling.

In an important issue of *XVII^e Siècle*, the journal of the French Society for the Study of the Seventeenth Century, Yves Coirault in 1971 was sounding this tone, as had Hegel and Croce in earlier generations. Introducing that series of articles on seventeenth-century memoirs, as studied by an important and productive group of French historians, Coirault said, “...given the impurity of history, the poetics (*poétique*) of the work, its discourse, is necessarily literature.”² In a nutshell, this position is what Hayden White has systematically developed. His basic philosophical concern is (as he puts it) “the problem of the relationship among description, analysis, and ethics in the human sciences”³ — a Kantian division of the human faculties.

I’d like to quote some of White’s words addressed particularly to the discipline of history: “It now seems possible to hold that an explanation need not be assigned unilaterally to the category of the literally truthful on the one hand or the purely imaginary on the other, but can be judged *solely* in terms of the richness of the metaphors which govern its sequence of articulation. Thus envisaged, the governing metaphor of an historical account could be treated as a heuristic rule which self-consciously eliminates certain kinds of data from consideration as evidence.”⁴ And here is White on what we ask

of an historian:

... there is no such thing as a single correct view of any object under study but...there are many correct views, each requiring its own style of representation...we should no longer naively expect that statements about a given epoch or complex of events in the past 'correspond' to some preexistent body of 'raw facts.' For we should recognize that what constitutes the facts themselves is the problem that the historian, like the artist, has tried to solve in the choice of the metaphor by which he orders his world, past, present, and future. We should ask only that the historian show some tact in the use of his governing metaphors.⁵

Here we pause for breath, and head back to my non-theoretical, very real classroom and its students, and imagine the more perceptive among them saying, "But where has 'what really happened' gone if this is what we ask of historians?" Where, indeed? But I think you can see how I here envisioned one possibly fruitful technique to use in analyzing Retz's memoirs, to get at his writing of history in ways that do not have to surrender necessarily when a question cannot be answered. This was important to me, for there is a major question in Retz's political past which we cannot — at least not yet — answer, a question much more weighty than the church silver, and that question involves the legitimacy of the whole Frondeur cause during the rebellion. Was it narrowly based on the self-interest of the nobles? Louis XIV and Mazarin attempted to destroy every bit of evidence that would document anything else, anything more politically legitimate. Retz wrote his memoirs in part to say that there was a solid rationale to the Fronde rebellion, and that Retz had stood for it and expressed it in theory and act. But we know that Retz was opportunistic and ambitious, and the question becomes, How can we possibly deal now with his "evidence," cognizant of his shifting points of view, with all of this complicated by the fact that he wrote his memoirs some twenty-five years after the events? Documentation fails us at many a point.

I had turned to Hayden White's methods as one approach to Retz's history. White says, as Yves Coirault had done, that because the narrative of history is inevitably literary, a historian tells a story of a particular kind which (echoing Northrop Frye's anatomical terms) White named as Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, Satire. White added that the historian also tends to use a relatively consistent mode of explanation (and here the borrowing is from Stephen Pepper): Idiographic (or Formist), Organicist, Mechanistic, Contextualist.⁶ Besides that, White finds it inevitable that the historian works from

within a certain ideology (Anarchist, Conservative, Radical, Liberal) as Karl Mannheim presented those classifications in *Ideology and Utopia*. Furthermore, White maintains that there is one other set of modes as well, underlying all the others: "I have been forced to postulate a deep level of consciousness on which a historical thinker chooses conceptual strategies by which to explain or represent his data. On this level, I believe, the historian performs an essentially poetic act, in which he *prefigures* the historical field..." These prefigurations White categorizes with the familiar literary terms of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony.

Reduced to lists, all this looks very pat and perhaps sterile, but examining textual materials through this structure did prove to be useful in the case of the memoirs I was interested in analyzing. Hayden White had worked with the approach primarily on nineteenth-century historians, in his notable *Metahistory*. I modified his procedures in two ways. After some preliminary experimentation I divided Retz's 1000-page text into some fifty sections of varying length as suited his narrative, and examined each one separately at an early stage of the operation, rather than treating the work as a whole right from the start. The second modification: I had to change White's ideological categories to those political viewpoints which suited seventeenth-century France — that is, a first one characterized as feudal, held by the traditional nobility; a second, mainly championed by the Parlementary magistrates, the officials, and their supporters, which Ernst Kossmann termed Baroque; and a third one that I ended up calling, none too succinctly, "providential statist absolutism," representing the rationale supporting an increasingly bureaucratic system run by a divine right monarch.

Now, to make a long story short, the use of White's categories of analysis — as thus modified — brought about several helpful new insights on Retz's memoir text. It demonstrated how Retz moved in his account from structuring by feudal ideology to structuring from a Baroque view at precisely those episodes of the Fronde when his own role was most suspect, according to the standards of the victorious monarchy of the 1670s, the era when Retz composed the narrative. White's techniques exposed an important metaphor from French historical experience which characterizes certain parts of Retz's text, and highlighted as well an underlying irony which disappears only, interestingly enough, when the Baroque ideological view predominates. The analysis showed how Retz's very strategies of narration support his view that history is really disorder and confusion and contradiction. All that is useful for understanding "what really happened" after the defeat of the mid-century Frondeur groups, insofar as that defeat contributed to the stability of Louis XIV's

absolutism.

But using White's procedures, useful as they were, also served to illuminate the limitations of his approach, for nothing I did with them could answer that *evidential* sort of question which is of major importance: Did Retz as a rebelling Frondeur really have, at the time of the Fronde, a politically responsible point of view? This question, while not essential in understanding the older memoir writer Retz, *is* essential in understanding the historical Retz of the mid-seventeenth century. In the same sense that I cannot now answer the question of the church silver, I can't answer this one either. I'm a good bit closer than I was, and I do have an educated guess, but I can't answer it. By bits and pieces, historians such as Richard Bonney are at present combing such documents as escaped destruction from the Fronde period, especially in provincial archives. Perhaps the question is ultimately answerable, perhaps not.

This limitation inherent in White's analytical techniques leads us to Maurice Mandelbaum's framework for discussing historical knowledge, one which very clearly says that current attempts (such as Hayden White's) to identify history with narrative or discourse are mistaken. When Retz had diagnosed similar shortcomings in the historical writing of his day and sought to correct them in his own, his argument was that *real* history ("what really happened"), rather than being governable by the clarity of classical narration, forms a "monstrous body" in its disorder and confusion — a marvelously Baroque image from a quintessential Baroque personality.

Maurice Mandelbaum, when challenged by the current attempt to identify history with narrative, structures an argument that seeks to demonstrate the reality of hard-won objective "truth" in historical writing — that objectivity which he, and others, refuse to surrender to White's brilliant but (to their minds) diversionary strategy.

To follow Mandelbaum's argument we need a sense of his terminology and his categories, and I invite your attention here to the differences of vocabulary and of tone from those of Hayden White. Mandelbaum reminds us of that commonplace in historiographical writing which says that historians are concerned with particular events that occurred at specific times and places, and not with them only in so far as they represent events of a given type. "Historians are concerned with the particular, rather than with establishing explanatory generalizations."⁸ Mandelbaum states some essential, generic characteristics of historical work: (1) it purports to establish what actually occurred at a particular time and place, or is concerned with tracing and explaining some particular series of related occurrences; (2) Historical studies depend on *inquiry* in order to establish the truth concerning particular events that did actually occur. They must be

able to advance external *evidence* that vouches for their truth; (3) The historian views human thoughts, feelings, and actions in their societal setting — that is, in terms of the various ways in which they affected, or were affected by, the society in which they took place.⁹

It is important to bear in mind Mandelbaum's use of the terms "society" and "culture" in order to understand his basic distinction of general and special histories:

Society: A society consists of individuals living in an organized community that controls a particular territory; the organization is provided by institutions that serve to define the status of different individuals and the roles they play in perpetuating the continuing existence of the community.

Culture: (not an anthropological use of the term) A generic term designating whatever objects are created and used by individuals, and whatever skills, beliefs, and forms of behavior they have acquired through their social inheritance.¹⁰

Institutionally oriented histories — that is, societal-based ones — are "general histories"; histories of specific aspects of culture (architecture, coffee drinking, what have you) are "special histories."

Two other important terms in Mandelbaum's lexicon are *scale*, comparable to the varying scales of map making, where a historian chooses the level of feature and detail he will work with; and *facets*, where the historian chooses the aspect or aspects of the subject he will include.

Mandelbaum classifies three important types of histories within either general or special historical studies, acknowledging that not one of them exists as a pure form in historical practice. The first he terms "sequential," those studies which follow one series of events. Mandelbaum cautions, in characterizing this type, "It is misleading to describe what historians do as if this were comparable to the storyteller's art."¹¹ The historian cannot follow a simple story line. A second type of either special or general historical studies he calls "explanatory." The historian is here not following one continuous series of events; he knows, or believes he knows, what in fact happened, and is seeking to explain.¹² The events with which he deals may not belong together except as they contribute to the particular outcome which the historian is explaining.

The best way to understand the third major type is by envisioning the kind of background which a historian might well supply before developing the sequential or explanatory narrative of the other two kinds. If the whole study is the description or characterization of a historical period or an aspect of a period, Mandelbaum calls it

"interpretive."¹³

Thus, Mandelbaum finds historical studies to be far more diverse, as he puts it, than is usually assumed, and this diversity is "reflected in differences between the modes of explanation to be found in them."¹⁴ Generally speaking, "explanation of the whole will depend upon understanding the connections that exist in the patterning of its parts."¹⁵ At this point in his examination of causation, Mandelbaum begins to sound like parts of White's study, but the point that Mandelbaum is here making (implicitly to White) is that *type* of history (general or special, sequential, explanatory, or interpretive) will affect how the part and the whole are related more importantly than will structural considerations of literary discourse.

When is an historical explanation "true"? For Mandelbaum there are at least three answers, depending on the type of historical study. In special histories, explanation of characteristics to be found in one or more cultural works is through recourse to something lying outside the works themselves (in cultural tradition, or biographical facts, or societal change, for example).¹⁶ It may be found by readers of that special history that the description of the cultural works may be adequate and sensitive, but that the explanation offered for what they have in common may not be appropriately based. Or the explanation may be judged to be insightful, but the overall validity of the study is marred by an incomplete or incoherent description, according to the choice of scale and of facets the historian made. In short, each of the two parts of a special history — the internal subject and the outside explanatory agent or agents — can be evaluated separately. It is probably important to note at this point that Mandelbaum finds that in special histories, historical objectivity is limited, if it is even possible.

In general histories of the sequential and explanatory type, however, the explanation for what happened is given not through appeal to something outside the events but through deeper penetration into what did actually happen. The events that explain what occurred are themselves part of the series of occurrences; a false explanation, then, is one which misrepresents what did occur.¹⁷ In these types of historical studies, the distinction between "cause" and "conditions" breaks down, and they cannot be separated in appraising the "truth" of the account.

