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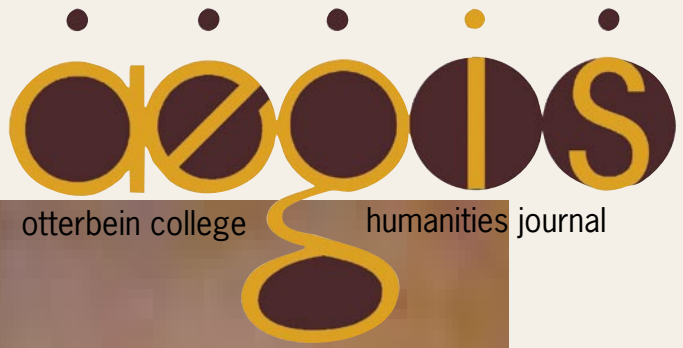


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Aegis: The Otterbein College Humanities Journal

Statement of Editorial Policy

A journal designed to catalyze a deeper critical appreciation of the humanities at Otterbein College, *Aegis* seeks scholarly essays and book reviews that advance the presence and values of the humanities on campus and beyond.

In accord with the National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) definition of the humanities, *Aegis* will consider scholarly essays and book reviews in the following disciplines: history; philosophy; languages; linguistics; literature; archeology; jurisprudence; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; ethics; and comparative religion.

Essays and reviews of books in the social sciences that are historical or philosophical in approach—or that involve questions of interpretation or criticism traditionally in the humanities—will also be eligible for publication in *Aegis*. *Aegis* will also consider essays and reviews of books that use the disciplines of the humanities to interpret, analyze, or assess science and technology.

Essays should be between 10-20 pages—in twelve point type, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins. This includes pages devoted to notes and/or works cited pages. Book reviews should be between 4-8 pages—in twelve point type, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins.

Aegis is committed to nonsexist language and to wording free of hostile overtones.

Aegis will appear annually during the first week of May of each calendar year. Essays and book reviews will be received on a rolling basis. The deadline for the coming year's edition shall be the second Friday of Winter Quarter. Essays and book reviews received after this date will be considered for the following year's edition—even if the writer is in the final year of his/her study at Otterbein.

Submissions, prepared according either to the *MLA Style Manual* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, should be sent in duplicate and addressed to Paul Eisenstein, Faculty Advisor, *Aegis*, 227 Towers Hall, Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, 43081. If you are submitting through the U.S. Mail and wish for one copy of your submission to be returned, please include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage. Authors' names should not appear on submitted essays; instead, submissions should be accompanied by a cover sheet, on which appears the author's name, address, and the title of the essay. All essays accepted for publication will need eventually to be submitted on hard diskette in Microsoft Word.

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Editors' Introduction

● ● ● Ashar Foley and Teresa Moore

Although Otterbein College enjoys a tradition of student publication, most notably with its literary magazine, *Quiz and Quill*, it has until now lacked a forum for student work in those disciplines that make up the humanities. *Aegis* aspires to be such a forum, providing a venue for the exhibition of our work and the exchange of our ideas. We welcome you now to the first of these conversations, a conversation that we hope will bring greater attention to alternative methods of inquiry to Otterbein and respond to the questions, “Why the humanities?” and, more specifically, “Why *Aegis*?”

In order to answer the former question, we must consider the values of the humanities and how they differ from those of the Sciences, including the political and social sciences as well as the study of Business and Economics. These, the “epistemic disciplines,” praise the use of objective reasoning based on concrete evidence to answer inquiries. Trying to find an equally concise definition of the humanities’ values proves more daunting, however. Merely listing the disciplines found in conventional definitions of the humanities—History, Philosophy, Foreign Language, Linguistics, Literature, the history, criticism and theory of the Arts, Ethics, and Comparative Religion—proves insufficient. Instead, we must be more general and transcend the limits of these disciplines in order to understand their common, foundational values. In doing so, we realize that what these disciplines share is an emphasis on individual voice and the promotion of a subjective synthesis *with* our world, rather than an objective explanation *of* our world. The humanities thus allow each scholar to produce his or her own method of approach, in contrast to the scientific subordination of the data-gatherer to the system within which he or she works. With this in mind, it follows that *every* discipline has such a qualitative, individualistic undercurrent, as every discipline is made up of individual practitioners engaged in their crafts. Where the disciplines of the humanities and the sciences part ways, however, is the level of priority they ultimately give the practitioner and his or her experience.

For better or worse, our world subscribes to the latter treatment of a person’s work—after all, scientific thinking and order produce more tangible, reportable results than do the humanities. As an unfortunate consequence, the merit of subjective, individual findings is often overlooked, science having no use for them unless “anchored in some kind of empirical study or procedure of practical reasoning” (Altieri 250). Thus, we see the true injustice done to the humanities in a scientifically-minded world: the qualitative inquiries of the humanities are held up to the same expectations as the quantitative inquiries of the sciences and asked to produce the same, objective results. This expectation, as we know, is unreasonable—like the sciences, the humanities are an ongoing conversation, but the accent is placed on the conversation itself and not on its outcomes. The former strives for a linear progress, forever building on and moving beyond the results of preceding inquiries; the latter’s brand of progress, however, is more of a network, constantly recalling past conversations and involving them in new discourses.