In general or special *interpretive* histories, the adequacy of the historical work can be measured against the evidence it collects, and against those points at which its basic principle of collection has led the historian to overlook other evidence without which the interpretive narrative is faulty.¹⁸

Can history be objective? Indeed, it can be, argues Mandelbaum,

supposing the proper kind of objectivity to be intended in that question. If two persons make contradictory statements regarding the same subject matter, whatever test must be used must be directly applied to *what* is being affirmed or denied, not to any influences leading to affirmation or denial. Keeping one's personal considerations from warping one's judgment does not in itself provide any test of whether a statement is true or false. And in every field, says Mandelbaum, the background and knowledge of the investigator will affect the investigation. But historical knowledge *can* be objective in the sense that "we regard its truth as excluding the possibility that its denial can also be true."¹⁹

On this basis, it is possible to accumulate an increasing, objective, "true" history, but only if the diverse types of historical writing are understood. As was noted when we spoke of modes of explanation, there is some reason, according to Mandelbaum, to doubt that in special histories objectivity can be obtained, but the same doubt does not apply to general histories. The reason is that the general historian cannot exercise freedom in delimiting what will or will not enter the account. "Once the historian has chosen a subject matter and a working scale, it is the data that inquiry reveals, rather than the historian's own initial concepts, that serve to control the structured connections of the facts within his account."²⁰ And they can be judged for their congruence with the structures of other general historical accounts, and thus objective history accumulates.

To sum up, Mandelbaum very specifically opposes White's views in several basic and important ways, as he states:

(1) "It is not true that sortal principles historians use in classifying evidence are merely subjective."

(2) Evidence imposes structure in historical writing.

(3) The more evidence there is, the less choice a historian has as to alternative ways to structure.

(4) Causal connections are authenticated on the basis of evidence.

(5) "The creativity of a historian is shown in how he handles evidence and where he has had the insight to look for new evidence."

(6) "History as a discipline is not a form of art."²¹

Thus, we see that there exist today some very clearcut oppositions concerning the discipline of history, depending on whether the "telling us" or the "what really happened" is being emphasized, and the current dialogue is certainly not the first nor will it be the last. It seems appropriate here for me to sum up briefly my own critique of Hayden White, whose approach to history has been important to me, but which I see as ultimately unsatisfactory and incomplete in describing or situating the discipline of history. On the positive side, White does force historians continually to be conscious of and to

appraise the recounting of events as a *non-neutral* element of the discipline. White's approach does not, I think, really threaten us with a *Götterdämmerung* of reason or objectivity if it is viewed as what White in his less exalted moments says it is — a heuristic procedure which can let us see and say more about certain texts than we otherwise could. And one wants to remind Mandelbaum here that the historical evidence so essential in his definition of historical studies is importantly built from documents and from other histories whose point of view must be judged. White's procedures can help us describe viewpoint; I am convinced of that.

But in the end, I agree with John Carlos Rowe's telling judgment, published not long ago in *Humanities in Society*, that White's "categorizing an infinite wealth of data in terms of four basic tropes falsifies diachronic (historical) particulars for the sake of synchronic (descriptive) abstractions."²² I appreciate this phrasing because it reminds us of the Saussurian linguistic origins in the current version of that old duality inherent in "telling us what really happened."

Notes

¹Alfred Louch, "The Discourse of Subversion" in *Humanities in Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1979), 34.

²No. 94-95, 5.

³Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 22.

⁴White, *Tropics*..., p. 46, my emphasis

⁵White, *Tropics*..., p. 47.

⁶White's explanatory modes are perhaps not as familiar in common knowledge as are the other terms. Included here, therefore, are brief explanations of these modes:

Formism (also termed *Idiography* by White, from the designation used by Wilhelm Windelband who provided philosophic defense of the method): the historian sorts out the various entities in a historical field, serving the function of a sort of magnifying glass for the reader. What is to be explained is more the uniqueness of agents, agencies, and acts which make up events than the scene against which things happen. Essentially dispersive in nature. (As Michelet and Carlyle, for example.)

Organicism: the historian tends to depict particulars discerned in the historical field as components of synthetic processes; he wants to relate the various contexts that are perceived in the historical record to history-in-general. He searches out principles of integration. More integrative than Formism, and more reductive. (As Ranke, for example.)

Mechanism: the historian's search is for causal laws determining the outcomes of processes discovered in the historical field. Elements are seen as related in a "part to part" sense; the historian distinguishes causes and effects among them. Integrative and reductive. (As Marx and Tocqueville, for example.)

Contextualism: the historian attempts to set an event within its context, but any movement toward integration of the phenomena should stop when a context is characterized in fairly general terms. Causes are seen in relationships to other events occurring in the same historical space. This method W.H. Walsh and Isaiah Berlin call "colligation." Relative integration only. (As Burckhardt, for example.)

⁷Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. x.

⁸Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 5.

⁹Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., pp. 6-10.

¹⁰Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 11; p. 12.

¹¹Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 25.

¹²Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 26.

¹³Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 28; p. 29.

¹⁴Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 136.

¹⁵Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 142.

¹⁶Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 133.

¹⁷Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 134.

¹⁸Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 135.

¹⁹Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 150.

²⁰Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., p. 165.

²¹Mandelbaum, *Anatomy*..., pp. 192-195.

²²"Structuralism or Post-structuralism: The Problem of 'The Discourse of History'," in *Humanities in Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1979), 22.

Duck Pond

Cecile Gray

The freshman scratches words
in his notebook: duck prints,
mudsplash, nothing said.
He searches the floor

as a duck scans the snow.
No hand to give him bread.
He flinches and starts,
but his pin-feather feelings

stick in his skin: no long thoughts
flow to the page. They ought
to come swift as skates!
His webs slip and claw.

He feels, but he doesn't know.
Words like ducklings *will* march
in lines when the damn thaw comes.
He quacks for crumbs.

Don Juan Dreams of Diana

Cecile Gray

(she said) At the end of clear ground, you cut through
the canebrake, quivered as stags do, sensing me:
the huntress, the archer, the hound
that sniffed your heels. And I followed.

I would not have thought I could drop my arrows
or open my bow-hardened hands.

My heart expects cliff and briar and quickens
to battle. Yet it breaks for you,

its crust gone chalk and thin
as the moon's white barnacles.

I cling. Will my weight make you stumble?

I dream I could comfort you (here I wept)
with my old blood courage; but I press
your mortal's touch to all my wounds.

Exegesis and Interpretation in Biblical Studies

Paul L. Redditt

Biblical study, if one stops to consider the matter, attempts to understand the thinking of ancient writers from a Middle Eastern country. In that, biblical study is no different from philosophy or classical studies. Biblical study, however, has one further task not necessarily incumbent on students of other ancient countries. The biblical scholar is asked to cross time, language and worldview, and to rescue meaning from those ancient texts which aids, even directs, our living today. Such a task is at least Herculean; some would say impossible. This paper, then, is an explanation and demonstration of biblical studies, especially gospel studies, as performed by the majority of critical scholars. I hope to persuade you that such studies are indeed scholarly and are attuned to historical and literary issues.

Scholarship being what it is, there are many specialties in biblical studies. Personally, my research interests lie in post-exilic prophecy. I suspect it would be more interesting to you if I select a text from the New Testament gospels. Another reason for choosing to work with the gospels is that the methods are best honed here. In the pages that follow, then, I will attempt both to explain and demonstrate how a biblical scholar investigates a text. I will focus my presentation around the work of Rudolf Bultmann, not because he is the latest word, but because his viewpoint represents the starting point for most New Testament studies today.

The Issue of Method

Before we can approach a biblical text, a couple of matters of method must be addressed. I shall be employing two methods in particular, methods with their own presuppositions and rules too numerous to mention and defend.

The first of these methods is called Form Criticism. It is the attempt to reconstruct the original, oral form of a story or saying, complete with its original setting in life and typical meaning. The second method goes by various names, but generally is called the history of traditions method. This method attempts to reconstruct the history of a story or saying, so far as this history is recoverable, from its original, oral stage to its final written stage(s).

A second methodological concern is the matter of written sources. Considerable research suggests that behind the Gospels of Matthew,

Mark and Luke lie four written traditions. The first of these sources is called Q, from the German word *Quelle*, well. Q is, by definition, the sayings of Jesus common to Matthew and Luke, but missing from Mark. Q is thought to have consisted entirely of sayings, with only half-verse settings. The Gospel of Thomas, discovered at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, is just such a gospel, but it is not Q.

The second source is the Gospel of Mark. Most scholars still hold that either Mark, or an earlier version of our Gospel, provided the basic narrative structure of the Synoptic Gospels. (The first three Gospels are so named because they agree in many places in their presentation of Jesus.) In addition to Q and Mark, there appear to have been special traditions belonging to Matthew and Luke; for example, the Birth stories and Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan. These four sources, then, comprise the written tradition lying behind the Synoptics.

A third methodological note concerns determining the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus, that is, whether one has grounds for saying Jesus actually made the statements attributed to him in the Gospels. The problem is that the Gospels are clearly the product of the church and show evidence of their authors' consciously using and shaping sayings to fit their own, late first century polemical needs.

New Testament scholars generally use three criteria to determine authenticity. The first is the criterion of dissimilarity. If a saying attributed to Jesus displays no bias from the Gospel writers or espouses no views known to have been polemical, and if the saying is unlikely to have come from Judaism, then it may with some confidence be attributed to Jesus. Put facetiously, if a saying attributed to Jesus sounds neither Jewish nor Christian, it may be assumed to be authentic. The second criterion is that of coherence. Material may be accepted as authentic if it can be shown to cohere with material already established by the negative criterion. Finally, some scholars argue (weakly) that sayings found in all four gospels are likely to be authentic. Use of these criteria, dissimilarity, coherence, and multiple attestation, furnish sayings with a reasonable claim to authenticity.

The first three questions have dealt with methods to explain or exegete a text. The fourth, and last, issue deals with the matter of interpretation. No unanimity exists among biblical scholars about the correct method(s) of interpretation. What I shall do is focus on the method developed by Rudolf Bultmann, the most influential voice in New Testament study during this century.

Bultmann's method of interpretation has two overriding principles. The first he calls demythologizing. Simply put, Bultmann does not accept the Bible's worldview, with a three-storied universe, an

apocalyptic end, and a mythical redeemer. He is not alone in that rejection. Most liberal Protestants before him simply peeled off that worldview, like the husks around a peanut, and seized what was left. Bultmann argued, however, that such a practice is unsound, because arbitrary, and that the biblical images must be interpreted — remythologized if you please.

How shall one reinterpret the Bible? By what criterion shall one remythologize? Here enters Bultmann's second principle. Living through the intellectual and social — not to mention ethical — upheaval caused by World War I and the collapse of liberal progressivism, Bultmann turned to the existentialist thought of his day. What was crucial, however, was that he grounded his interpretation in the New Testament itself. He saw the book as a demand for decision: a decision for faith, integrity, God. When Jesus came preaching that the kingdom of God was in the midst of his hearers, he was neither proclaiming his kingship, nor predicting the end of the world. He was announcing that the present must be seen/lived as the end time, that every moment was pregnant with the potential for authenticity. Thus Bultmann had his tools for exegeting and interpreting the New Testament.

Exegesis: The Parable of the Sower

In order to make this essay more concrete, I have chosen a fairly well known parable of Jesus, the Parable of the Sower. Its core is widely held to be authentic. It has the advantage of appearing in all three synoptics; so we can see how it developed. What is more, during its transmission it became the vehicle for the early Church's own search for interpretation and understanding, with particular regard to the parables of Jesus. The parable thus is apt for our consideration.

In studying this parable, I shall trace four steps. First, I will quote Norman Perrin's translation of the parable itself found in Mark 4:3-9. Then I shall deal with the question of what it originally meant, again following Perrin. Third, we shall see how the Gospel of Mark used it to open up the question of why Jesus spoke in parables. Finally, we shall see how Matthew and Luke, following Q, add another authentic statement of Jesus, replacing a motif in Mark with their own agenda. Norman Perrin translates the parable in Mark as follows:

Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among the thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it,

and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. And he said, "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear."¹

Bultmann cites the parable as one whose meaning is irretrievably lost. He does speculate whether it is a "consolation for every man when his labor does not all bear fruit," or "a monologue by Jesus, half of resignation, half of thankfulness," or "an exhortation to the bearers of the divine Word," or "of Jesus' preaching," or simply a statement that not all who hear would be saved.² Perrin, by contrast thinks the parable is easier to understand. He says:

When we recognize the original point as that of the contrast between the handful of seed and the bushels of harvest, and when we set the parable finally in the context of the proclamation of God acting as king in experience of men confronted by the message and ministry of Jesus, . . . the significance of (the) story . . . is surely that of a contrast between present and future: in the present forgiveness but also temptation; here and now table fellowship in the name of the Kingdom of God, but only in anticipation of its richest blessings. Seed time and harvest are well established Jewish metaphors for the work of God in the world and its consummation . . . Jesus . . . looked forward to a consummation to which this (present time) was related as seed-time to harvest.³

Bultmann's attempts to understand focused on the contrast of the soils, Perrin's on the contrast of seed versus harvest. It is not necessary for us to decide which — if either — is correct. A parable is susceptible to more than one meaning. These suggestions give us some very good clues as to the original meaning of this agricultural parable. Let us turn now to see what happened to it.

We may be sure that the disciples of Jesus for some reason or other remembered the parable and used it in their preaching. If its meaning to Bultmann was obscure, he may not have been alone. The disciples too may have found it ambiguous, or else appropriate for apologetics, and gave it a particular meaning. The interpretation of the parable found in Mark 4:13-20 allegorizes it. The sower is still not specified, but one might guess it is the preaching community. The seeds that fall along the path are beset by Satan before the seed (the potential converts) can germinate. The seeds that fall on rocky soil are the sympathetic listeners who believe at first, but when persecution comes, they recant. The seeds among the thorns are people who cannot renounce the world and its pleasures, while those seeds that fell in the good soil are the true believers. Gone are the emphases

upon different soils and the contrast between seed-time and harvest. In their place is the experience of the Christian community in its quasi-successful efforts to evangelize.

We perhaps owe to the Markan tradition Mark 4:10-12, written along with 4:1-2, the setting of the parable. The chapter opens with a public proclamation, but the explanation is private. Mark 4:10-12 functions not only to narrow the audience to the disciples, but also to show that the believers have the key to unlock the secrets to Jesus' mysteries. Indeed the reason Jesus taught in parables is now said to have been to code the gospel, so that the outsiders would hear but not understand.

This last function betrays a littleness of spirit on the part of a ridiculed, even persecuted, community, the teachings of whose Master had been scorned. Certainly the parables of Jesus were public and clear, but the approved interpretation of the community was allowed only to the select inner group.

At this point we confront what Werner Kelber has called the point of tension between the oral and the written form of language. In an oral performance the audience and the speaker interact, and each telling of a story or parable is new and fresh. A gesture toward a field or an inflection in the voice gives a new meaning to an old recitation. When, however, the parable is reduced to writing, it takes a fixed form. Its context is the context provided by the writer, who thereafter loses all control over the meaning.⁴ Hence, the written gospel attempts to provide *the* correct meaning, or at least a *correct* meaning (in contrast with *mistaken* meanings).

Still the Synoptic tradition kept building. The reference to seeing but not perceiving is actually an allusion to an Old Testament text, Isaiah 6:9-10. That verse had to do with Isaiah's ministry. He was commissioned to a futile task, to preach to a people who would not listen. Mark 4:12 applies that Old Testament text to the early church's context to claim that Jesus taught in parables to prevent non-believers from understanding. The Gospel of Matthew carries that understanding a step further. Recognizing the allusion to Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew quotes the passage. Characteristic of Matthew's Gospel is the insistence that things happened in the life of Jesus to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. This allusion from Mark 4 is thus turned into another fulfillment passage in the New Testament.

Yet one more development is discernible in the growth of this tradition. If you will notice, Mark 4:13 criticizes the disciples for not understanding. Obviously this critique originally provided the opportunity for Jesus (i.e. the early church) to "explain" the parable. As we have seen, however, Mark 4:10-12 and the parallel messages Matthew 13:10-15, Luke 8:9-10, have argued that the disciples

(i.e., the not-so-early church) as opposed to non-believers do understand. Thus Matthew and Luke omit the critique of the disciples found in Mark 4:13: "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?" In place of this negative query, both Matthew and Luke supply another authentic statement of Jesus, probably taken from Q. The saying in Matthew 13:16-17 and Luke 10:23-24 has lost its original context, though its purpose is clearly to compliment an audience for seeing something Jesus has been explaining. The saying takes on a limited reference, namely the disciples, from its present context in Matthew and Luke so that now it is the disciples who see and hear. This "correcting" of the portrait of Mark 4:13 Bultmann calls the "Christianizing" of the portrait of the disciples.⁵

To recapitulate, we have seen a parable about sowing seeds at different stages in its history. At first it was a folk parable drawing on the life of the peasants to whom it was delivered, and was taken up in the preaching of the church because of its usefulness. Once reduced to writing, however, it became a polemical vehicle to show that those in the communities behind Mark and the other Synoptics had genuine insight in the teachings of Jesus not available to others, perhaps some Christians, certainly not to unbelievers. Finally we saw the work of Luke and Matthew, especially in toning down the criticism of the disciples, incorporating another saying from Q and making explicit biblical allusions. We have done what we can to uncover what it meant at various levels of the tradition; we now turn to see what it means today.

Interpretation: The Parable of the Sower

You may have already begun to wonder why, if Perrin can tell us what Jesus originally meant by the Parable of the Sower, anyone would want to search further for the meaning of the story. Indeed, critical scholars of an earlier era thought that their goal was to strip away all the later accretions and interpretations of the church and the gospel writers and lay bare the teachings of Jesus. Such a view is simplistic for several reasons. (1) It is by no means certain that Perrin has uncovered the original meaning. (2) Indeed, as I pointed out before, it is not even certain that a parable would have only one meaning; each oral recitation would give it different nuances, and parabolic language is by nature polyvalent. (3) Most importantly, the parable was not addressed to us. It was, as I mentioned, addressed to Palestinian peasants and delivered in Aramaic. If the parable speaks to contemporary Christians, it does so, not directly, but because it illuminates in its specificity the general human predicament. It captures a general truth that can partially transcend the times and

cultures that produced it. If it can do that, it is a remarkable piece of literature.

The process of interpretation for such an ancient text must then bridge a time/language/worldview/cultural gap that is immense. Generally speaking such an effort may be represented by a simple algebraic-type ratio. We may say:

$$\frac{\text{The word of Jesus}}{\text{His time}} = \frac{X}{\text{Our time}}$$

The task of the interpreter is to solve for X, the interpreted word of Jesus.

I am not aware that Bultmann ever actually interpreted Mark 4:3-9. Nevertheless, this fool will rush in where that angel feared to tread. I shall attempt to tell you what Bultmann would have said about the meaning of Mark 4:3-9, provided that he had agreed with Perrin that the parable deals with the contrast between now and the future.

Bultmann has argued that Jesus was no apocalypticist; that is, he did not look forward to an imminent end-of-the-world cataclysm and a Future Age. Instead, Bultmann contends Jesus announced the inbreak of the End-time within history. Jesus' message was a call to live as if the end were now, to live each moment fully and authentically.

Perrin argued that the Parable of the Sower pointed to a consummation to which the present was related as sowing time to harvest time. Bultmann would question only the term "consummation." He would argue that the parable contrasts the present which is with the future that is possible, if one decides for authenticity, that is, for the life of faith. The present is, as Perrin contended, beset with temptation; but for one who has eyes to see and the faith to commit, the eschaton lies just ahead and within history. The Parable of the Sower then might be interpreted as an exhortation, encouraging the believer to excel in faith and not lose hope.

Conclusion

Biblical scholarship attempts by various means to understand and apply the insights of ancient texts to modern life. I have perhaps suggested to you more unanimity than actually exists, but for critical scholars — as distinct from more traditional scholars — the questions and methods are the same, even if the answers are sometimes different.

One may ask, however, about the understanding of Scripture as revelation if it is to be interpreted by canons not unlike those used in other disciplines. That is, conservative folks sometimes object that liberals treat the Bible like any other book. To that charge modern

scholars, if they bother at all, respond in two ways: (1) whatever else the Bible may be, it is first literature, and (2) intellectually, here I stand, I can do no other.

Footnotes

¹Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering The Teachings of Jesus* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 155.

²Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, translated by John Marsh (Revised edition: New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 199-200.

³Perrin, p. 156.

⁴Warner Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 23-31.

⁵Bultmann, p. 187.

Wanting, Desiring, and Valuing

Mitchell Staude

The word "desire" may be said to be a concertina-word: it moves between narrower and wider senses. But the widest sense, which I have employed, is a perfectly legitimate sense. There is *a* perfectly good sense in which everything we do, meaning to do it, is what we want to do, and in which all desires to act which we do not act from are also things we want to do.

D.M. Armstrong¹

The natural position to be opposed is this: since all motivated action must result from the operation of some motivating factor within the agent, and since belief cannot by itself produce action, it follows that a desire of the agent must always be operative if the action is to be genuinely his.

Thomas Nagel¹

There are conflicting interpretations . . . of what it is to want to do something. In a relatively strong sense a man wants to do something if he looks forward to it with pleasure or expects to enjoy doing it; it is in this sense that a man does not want to do as he ought. In a weaker sense a man wants to perform some action simply in so far as he thinks that, for whatever reason, it is the thing to do; it is in this sense that a man does want to do as he ought, just because he thinks he ought to do it.

Don Locke¹

Introduction

Before the rise of psychology as a discipline separate from philosophy, the question of the nature of human nature was part of the realm of metaphysics. Theories of human nature attempted to analyze human experiences and activities as due to certain capacities and powers that make an individual a human.² These various powers and capacities were classified under two headings: the conative were those by which a person is moved to act, the cognitive were those by which one knows and understands. Cognitive powers and capacities were usually grouped together and referred to as Reason; conative powers and capacities, however, went by many names: passions, desires, impulses, appetites, instinct, volitions, will. Sometimes there

was mention of a third category of capacities, the affective — those by which one is affected by external stimuli. Usually, however, these capacities were also seen to be either cognitive (e.g., perception) or conative (e.g., passion). Much of the history of psychology up to the nineteenth century involves discussions and disagreements concerning how the cognitive and conative are usually related and whether this relationship could be altered.

Historically, the debate over the proper relationship between the cognitive and the conative was more than an exercise in metaphysical theorizing. Discussions of how the cognitive and the conative are actually, or usually, related often led to discussions of whether this relationship was the one most conducive to human happiness. The proper (sometimes seen as distinct from the actual) relationship between the two was seen as providing a metaphysical foundation for ethical and political theory. There were two major positions on the proper relation between the cognitive and the conative: rationalism and voluntarism.³

“Rationalism,” in one of its senses, applies to those theories of human nature maintaining that reason is capable of motivating a person to act — in other words, that some cognitive states have conative powers. Plato is considered the paradigm rationalist. His characterizations of the “types of souls” ranging from the tyrant to the philosopher provide illustrations of the different ways in which reason can be related to the passions, appetites, and desires.⁴ For Plato, unhappiness, immorality, and civil injustice are the results of an improper relationship between reason (cognitive) and the non-rational conative aspects of human nature. Kant’s distinction between motivation by duty and motivation by inclination can also be cited as an instance of rationalism.⁵ For Kant, genuine moral behavior is only possible when one is motivated by reason, rather than by some non-cognitive influence.

While rationalistic theories of human nature attribute conative powers to cognitive states, voluntaristic theories keep the cognitive separate from the conative. Psychological voluntarism is the general theory of human motivation that all humans are motivated to pursue the ends they do pursue by non-rational, non-cognitive influences and that *if* reason has any contributory role at all, it is simply to determine which are the best means to go about pursuing those ends. Thomas Hobbes and David Hume have probably been the most influential proponents of this view.⁶ For Hobbes, all human action and feeling stem from Desire and Aversion, and the appreciation of this is essential for the foundation of morality and the establishment and preservation of civil society. Hume sees all human action, including moral action, springing from what he calls the Passions,

and he presents the clearest articulation of the voluntaristic position on the relation between the cognitive and the conative: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."⁷

One consequence of psychological voluntarism, since reason has no function in determining ends, is that no desire or passion and no goal pursued are rational or irrational. Certain goals may well be imprudent, that is, the achieving of that goal would involve or result in the frustration of many other desires, but wanting that goal is in itself not irrational. This consequence of psychological voluntarism leads to axiological voluntarism. Since no end pursued is either rational or irrational, and since ends, goals, are simply the objects of desire or passion, it follows that the value an end has is not something recognized, discovered, or determined by reason but is merely a function of whether it satisfies some motivating influence. And if the value an end has is solely determined by its being an object of a motivating influence, the question of whether the end is good or bad *in itself*, that is, independently of it being desired or willed, is meaningless.⁸ Hobbes and Spinoza are the classic proponents of axiological voluntarism and Spinoza offers the clearest statement of this position: "We neither strive for, wish, seek, nor desire anything because we think it to be good, but on the contrary, we adjudge a thing to be good because we strive for, wish, seek, or desire it."⁹

Today, the importance of psychological voluntarism is immense. In psychology and psychiatry its influence is almost omnipresent. It is that core of existentialism that lead critics of this view of man to brand it "irrationalism." It is an essential ingredient of much of Protestant theology since Kierkegaard and is making inroads into Catholic theology as well. It has also become involved in the controversy concerning whether one ought to believe something on faith, as is evident from the title of the discussion of this issue by William James: "The Will to Believe."¹⁰

In the writings of Anglo-American analytic philosophers, psychological voluntarism is quite prevalent, although the notions of impulse, instinct, volition, and will are practically anathema. Passions, appetites, and aversions, along with those phenomena that non-analytic philosophers call volitions, are usually either analyzed in terms of desires or simply reclassified as such — as one philosopher puts it: "In old-fashioned language, the Will is not a separate faculty from Desire."¹¹ In addition to reducing most conative factors to desire, the voluntarism found in analytic philosophy uses "desire" and "want" interchangeably; illustrating this usage is D.M. Armstrong's statement of voluntarism, perhaps the clearest statement of it in analytical philosophy:

The word "desire" may be said to be a concertina-word: it moves between narrower and wider senses. But the widest sense, which I have employed, is a perfectly legitimate sense. There is a perfectly good sense in which everything we do, meaning to do it, is what we want to do, and in which all desires to act which we do not act from are also things we want to do.¹²

There are, then, two features of the voluntarism dominant in contemporary analytical philosophy: (1) the conative is reduced to desire — desire is the source of all motivation and feeling — and (2) "desire" is used in the widest sense and is interchangeable with "want."

In view of this new form of voluntarism, the relationship between desires (or wants) and behavior is the core of all philosophical issues connected with human action. Some attempts at resolving, some at dissolving, the "freewill" problem maintain that free action is not incompatible with caused behavior, but rather is to be contrasted instead with coerced action. On this view, free actions are those actions resulting from the agent's desires, not from either the wants of others or from external forces acting on the agent's body; free action is action motivated by desire. In the fields of value theory and ethics, hedonism, ethical egoism, and some forms of utilitarianism are often founded on the voluntaristic theory of psychological egoism: the theory that all human actions are motivated not simply by desire but by a certain kind of desire. In theories of responsibility and in philosophy of action, the distinction between intentional actions and unintentional actions is explained in terms of the agent's wants, which leads to analyses of intentional action in terms of actions generated by wants: intentional action is action motivated by desire. (When intentional action is viewed in this way, the analysis of free action as action motivated by desire will have to be modified: for not all intentional acts are free acts.)

For the form of voluntarism prevalent in analytic philosophy, the issue of the relation between the cognitive and the conative becomes the issue of the relation between reason and desire. At the center of the question of what role reason plays, or should play, in directing human behavior are the concepts of rational action and of acting for a reason. Two different theories of the relation between reason and desire have gained ascendancy: these can be called the Humean and the Davidsonian.¹³ On the Humean view, reasons are beliefs of a certain sort (either value beliefs or beliefs about means to something else), which are incapable of motivating by themselves. No matter how many reasons a person may have for doing something, A, unless he *also* wants to do A, he will not do it: desires must be added to

reasons for there to be motivation. The Davidsonian position agrees with the Humean that beliefs are incapable of motivating by themselves and that desires are necessary for motivation, but it denies that reasons are incapable of motivating. Reasons can be motivating on the Davidsonian account, for what it is to have a reason for doing something, A, is (1) to believe that doing A will have a certain property or be a certain kind of action *and* (2) to want¹⁴ to do actions that have this property or are of this kind. Reasons can be motivating without *additional* desire because having a reason is already to have a desire. For both positions, rational action is action motivated by desire.

Consider the following schema for a voluntaristic view of human nature. There are certain basic or foundational desires that we as humans share (our human nature). A foundational desire has as its object the actualization (exemplification) of a certain property ϕ by the desirer, e.g. pleasure, reduction of tension, avoidance of pain.¹⁵ When a person has (or acquires) a belief that objects or activities of type F have property ϕ , a desire for A's is generated (and remains dispositional) a part of that person as long as the belief and the foundational desire do). The person now has a "general" desire for A's. If the person acquires a belief of a particular object x that it exemplifies A, a desire for object x is generated. It is by a process with this structure that desires for particular objects — or "particular" desires — come into being. But most desires that we have are not immediately satisfiable; we need to strive to satisfy them. Hence, beliefs as to *how* to satisfy them are needed. When the agent realized that only by doing an act of type A will the desire be satisfied, a want to do an act of type A is generated.¹⁶ But even this may not be enough, for an act of type A may not be something the agent can do without doing something else first. And so a belief concerning how (the means) to do A is required. This "want-generated-by-belief" process continues until the person reaches a belief that by doing *N now* he can start pursuing his goal. This belief generates the want to do *N now*, which in turn — unless something interferes — motivates (causes) the person to do *N*.

This is a very powerful conception of the structure of motivation. It gives some account of how beliefs and desires interact in the production of action and of how general desires can issue in specific acts. It provides a basis for an account of rational action — an account that can distinguish between the rationality of a person's behavior given that person's belief-desire system and the rationality of that belief-desire system itself. It can distinguish between free and unfree actions by claiming that whenever an agent's beliefs as to how to satisfy a basic desire are generated by someone else using force,

coercion, or various forms of psychological manipulation, the agent "unfreely" comes to want to do that which he (she) would not have wanted to do if such interference had not occurred and that actions that are the causal result of this unfree want are themselves unfree. Intentional action on this account would be acts of a person that are immediately caused by a want to do those acts.¹⁷ Some of the problems of deviant causal chains that plague many theories of action are avoided, for there is very little room for deviance from wanting to do *A* at time *t*₁, to doing *A* at *t*₂. This conception of action seems also to get some support from the widest sense of wanting, by providing an explanation for why there should be such a sense: every intentional action can be said to be wanted because each act that is intentional is caused by a want to do that act.¹⁸

I will call theories of motivation having this structure stringent voluntarism.¹⁹ Stringent voluntarism consists of four theses: (1) desire (or some other kind of non-cognitive state) is the source of all motivation; (2) non-fundamental desires are generated by beliefs interacting with more general desires; (3) action results when wants to do particular acts at particular times are generated; and (4) the relation between these specific wants and the acts they produce is that of cause to effect.

It is my view that given a straightforward interpretation of the four theses of strict voluntarism, and treating (3) and (4) as one thesis, all are false. But it is difficult to establish the *falsity* of a philosophical view and I am not sure that strict voluntarism can be *proven* false. What I shall try to do instead is articulate an alternative view that (1) denies the major theses of strict voluntarism; (2) can account for the same phenomena, with plausibility comparable to the denied theses; and (3) point out some phenomena that strict voluntarism does not handle as well.

If there is a distinction between wider and narrower senses of "desire," then it would seem that the nature of the relationships between desire and reason and between desire and action will depend upon what sense of "desire" is being used. With rare exception,²⁰ analytical philosophers use the widest sense in their discussions of these crucial relationships.²¹ This widest sense is that sense in which a person can be said to have wanted to do anything he intentionally did — for if he hadn't wanted to do it, he would not have done it. First, I shall show that this widest sense of "desire" or "want"²² does not contribute any plausibility to strict voluntarism and to the extent that it is thought that it does, how it operates in explanations of actions has been misunderstood. Second, I shall argue that when the widest sense is used, we cannot understand what an agent is claiming when he claims either to have not wanted to do what he intentionally did do

or to have wanted to do something else *more* than he wanted to do what he actually did do. Third, I shall maintain that attempts to defend strict voluntarism by making distinctions between intrinsic wantings and extrinsic wantings and between really wanting and wanting all things considered will not work. I shall do this latter by arguing that the way we experience and the way we talk about motivational conflicts are not adequately captured by these distinctions. I shall conclude by claiming that many cases of motivational conflict are best accounted for by a view of motivational incompatible with strict (or even moderate) voluntarism.

II.

The Widest Sense of "Wanting"

The widest sense of "wanting" is such that for any act that an agent intentionally performs, (1) there are contexts in which he can be said to have wanted to do that act, and (2) a want-explanation can be given. If the plausibility of strict voluntarism is to be undercut, we need an account of why it is every intentional action can be said to be wanted and what is the relation between that want and that action, an account that does not view this relation as that of cause to effect.

Consider the following explanatory stories.

A. John wanted to make Mary happy. Because he wanted to make her happy, he gave her some flowers. Because he wanted to give her some flowers this evening, he bought some flowers. Because he wanted to buy some flowers, he went to the florist. Because he wanted to go to the florist before it closed, he left work early. Because he wanted to leave work early, he went to work early. Because he wanted to go to work early, he got up at 6:00 a.m.

B. Bill, who was tired and sleepy, wanted a cup of coffee. He wanted a cup of coffee because he wanted to be alert for class this afternoon. He wanted to be alert for class this afternoon because he wanted to do well on the exam next week. He wanted to do well on the exam next week because he wanted to get a good grade in the course. He wanted to get a good grade because he wanted to keep his grade average high.

In both stories, there is a chain of relative ends, each end is cited to explain something done, or wanted, as a means to it and is in turn explained by citing some further end. And although the first link in each chain is not viewed as being, or involving, a relative end, one can imagine other actions for which it would be: e.g., John's going to bed early the night before, Bill's wanting change for a dollar. Nor is the

last cited end necessarily a final end: John could have wanted to make Mary happy so he could invite some friends over to watch the game; Bill could have wanted to keep his grade average high because he wanted to qualify for a fellowship. With chains of relative ends like A, (1) every action, except the first, is not only explained by a want but is also said to be wanted *and* (2) what explains the agent's action also explains his wanting to do that action. This generates chains of motivational explanations such as B, which involves explanations not of an agent's actions, but his wants.

In these chains of motivational explanations an agent's behavior is explained by showing how he was motivated to do it as a means to something else. An action is explained either by citing something else the agent was motivated to pursue or by claiming that he was motivated to perform that act as an end-in-itself. Such explanations do not reveal what it is that is motivating the agent to pursue the goal he is motivated to pursue. If there is a sense of "wanting" that is used to refer to factors that motivate, that initiate a purposive pursuit of a goal, this might be called " 'wanting' in the motivating sense"; as it stands, the sense of "want" used in the motivational explanations thus far is only a "motivated sense," that is, to say that an agent wanted to do something, in the widest sense, is to say that he was motivated to do it.

Stories A and B, when examined closely, also reveal a very important feature of motivational explanations and of the widest, the motivated, sense of "wanting." It is obvious that "_____ is a means to . . ." is a transitive relation. This transitivity is embedded in motivational explanations: if John does x in order to do y and does y in order to do z, then John does x in order to do z.²³ Stories A and B also reveal this transitivity in motivational explanations: in both, it is the agent's being motivated to pursue some end (e.g., making Mary happy, keeping one's grade average high) that explains the agent being motivated to pursue or do those things that are means to that end. Motivational influence is transitive; it is transferred across the relation from end to means. Following Nagel,²⁴ I call this characteristic the transitivity of motivational influence.

It is the transitivity of motivational influence that underlies the various links in purposive explanatory chains. But this characteristic does not explicitly reveal the immediate cause of an intentional act. "John gave Mary flowers because he wanted to make her happy" explains John's behavior, in light of the transitivity of motivational influence, in the following way: John was motivated to make Mary happy (by what he was motivated is not given) and because of this he was motivated to give her flowers and did. Not only does this explanation not cite what was motivating John to make Mary happy,

it does not cite the immediate motivating influence behind his action such that he was motivated to give her flowers rather than, for example, take her to dinner.

Although there is no explicit mention of the immediate motivating factor of John's behavior, that factor is implicit in our understanding of the want-explanation. The implicit factor in all purposive explanation is belief. If John gave Mary flowers because he wanted to make her happy, then John believed that giving her flowers would make her happy, or would be a means to it. And he would not have given her the flowers if he had not had this belief. In some sense of "implies," then,

Agent S does act A because he wants to do Y

implies

Agent S believes that doing A is a means to Y.

The beliefs an agent has about the means to his ends are a crucial element in motivation. In fact, one can give a motivational explanation of a person's behavior solely in terms of his beliefs: for example, John gave Mary flowers because he believed it would make her happy. In some sense of the word "implies"

Agent S does A because he believes doing A is a means to Y
implies

Agent S wants to do Y

The transitivity of motivational influence is such that motivational influence is transferred across the relation from end to means — but transferred to what? When we are motivated to pursue or bring about some end, beliefs (whether newly acquired or already held) concerning more immediate ends that would lead to or facilitate the bringing about of the final goal acquire, have transferred to them, the motivational influence to direct our behavior towards these more immediate ends. Such a belief is able to motivate a person only when it occurs within the context of the person already being motivated to pursue the end.

That sense of "wanting" that applies to all intentional actions, the widest sense, refers not to a spring of action, to something that moves a person to act, but rather to a state in which an agent is being moved to act. Wants, therefore, are not what moves one to act intentionally, but are states of a person being moved to behave: as Don Locke puts it, wanting "is the causing, not the cause."²⁵

If the above account is plausible, then it provides a challenge to two of the central theses of strict voluntarism: the thesis concerning the generation of desire and the thesis concerning the causal role of generated desire. But these theses are not necessary for a voluntaristic theory of motivation; strict voluntarism can be modified. Instead of having "generated desires" separate from the beliefs, a modest voluntarism can allow that all such desires are states in which the

agent is being influenced by the relevant beliefs. But these cognitive states have only the power of modifying motivational direction, not of initiating. Foundational desires are the source, and the only source of this motivational influence.²⁶

III.

Voluntarism and Doing What One Doesn't Want to Do

Voluntarism (strict and modest) not only uses the widest sense of "wanting" to support its claims about the generation of actions, it also uses it to reject the claim of rationalism that there are some things we are motivated to do but we are not motivated by desire: "but you would not have done it if you had not wanted to do it" is the usual response. Using the widest sense of "wanting," this response is true—but all it says is that if you had not been motivated to do what you did you would not have done it. This latter claim is not very informative and certainly cannot be used as a refutation of rationalism.

There are additional problems with using just the widest sense of "wanting" in one's motivational views. For one, what is being claimed when someone says that he didn't want to do what he intentionally did do? Consider the following case.

Case One: The Reluctant Exerciser

Fred wants to be healthy. He also wants to become healthy. He realizes that the only way to become healthy is to do three things: (1) change his eating habits, (2) quit smoking, and (3) exercise. Although he hates exercising, doesn't want to quit smoking, and loves to eat, he will do all three things necessary to become healthy.

When Fred claims that he doesn't want to quit smoking or that he doesn't want to go jogging at 6:30 a.m. each morning, he cannot be using the widest sense of "wanting"—because he does do these things and hence wants (is motivated) to do them. Hence, he must be using some narrower sense of "wanting." But voluntarism can account for cases like this by distinguishing two narrower senses of wanting. A person can either want or pursue something as an end-in-itself or want something as only a means to achieving something else wanted: the widest sense of "wanting" covers both intrinsic wanting and extrinsic wanting. Often when a person denies of what he did intentionally that it was something he wanted to do, he is denying that he intrinsically wanted to do it.

There are other kinds of cases in which an agent claims to have not wanted to do what he intentionally did do. And some of these cases do not present any problems for voluntarism. Consider the following case.

Case Two: The Disappointed Applicant

Robert wants to become a good philosopher and make some contribution to his field. He believes that the best way to achieve his goal is by being part of a philosophy faculty at a college or university. He wants very much to go to the University of Texas at Austin because he believes he would learn much through working with several members of that philosophy department, whose work he finds stimulating. But he accepts a job at a local community college, for it was the only one offered. Robert does not want to be at this community college, but this is what he will do.

Since what Robert is said to want (to teach at Austin) and what he does but claims not to want are both means to an end, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic wanting is inapplicable to this contrast. Usually, the distinction between *really wanting* and wanting *all things considered* is introduced to explicate this kind of contrast. The notion of wanting all things considered is the motivated sense applied to actions: at the time of acting one always performs that act one is most effectively motivated to do. This distinction indicates that some factor in the agent's situation, as he sees it, has interfered with the effectiveness of one of his wants. The interfering factor in this case is Robert's (correct) belief that he did not have (since he was not given) the opportunity to teach at Austin. Both the "all things considered" qualification and the contrast with "really" wanting serves to point out that (1) until something interfered, one had been more strongly motivated to do something other than what one did, and (2) if that interfering factor had not appeared, the agent would not have acted as he did but would have done what he is said to have really wanted to do.

Neither type of case — the reluctant exerciser and the disappointed applicant — shows that voluntarism has difficulty in making sense of not wanting to do what one does. Although strict voluntarism has had to be modified, nothing said so far has challenged the basic voluntaristic program. That is about to change.

IV.

Aversions: The Sexual Context as "Illustrative" of Desire *Case Three: The Rape*

On the night of 21 August 1974, Anne Tonglet and Araceli Castellano were camping in a pine forest on the Mediterranean shore near Marseilles. About 1:00 a.m., they were awakened when three men entered their tent, brandishing stones, and began to beat them. After being beaten and threatened with death, the women agreed to engage in sexual activities with these men. What followed

was described, on the one hand, by the women, as a "five-hour nightmare," while on the other hand, by the men, as "five-hours of joyous group sex . . . since in the end the girls agreed. "The women, fearing death, intentionally engaged in various activities and pretended to be very friendly as the men left, afraid that they would not leave or that they would kill them before leaving. The intentional behavior of the women throughout that morning was later used by the men's lawyer as refuting the women's charge of rape: "a non-consenting woman cannot be forced to practice certain caresses."²⁷

The Tonglet-Castellano case can be used not only to illustrate a case in which it makes sense to deny that one did not want to do what one did do but also how the widest sense of "wanting" can be used to make very misleading statements. In the widest sense of "wanting," they wanted to do what they did, for they intentionally did it; and yet the position taken by the men's attorney that the women wanted to have sex with them because they actively participated is surely mistaken. Nor is the distinction between wanting all things considered and really wanting helpful. What the women would be said to really want to do is go back to sleep unmolested; but they were much more strongly motivated to do what they didn't want to do than they were to simply go back to sleep unmolested.

Even though the women intentionally engaged in sexual activity, rather than continuing to struggle or even simply remaining passive (for both would have been seen by the men as resistance), they were forced to do so, they had no choice.²⁸ They were not simply forced to *act*, they were forced to *want* to act. By denying that they wanted to do what they did, by charging the men with rape, the women are pointing out that their being motivated to do what they did was forced upon them by the threat of death.

One way in which the notion of intrinsic wanting might be applied to this case is to point out that Tonglet and Castellano wanted to avoid being further harmed and did what they did in order to avoid that; thus the end they were pursuing, the object of their desire, is said to be "the avoidance of further harm." But explaining someone's behavior by saying that the purpose of it was "the avoidance of Y" places that behavior into an avoidance, not a pursuit, pattern; it does not identify as a goal of pursuit behavior something called "the avoidance of Y." "Avoidances," whatever they are, are not something a person pursues; states-of-affairs, actions, and activities, on the other hand, are the kinds of things a person will sometimes pursue and sometimes avoid.²⁹

The transitivity of motivational influence may, and often does,

generate avoidance motivation. If John wants to invite his friends to his house to watch the game on T.V. and believes that if he does anything to irritate Mary, he won't be able to have his friends over, he will be motivated to avoid doing anything he believes might irritate Mary. But the avoidance motivation in the rape case is not generated by pursuit motivation. What Tonglet and Castellano were motivated to avoid was not something they believed to be incompatible with achieving some goal they were motivated to pursue. Painful things, harmful things, and deadly things are not things a person avoids because they are believed to be a hindrance to the achieving of some goal; they are things that are avoided simply because of what they are: they are avoided as "ends in themselves."

There is a class of actions and of wants that are explained not in terms of some end one is motivated to pursue — some end one is attracted to, as it were — but in terms of an "end" one is motivated to avoid — an end one is repelled by. There are purposive patterns of behavior that have as their goal the avoidance of such a repellent end (which, for lack of a better word, will hereafter be called "repellents" rather than "ends"). The rape case illustrates that there is one class of repellents that are in some way associated with pain and are avoided *because* they are so associated. In order to keep this form of motivation distinct from both pursuit motivation and any other forms of avoidance motivation there may be, motivational states of avoiding repellents associated with pain can be called *Aversions*.

The force of the rape case lies in its implicit reliance on the moral difference between engaging in sexual activities because one is threatened with violence if one doesn't and engaging in sexual activities because one wants to. This difference, one might argue, does hint at a narrower sense of "wanting," for surely when one is said to be engaging in sexual activities because one wants to, something more is being said than simply one is motivated to do so — and that something more is that one desires to. But all "because one wants to" excludes when it is contrasted with "because one was forced to" or "because one was threatened" is precisely that one wasn't forced to or threatened. That Janet's having sex with Bill was not an instance of rape but was done because she wanted to gives no clues to Janet's motivation for doing it *except* it wasn't done out of fear: all that it indicates is that the goal she is pursuing by acting is not one forced upon her by the will of another. One does not know whether she is acting out of desire, out of curiosity, out of pity, out of gratitude, seeking revenge against her husband, or paying an old debt. Thus using the notion of engaging in sexual activity because one wants to, and not because one is being forced to, does not utilize the narrower sense of "wanting" that applies only to ends.

But this notion of engaging in sexual activity because one wants to *does* lead to a narrower sense of “wanting,” once it is realized that the question “as opposed to what?” can have different answers. Instead of contrasting doing something because one wants to with doing something because one is forced to, one can contrast it with other kinds of motivational influences. If Bill is curious as to why Janet has consented to having sex with him, she may try to reassure him that she is doing it not because she is curious about what it’s like to do it with someone other than her husband, nor because she feels sorry for him, nor because she’s angry with her husband, but because she really wants to do it. The same notion of wanting is working when Janet tells her friend that she doesn’t really want to have sex with her husband anymore, but that she does so anyway because she thinks it’s her duty, or she doesn’t want to hurt him, or she doesn’t want him to walk out. It is to cases of genuine motivational conflict that our attention now turns.

V.

On Not Wanting to do What One Intrinsically Wants to Do: The Case of Pleasure Motivation

Case Four: The Depressed Friend

William has been looking forward all week long to attending a Sherlock Holmes film festival on Saturday, which will feature two films with Arthur Wontner that are rarely shown and that he has never seen. So that spending all day at this festival would not conflict with his job responsibilities, for the past week everything else has been sacrificed in order to get all of his work done by Friday. On Saturday morning, as he is getting ready to leave for the festival, he receives a phone call from a close friend. This friend suffers from occasional fits of depression during which she loses touch with reality and becomes a danger to herself; she is in one of those now and asks if he would keep her company during the day. Having done it before, William knows what it will be like if he goes — a protracted, tedious, and exasperating attempt to convince her of her own worth and to dissuade her from suicide, an experience that will leave him so psychologically exhausted that he will have great difficulty concentrating for days. He has a choice as to how he’ll spend his day, a choice he doesn’t like to make, a choice he wishes he didn’t have to make. Realizing, however, that at the present time he is probably the only one to whom she can turn, he agrees to come over. But although William chooses to spend the

day with his friend, he doesn't want to. He doesn't want to do his duty; he wants to attend the Sherlock Holmes festival.³⁰

When William claims that he didn't want to do what he did do he cannot, of course, be using the widest sense; but neither is he using the narrower sense connected with intrinsic wanting. For in denying that he wanted to spend the afternoon with his friend, that he wanted to do his duty, he is not simply saying that he was motivated to do so as a means rather than as an end-in-itself; there was nothing further that he wanted to accomplish by doing his duty. Keeping his friend company and from committing suicide were not things he hoped to accomplish by doing his duty; accomplishing them was his duty. And whether one describes what he intrinsically wants as doing his duty or as keeping his friend from harming herself, William could intelligibly and sincerely claim both that he doesn't want to have to do this, this evening, *and* that he doesn't want to do this at all this evening.

The distinction between wanting all things considered and really wanting also fails to capture the contrast being made in this case. To say that going to see the films is what William really wanted to do is not simply to say that that is what he would have done if his friend hadn't called, although it is what he would have done if she hadn't. One can imagine a situation in which he was going to spend the entire day drawing up a proposal, which he doesn't like to do very much. In one sense, he really wants to get that proposal out of the way — in the sense that he was strongly motivated to do so. In both cases, he would rather spend the day doing what he had planned on doing before he had received the call; in both cases, the original motivating influence is overridden by the call of duty. And yet there is something different about William's wanting to see the Sherlock Holmes films when compared with wanting to spend the day writing a proposal. When William claims he really wants to go to see the films or that he wants to see the films more than he wants to visit his friend, something else is involved in wanting than simply being motivated more strongly one way rather than the other. And when he denies that he wants to do his duty, he is not denying that he is motivated to do so as an end; this again suggests that something is missing, some features his being motivated (wanting) to see the films has that his being motivated (wanting) to visit his friend doesn't have.

There are many indications of William's wanting to see the films; he was willing to do without other things he enjoys so that he would be able to go see them; he had been looking forward to seeing them all week; he had been excited when he first heard about them; he mentioned several times the rare thrill it was to see Holmes come alive before one's eyes, something that only happened in Wontner's films.

After he had decided to spend the day with his friend, there were indications that he didn't really want to do so; he certainly wasn't looking forward to it and he thought it would be a joyless, difficult time. Clearly, the central factor involved in this case is *pleasure*.

Pleasure seems to be connected with seeing the films in *two* ways: first, William is pleased and excited about seeing them — he is looking forward to it — and second, he seems to believe that seeing them will be enjoyable. And in just these ways, pleasure is absent from visiting his friend: he is not looking forward to it *and* he believes that it will not be enjoyable. But pleasure is not a mere *additional* factor to William's being motivated to see the films; it is an integral part of his wanting, it makes his wanting what it is — he would not want if that factor were missing.

It would seem, then, that the connection a proposed action has with pleasure can be a relevant factor in an agent's being motivated to perform that action. In the sense that William wanted to see those films, in the sense that is connected to looking forward to something, being excited about it, believing that it will be pleasurable, he certainly did not want to go visit his friend, although in the motivated sense, visiting his friend is what he wanted to do "most."

VI.

On Not Wanting to to What One Intrinsically Wants to Do: The Case of Value Motivation

Case Five: The Philandering Artist

Pierre wants very much to become a good artist and believes he can make some contribution to the advancement of art. Although he is conscientious in completing works specifically commissioned, during the past two years he has produced very little original work of his own. At present there is a painting he wants to do and feels strongly about completing it. But although he believes the painting will be quite important, he spends his time chasing women instead of creating. He doesn't understand his behavior and, in moments of reflection, he despises himself for it. He wants very much to be an artist and to excel at it; he thinks that his project is not only interesting but also has the potential of being noticed. He wants to complete the project and doesn't want to chase women, but this is what he does every chance he gets.

In the history of philosophy, there has been much discussion of situations similar to Pierre's, although these situations were differently described. For some philosophers the issue was whether, and if so, how *akrasia* was possible: roughly, *akrasia* occurs when a person

does not do what he believes to be the right thing to do. The classical formulation of the denial of the possibility of *akrasia* is that of Socrates, reported and defended by Plato;³¹ the classical formulation of the anti-Socratic position can be found in the plays of Euripides.³² Christian thinkers, however, were either concerned with a different phenomenon or described it differently; the debate over weakness of the will concerns the question: How is it possible to want to do that which one knows is good and yet not do it? The classical formulation of this problem is presented by St. Paul: "I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I do."³³ Pierre's situation seems to be one of weakness of the will.

How does Pierre view the two activities in question? Creating art, and doing it well, has been his ambition for years; for him, it is the most worthwhile activity in which to be engaged. When asked what he does or is interested in, he begins to talk about art; whenever he is in a less than frivolous conversation, he introduces issues involving art. Of the historical and contemporary figures he admires most, the majority are either artists or persons known for their appreciation and support of art. He is pleased with those artistic abilities he has so far developed and is proud of those achievements he has made. Chasing women, however, is not something he likes to talk about nor is it something he admires in the behavior of others. He doesn't consider it a worthwhile or meaningful endeavor, no matter how successful. He is ashamed when he hears his colleagues making jokes about him and "his women" and in moments of reflection, he despises himself for his behavior. All of these various attitudes have something in common: value judgments. What distinguishes his being motivated to create from his being motivated to chase women is that the former is connected to his values, while the latter is incompatible with them. But Pierre's values are not simply an additional factor to his being motivated to create — as if he wants, in the widest sense, to create *and*, in addition, values it as well — but rather they are an integral part of his wanting; they make his wanting what it is — for if his values were not involved in the way that they are, he would not have the wants that he has.³⁴ Apparently, the connection that an activity or action has with the agent's values can be a factor in the agent being motivated to engage in that activity.

VII.

Desiring and Valuing

The depressed friend and the philandering artist cases are illustrations of that perennial paradigm of motivational conflict, alternatively characterized as "pleasure versus the good," "inclination versus duty," "desire versus reason," and "the flesh versus the spirit" — a

motivational conflict that goes straight to the heart of the debate between rationalism and voluntarism.

In the depressed friend case, William's being motivated to see the films is explained in terms of the characteristics he believes that activity has by itself, rather than in terms of any relation it has to some other act, activity or state of affairs. His account of why he wants to see the films is likely to be couched in terms of how enjoyable, exciting, thrilling they are, that is in terms of the pleasurable of experiencing them. Seeing the films is, for William, an end-in-itself. In the philandering artist case, Pierre's chasing women isn't seen by him to further his advance on some goal, but as an exciting and enjoyable activity. On the conscious level, Pierre is motivated to pursue sexual activity with a particular woman as an end and it is an end because he enjoys such activity. It should be clear from these two cases that there are patterns of purposive behavior whose ends are actions, activities, or states-of-affairs that are believed to be in some way associated with pleasure and are pursued as an end because they are so associated.

William is motivated to visit his friend because he believes that it is his duty to do so. Doing his duty, for William, is not seen as being a means to something else nor is it in any way associated with pleasure — in fact he believes the experience will be unpleasant and have unpleasant consequences for him. Pierre is motivated to engage in artistic creation because he believes it to be a noble and worthy endeavor. Creating art is not seen by him as simply being a means of livelihood or for something else. Pierre's case illustrates that the values involved in value-motivation need not be *moral* values; they may be aesthetic values, political values, religious values, intellectual values, etc. But what these cases do show is that there are purposive patterns of behavior whose ends are in some way deemed valuable in themselves and are pursued as ends because they are so esteemed.³⁵

From one's own experience, it should be obvious that pleasure-motivation and value-motivation can come in conflict. Some things a person enjoys doing or that give him pleasure are not things he values — some many even be incompatible with his values, as in Pierre's case. Some things a person does because he values them are not necessarily pleasant — some may even be unpleasant to do. And while one value-motivation may at times conflict with another value-motivation, these conflicts will either be resolved by, or cause a change in, the internal structure of a person's system of values. But value-pleasure conflicts are different in kind, in that their resolution does not depend upon what the agent's value system is — for it is precisely that value system that is being opposed from without. The resolution depends not upon *what* the agent's values are, but on how

strong, motivationally, they are. It seems reasonable to conclude that pleasure-motivation and value-motivation are different, distinct kinds; pursuing and doing that which is (believed) good is not always pleasurable, nor believed to be, while pursuing and doing that which is pleasurable is not always valued.

The way in which "want" is used in the philandering artist's case is different from the way in which it is used in the depressed friend case. But in both cases, the use of "want" is different from the narrower sense of "wanting" indicating intrinsic wants; for although what the agent is said to want to do, in both cases, is wanted as an end, so too is what they are said not to want. In the philandering artist case, the end Pierre is said to want, but which he does not do, is thought to be valuable or worthy while the end he is said not to want, but which he does pursue, is that which is not thought valuable. "Wanting," then, in this case is used to apply only to valued ends. In the depressed friend case, on the other hand, the end William is said to want, but which he does not do, is thought to be in some way pleasurable, while the end he is said not to want, but which he does pursue, is something not associated with pleasure. "Wanting," in this case, is being used to apply only to those ends associated with pleasure; consequently, it is a *different* narrower use of "wanting" than that found in the philandering artist case.

VIII.

Wanting One Thing More Than Another

In neither case (the depressed friend and the philandering artist) does the distinction between intrinsic wanting and extrinsic wanting help us to understand the contrasts being made. Nor is the distinction, made in discussing the rape case, between coerced wanting and uncoerced wanting, helpful. Perhaps, then, the distinction between really wanting and wanting all things considered will be sufficient to handle these two cases.

When a person is described as having really wanted to do other than he did, the most plausible interpretation of the function of "really" is that it is augmentative: what a person is said to "really want" among alternatives is that which he wants *more* and *most*. Using the widest sense of "wanting," to want something more than something else is to be more strongly motivated to do it. Consequently, it does not make sense to say, using the widest sense of "wanting," that an agent wanted to do something *more* than what he did do. What then is being claimed when a person is described as wanting to do one thing more than another?

In the disappointed applicant case, however, *really* wanting or wanting something more than what one did indicates not only a

motivational influence frustrated by one's situation or overridden by a stronger want, but also a want that is strongly felt. The strength of a motivational influence can be exhibited in *two* ways: (1) the degree to which it affects the agent's behavior, and (2) the degree it affects the agent's consciousness — his feelings, thoughts, etc.³⁶ One indication that a person is very strongly motivated to do something is that doing it is what occupies his thoughts and is what he is said to feel strongly about. This criterion for strength in a motivational influence applies to all forms of motivation. This kind of motivational strength is frequently manifested when the motivating force is frustrated. And although the turbulence present in consciousness is likely to be different for value-motivation than for desires, when frustrated there can be turbulence nonetheless. The frustration of a desire (e.g., in the depressed friend case) frequently takes the form of disappointment — the stronger the desire, the more the person is disappointed. The frustration of a value-motivation by some other (non-value) motivational influence (e.g., in the philandering artist case), may reveal itself to consciousness in the form of guilt or of dissatisfaction with one's self — the more value the person places on acting in such a way the more he feels dissatisfaction. In some contexts, then, to talk about wanting something more than another is to talk about that concerning which one is more strongly affected.

When someone who must make a choice is advised to do what he wants to do most, what is he (or she) being told to do? If the widest sense of "wanting" is being used, they are being told to do that which they are the most strongly motivated to do. But when John's wife presented him with the ultimatum to decide which he wanted more, his family or his promotion, she is not asking him to conduct an introspective inquiry into which he was more strongly motivated at the present time to pursue; she apparently believes she already knows the answer to *that* question, which is why she gave the ultimatum. In many cases "which do you want more?" can be used, as it is here, to say: consider your priorities; which is more important to you? On the other hand, when Robert is asked which he wants to do most on his birthday, see *Star Wars*, hear *Das Rheingold* at Wolf Trap, or explore some old book stores, he is not being asked about priorities, about his system of values; he is being asked which activity he would enjoy more.

The meaning of the question "Which does an agent want to do most?" depends upon which sense of "wanting" is being used; is the agent being asked which option he would enjoy most, or which does he consider more worthy, more important? In situations where both pleasure and value are factors, it becomes even more crucial to be clear about which question is being asked. Conflicts between

pleasure-motivation and value-motivation cannot always be arbitrated by the realization that doing what one values won't be any fun or by the judgment that enjoying oneself is not all that important. Since values and desires are separate and often conflict, what one is said to want most, or more than something else, will in many situations depend upon from what perspective one is judging — from the point of view of possible pleasure or from that of value.

While the notion of really wanting can be applied to both the depressed friend and the philandering artist's cases, it does not do justice to the contrasts being made in those cases. Neither William nor Pierre claim to want, all things considered, to do what they did — they deny that they wanted to do it at all. Furthermore, William seemed to *feel* strongly about going to visit his friend, even though he didn't want to. In addition, situations in which a person is asked which of a number of things he wants more support the contention that in some contexts to want something involves valuing it while in other contexts it involves believing it to be pleasurable.

"Agent S wants to do A more than he wants to do B" can be used to make several different claims: (1) the agent believes that doing A has more value than doing B; (2) he believes doing A will be more pleasurable than doing B; or (3) he is more strongly motivated to do A than he is to do B. "Agent S really wanted to do other than he did" is usually used to indicate that the agent's consciousness was more affected by what he is said to really want than was his behavior. This can be accounted for by either the blocking of the behavioral effectiveness of that want by some inhibiting factor *or* the want being "overridden" by a motivational influence that was stronger, but not felt to be stronger. The meaning of "really wanting" is context dependent; it leads to the question "as opposed to what?" In some contexts what it is opposed to is "being forced," in others it is "out of duty," "guilt," etc., and still others, it is "in order to . . ."

IX.

Objections

The view I have been presenting has serious consequences for voluntarism. At first, strict voluntarism had to be rejected in favor of modest voluntarism. The realization that pain-avoidance and pleasure-pursuit are different forms of motivation challenges modest voluntarism. Modest voluntarism must be replaced by Hobbesian voluntarism. Hobbesian voluntarism claims that there are *two* sources of motivation: desire and aversion. This form of voluntarism is immune to the problems of the previous two. More serious, however, is the separation of value-motivation from pleasure-motivation. This separation raises a possibility that threatens to destroy the foundation of all

forms of voluntarism: for when value-motivation stands alone, the most plausible source of this kind of motivation is one's value-judgments or value-beliefs.

One is forgetting, the defender of voluntarism might argue, that the recognition that something is one's duty will be motivationally effective only if one *wants* to do one's duty; unless one wants to act in accordance with some values, value-beliefs will be powerless. Thus, whenever a person pursues the Good (in whatever sphere: morals, religion, politics, etc.) he is motivated not by value-beliefs alone, but by this *desire* for the Good. And when one rejects hedonism by separating pleasure-motivation from value-motivation, one is recognizing that there are different kinds of desires. Voluntarism is not required to claim that there is only one property desired for its own sake, that there is only one kind of foundational desire. The two cases under discussion reveal conflicts between two foundational desires: the desire for pleasure and the desire to do one's duty.

First, there is an important difference between the pursuit of a pleasurable end and pursuing pleasure as an end, although that difference is somewhat difficult to articulate. The hedonist, sensualist, and thrill seeker do things *in order to* enjoy themselves. William, Pierre, and many others, while doing things because they are enjoyable, do not see the pleasure as a result to be achieved. Although pleasure can be taken as an end-in-itself, being pleasurable in these cases, and in most cases, is a property of one class of ends, not an end-in-itself. The object of desire, then, is usually not pleasure, but rather that thing (object, action, activity) that is thought to be pleasurable.

Second, as previously pointed out, William's being motivated to visit his friend is not separate from his valuing: he does not value doing his duty *and in addition* want to do it. One possible way to view William's case³⁷ is to claim that values or valuing *contain* wants. This move is a kind that I have called Davidsonian. According to this view, a valuing is a compound "act": a value judgment to the effect that doing A has (value-)property ϕ *and* a want to do things that have property ϕ .

I have argued that the widest sense of "wanting" is a "motivated" sense, it indicates the fact that the agent is motivated to act but it does *not* indicate what it is that is motivating him to act. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic wantings merely divides the territory of the widest sense between these two types of wanting: but both are still "motivated wants." To say that S intrinsically wants to do A is to say that S is motivated to pursue doing A as an end-in-itself; it does not indicate what it is that is motivating S to so pursue doing A. William does intrinsically want to do his duty. But this leaves open

the question as to what is motivating him to do his duty. If there is a sense of "wanting" that applies to *motivating* states, I am inclined to say that it is not the case that William's valuing *contains* a want but that his valuing, his value-judgment *is* his want; it is what motivates him.

To say that William would not have done his duty if he had not wanted to do so is a truism because it is using a motivated sense of "wanting": he would not have done it if he had not been motivated to do it. If motive determines whether one does one's duty, we can even say that he would not have done it if he had not been motivated to do it *as an end-in-itself*. If all that is meant by a desire to do one's duty is that one is motivated to do one's duty as an end-in-itself, this is not incompatible with the falsity of voluntarism.

A person who pursues something as an end is not pursuing it because of some external relationship it has to something else, but because it is what it is, because it has certain properties. Pursuing something as an end *can* be explained in terms of it having certain properties, as when William is said to want to see the films because they are enjoyable and to want to visit his friend because it was his duty; but the property that determines something as an end is not something *else* being pursued as an end, it is not the "real" end of that pursuit. When we notice, however, that over a period of time there are patterns in a person's pursuits, that many of the ends he pursues have some property in common, which is often cited as explaining the pursuit, we attribute to the agent a disposition to pursue ends having that property. We give explanations of particular pursuits in terms of his wanting or desiring things with that property: a person who regularly pursues things connected with glory is said to desire glory, a person who collects things because they are beautiful is said to have a desire for beauty, a person who pursues goals because they are moral is said to desire to be moral, and so on. Explaining a person's purposive pursuit by citing such a want or desire places it within a pattern of similar pursuits. Significantly many such patterns are called *character-traits*, for in explaining a pursuit in terms of such a pattern, we are explaining it by referring to the kind of person the agent is.

To say that William visited his friend because it was his duty is to explain his behavior in terms of a disposition to do or to pursue things that are his duty. To talk of a desire or want to do his duty is to talk of just such a disposition, just such a "trait" in his character — it is to use "desire," "want," in the motivated sense. His desire, or want, is not what is motivating him to pursue that kind of end, but is simply his disposition, his tendency, to be motivated by considerations of duty. Although recognizing that William's moral act is explained in terms

of a long-term dispositional want to do the moral thing, the defender of voluntarism is misled by the motivated sense of "wanting"; particular moral actions can be explained in terms of dispositional wants, character-traits, but these wants are *patterns* of motivation, not something that *accounts* for such patterns.

Voluntarism derives its plausibility from using the motivated sense of "wanting" as if it referred to motivating states. Its mistake is to infer from a person having a disposition to act morally the claim that the want is what accounts for the disposition. If going to visit with his friend was an end for William and the property relevant to its being an end was that doing so was his duty, then William is the kind of person who pursues ends because they are his duty — i.e., he has a disposition to do those things he believes to be his duty. Thus it is true that William wants to do his duty, that had he not had this want, the consideration of duty would not have moved him, and yet it need not be the case that *separate from* and *accounting for* his dispositional state is a "want" or a "desire" to be moral that motivates him to act morally.³⁸

It might be argued that one need not postulate two narrower senses of "wanting," one applying to pleasure-motivation, the other to value-motivation, in order to deal adequately with the cases of the depressed friend and the philandering artist. What these two cases illustrate, it could be said, is not two different sense of "want," but two different reasons for wanting. Limiting the discussion to pursuit-motivation, there are three kinds of reasons for wanting to do something: (1) it is a means to something else one wants; (2) it is pleasurable; and (3) it is good (has value). Explaining an action or a want in terms of the first kind of reason shows that the behavior was performed as a means and the want was generated by another want; explaining an action or a want in terms of the second or third kind of reason shows that the behavior was performed as, and the want directed to, an end. Reasons as inducements operate in a similar way. Given that a person wants to do A, then if he was to be convinced that doing B is a means to doing A, he may (by transitivity of motivational influence) come to want to do B. Similarly, given a person who is usually motivated to do pleasurable things or to do things worthwhile, to convince them that doing A will be pleasurable or will be worthwhile is likely to result in that person becoming motivated to do A.

But relying on the notion of a reason for wanting, rather than distinguishing between two narrower senses of "wanting," will not be enough to render intelligible the conflicts involved in the two cases. In the first place, William and Pierre are both motivated toward two different ends, one of which is wanted because it is associated with

pleasure, the other because it is valued; even using just the notion of a reason for wanting, there is a distinction between value-motivation and pleasure-motivation. But the crux is that these two motivational influences are in conflict in each case. Even if one were to know what can count as a reason for wanting, how those reasons can conflict, and what it is for one reason to be stronger than another, the descriptions of the agents as not wanting to do what they did and of wanting to do what they didn't will remain unintelligible if only the widest sense of "wanting" is used. Clearly, these cases do indicate different reasons for being motivated, but it is equally clear that these cases cannot be adequately understood *unless* "want," in each case, is used to mean something more than "is motivated to" — for in each case, "want" is used in such a way that the reason for being motivated is involved in its *meaning*.

X.

Conclusion

What I have tried to show in this paper is that there is a plausible alternative to voluntarism. My method for doing this is to look at ways we talk about and explain actions. (1) I have argued that the way in which the widest sense of "wanting" operates in explanations does not lend support to voluntarism. (2) I have also argued that descriptions of agents as not wanting to do what they intentionally did do and of wanting to do something they didn't do more than they wanted to do what they did do provide us with insights that at first require modifications to voluntarism. But there are cases, however, in which the agent can claim that he didn't want to do what he intentionally did do that raise a serious challenge to voluntarism. In cases like that of the depressed friend, the claim is that one doesn't think that doing what one will do will be enjoyable in any way. One wants to do that which is associated with pleasure and doesn't want to do that which is not. Consequently, pleasure is a factor relevant to a person being motivated to do something. In cases like the philandering artist, the claim is that one sees no value in doing what one is doing. One wants to do that which one values and doesn't want to do that which one does not.

There is historical precedent for calling the concept corresponding to the sense of "wanting" applicable to pleasure-motivation the concept of desire: for traditionally (1) pleasure has been associated with desires whenever values were associated with reason, and (2) desires have been most often cited as that which is responsible for pleasure-value conflicts. The concept of desire, then, will be that concept of wanting governing pleasure-motivation.

There is nothing illegitimate in using "desire" in such a way that all

and only things pursued as ends are objects of desire. But this use of "desire" is unhelpful in many situations requiring want-explanations. Furthermore, it renders unintelligible the descriptions given in many instances of motivational conflict. Nor is there anything illegitimate in using "desire" to refer only to pleasure-motivation. The plausibility of there being such a thing as pleasure-motivation distinct from value-motivation and pain-avoidance motivation I have tried to establish. In addition, this use of "desire" not only has historical precedent, it enables us to talk intelligibly about those instances of motivational conflict between pleasure and value.

Footnotes

¹D.M. Armstrong, *A Materialist Theory of the Mind* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 152; Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 27; Don Locke, "Three Concepts of Free Action" (p. 96), *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* supp. vol. 49 (1975): 95-112, p. 96.

²For examples, see Aristotle *De Anima* and *Metaphysics* θ : and St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* I questions 77-82.

³The terminology and characterization of this distinction are taken from Richard Taylor, *Good and Evil: A New Direction* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1970) and "Voluntarism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8: 270-272.

⁴*Republic* 543a-592b.

⁵Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1959).

⁶Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.), I 6; and David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (London: Oxford University Press, 1888), II 3 i-iii.

⁷Hume, p. 415.

⁸Taylor, "Voluntarism," p. 271. Taylor, however, uses the term "ethical voluntarism" for what I am calling axiological voluntarism.

⁹Benedict De Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. William Hale White and Amelia Hutchinson Stirling, ed. James Gutman (New York: Hafner Press, 1949), III prox IX, note (pp. 135-136).

¹⁰*Essays on Faith and Morals*, ed. Ralph Barton Perry (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), pp. 32-62.

¹¹D.M. Armstrong, p. 152.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹³These positions are labeled "Humean" and "Davidsonian" to avoid controversy surrounding the correct interpretation of Hume and Davidson. For Davidson's position, see Donald Davidson, "Action, Reasons, and Causes," *Journal of Philosophy*, 60 (1963): 685-700.

¹⁴Donald Davidson does *not* speak of *wanting* to do actions that have the property in question but of a "pro-attitude of the agent towards actions with a certain property" (p. 68F). The point is that the conative power of a reason is a function of this non-cognitive "pro-attitude." A view similar to Davidson is given by Carl G. Hempel in "Rational Action" (*Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* v.xxxv [1962]) where "motivating reasons" are composites of beliefs and goals (objectives).

¹⁵We can have lots of fun inventing taxonomical labels to distinguish different ways of filling in this schema. Theories that claim that foundational desires all have equal influence on the agent would be egalitarian voluntarism, while theories that claimed

that some foundational desires either were more important or stronger than others would be aristocratic voluntarism. Monistic voluntarism would be the view that there is only one foundational desire — only one ϕ desired; hedonistic voluntarism would say it was pleasure; analgesistic voluntarism would claim it was the avoidance of pain; erotic voluntarism, sexual love; agapeistic voluntarism, union with God; eudaemonistic voluntarism, happiness. Pluralistic voluntarism would claim that there are several different foundational desires and would probably be either an egalitarian or an aristocratic view. But pluralistic voluntarism need not be either. Abraham Maslow, e.g., has claimed that there are “higher level” desires (needs) that do not become activated until the “lower level” desires are satisfied with frequent regularity. But since these desires (e.g., for companionship, meaning, challenge) do not “compete” with the basic desires, this is not an egalitarian view; and since they do not “override” or “outweigh” the basic ones when they are in conflict, it is not an aristocratic view. This would be hierarchical voluntarism.

Like I said, we could have lots of fun doing this, but since this is a serious philosophy paper, we won't do it.

¹⁶There are, of course, several factors that can interfere with this want-generating process. For the sake of simplicity, I shall assume that none of them are present.

¹⁷See, e.g., Alvin I. Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970): “It is part of the concept of an *act* that an act is caused by a want” (p. 112).

¹⁸This conception of motivation has further benefits. It preserves a role for the notion of human nature while providing a basis for explaining the vast diversity of goals pursued from culture to culture, from individual to individual within an age and culture: the explanation will cite differing beliefs as to which type of objects have the various fundamentally desired ϕ 's.

¹⁹Stringent voluntarism is neutral with regard to the monistic/pluralistic distinction and the egalitarian/aristocratic/hierarchical distinction.

²⁰One such exception is to be found in Richard Brandt and Jaegwon Kim, “Wants as Explanations of Actions,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 60 (1963): 425-435.

²¹See also William Alston, “Motives and Motivation,” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 5: 399-409; Robert Audi, “The Concept of Wanting,” *Philosophical Studies* 24 (1974): 1-21; Richard Brandt and Jaegwon Kim, “Wants as Explanations of Actions”; R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 169-170; and Don Locke, “Reasons, Wants, and Causes,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 11 (1974): 169-179.

²²Henceforth I shall use simply “want” for this widest sense — for convenience.

²³Some may doubt this claim because at the time John does x, he may have forgotten that ultimately it will lead to z or there are descriptions of x, y and (or) z such that John would not acknowledge the third claim, etc. But I find most of these counter-examples odd.

²⁴This phrase is taken from Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) Chapter 5, in which it occurs as “the omnipresence of desire” and as reference to the transference of motivational influence across the relation of ends to means.” It has been suggested that this phrase is misleading, because “transitivity” is a logical term whose use allows no exceptions, while motivational transitivity can be blocked by other psychological factors.

²⁵Locke, p. 176.

²⁶D.M. Armstrong's views are a good example. He uses a “homing” rocket as an analogy for motivation. Desire is analogous to “thrust of some sort which propels it towards the target” while beliefs operate as modifiers of the direction. See *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*, pp. 138-140.

²⁷The description of this case is based upon, and the quotations are taken directly

from, Claude Servan-Schreibler, "The Rape Case That Is Shaking Up France," *Ms.*, October 1976, pp. 126-127.

²⁸When it is claimed that they had no choice, the intentionality of the behavior is not being denied. What is being claimed is that what they did, or even, if you insist, what they *chose* to do — was the *only* rational alternative open to them; for the only other alternative they had was to continue to be beaten, perhaps to their deaths. Aristotle, however, believes that in some coerced situations in which you are given the choice between being killed and doing something horrible, death is the rational thing to choose (See *Nichomachean Ethics* III).

²⁹It has been suggested (R. Audi) that perhaps "seeking to avoid" could be used to avoid separating avoidance motivation from pursuit motivation. I am unsure how to respond to this. If "seeking" is being used to mean something other than "trying," I find it odd. We usually *seek* things, i.e. we try to find them.

³⁰A case similar to this one is discussed, for a similar reason, by J.C.B. Gosling: *Pleasure and Desire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 87-90.

³¹See, e.g., *Meno* 77b-78b, *Protagoras* 352b-358d, *Gorgias* 466d-481b.

³²See, e.g., *Medea* lines 1075-80, *Hippolytus* lines 375-88.

³³Romans 7:19 (RSV).

³⁴In section IX I shall consider the objection that values *contain* wants.

³⁵Although pursuing a goal and avoiding a repellent are different kinds of motivation, value-motivation involves both. Values are two-sided; a "value" consists of both a positive value, a "good," and a negative (dis-)value, or "evil." (A disvalue or evil is not simply the absence of its corresponding good, but a "positive" opposite.) Part of what it is to value something (e.g., a property of actions or activities) is to disvalue its opposite. Value-motivation is such that a person is not only motivated to pursue as ends those things that have the positively valued property, but also motivated to avoid as evils those things that have the negatively valued property. For example, a person who values honesty will not only be motivated to pursue honesty, but there will be also situations in which he will be motivated to avoid being dishonest; a person who values supererogatory behavior will not only, at times, be motivated to do more than his duty requires, he will also be motivated to avoid doing less than his duty (or, perhaps, doing only his duty). Value-motivation involves both the pursuit of goods and the avoidance of evils and each pattern of motivation can involve, by the transitivity of motivational influence, both pursuit and avoidance behavior. And since values are agent-dependent, not only are the pairs of opposed properties taken as values agent-dependent but so too is which of an opposed pair is given the positive or negative value. A person may take perversion, dishonesty, and infidelity as his positive values, pursuing things that have those values and avoiding those that are socially acceptable, honest and loyal. For example, in *The Thief's Journal* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), Jean Genet presents a character who sees his path to sainthood, to moral perfection, in becoming the most perfect pervert, thief, and traitor that he can.

³⁶See, e.g. Armstrong.

³⁷Suggested by Robert Audi.

³⁸For a very different kind of argument against the idea that there is a desire to do one's duty that is the source of moral motivation, see John Ladd "On the Desire to do One's Duty for Its Own Sake" in A.I. Melden, ed., *Essays in Moral Philosophy*.

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