The history and practices of psychoanalysis serve as a good example here: although rejected by the medical community in favor of more expedient drug-therapies, psychoanalysis

gradually provides patients with new dialogues and perspectives with which to examine their lives, thereby approaching the roots of problems rather than merely suppressing the symptoms for the sake of visible progress. While both therapies have the same ultimate objective—to produce a recovered patient—psychoanalysis stresses the patient’s involvement in his own recovery, valuing process over immediate result. Consequently, psychoanalytic practice is not generally considered a viable therapy, a reflection of this society’s demands for quantifiable outcomes and its opposition to the disciplines that comprise the humanities. Compared to the sciences, they are often derided for lacking sources, system and method. These constructs, of course, are less important to the scholar of the humanities than the quality of the thought process itself.

Due to the abstract nature of such qualitative study, the need for continued research in these areas appears less obvious to us than the need for research in the areas of their empirical counterparts. In his essay, “What is Human About the Humanities,” Charles Altieri remarks that, throughout history, those for whom the sciences’ merit is questionable or at least less apparent have been touted as “unappreciated prophet[s] of some new world order” (Altieri 253). Perhaps this attests to the personal nature of the joys afforded us by the humanities—after all, something is only “obvious” if it is backed by universal agreement. The very structure and methods of the scientific disciplines imply this agreement, as they are designed for a large number of practitioners in a broad community. In contrast, the many incarnations of the humanities are the outcomes of individual expressions of passionate connection, and so appeal to smaller, often specialized communities comprised of those who share a similar enthusiasm. Also, the humanities do not require that these expressions be codified, so long as they successfully communicate the experience. This liberates humanities scholars to create works with an innovative, unpredictable quality, a quality unavailable to disciplines whose practices aim to produce repeatable, foreseeable results. Nemour M. Landaiche champions this quality in “Appealing to Passions for Commitment,” his response to Altieri’s essay, stating that the humanities “forgo those highly probable, socially engineered outcomes” sought after by the sciences (Landaiche 266-67). In essence, the spirit of the humanities defies the institutionalization characteristic of the sciences, retaining a plasticity that fosters the celebration of the human experience. These disciplines act as a running commentary on “what feels true about being alive,” an avowal of our encoded existence; rather than ask “Why the humanities?” we should try to imagine the unengaging quality of a life without them (Landaiche 267). Indeed, wouldn’t the pleasure of viewing a movie be ruined if we were unable to discuss our personal interpretations, gleaned from the execution of a script? What would be lost if personal belief systems were denied the ability to examine religious constructs? Who would wish to create art without an audience to appreciate and further its meaning? We cannot escape the value of our experiences and interpretations, the tang and zest they add to what could be an otherwise savorless life. Providing a means for commentary on our individual experiences, the humanities unite and humanize us.

The concluding question of “Why *Aegis*?” remains, however. It is our conviction that *Aegis* offers the chance to engage in life’s inquiries and to communicate our findings concerning these inquiries. Although we are still in a nascent stage of identifying what truly excites us, still experimenting with the formulation of and commitment to our inquiries, we are nonetheless even now practitioners in our various fields. This journal aims to alert us to this, to help us know the rightness of pursuing our passions. Also, *Aegis* hopes to model the

standards for honest and authentic communication shared in common by the disciplines of both the sciences and the humanities (for, although their values are not the same, standards are uniformly high). *Aegis* is our venue, a publication in which to support each other's endeavors, to share our discoveries, and, ultimately, to find our own answers to the question, "Why the humanities?"

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Interview with Dr. Richard Leppert: Importance of the Humanities

● ● ● Ashar Foley and Teresa Moore

This year, Aegis had the opportunity to hold an interview with Otterbein College's visiting Humanities Scholar, Dr. Richard Leppert. We were interested to know about his views regarding the academic importance, non-academic influence, status, and flexibility of the humanities.

AEGIS: We understand that you study and teach multiple divisions of the humanities: music, literature, and art. How do these divisions inform one another? Do you feel as though they are different aspects of one identity or all to be approached in different manners?

LEPPERT: Well, there are a couple things. With regard to the first part of the question, I think the connections that I trace among art, music and literature relate to the way I study them as a part of their shared cultural milieu. In other words, if I'm looking at something from Twentieth Century American culture, a work of literature, some music and an artwork, certainly the most obvious thing each has in common with the others is their cultural frame, namely Twentieth Century America. At the same time—and this gets back to the second part of your question—while American art, literature and music share the same cultural frame, they are of course separate practices that have something unique about each of them. The way that a writer, a poet or a novelist, say, addresses a cultural question is not the same as how a visual artist or a musician would. So, the specific differences between those discursive forms have to be respected.

AEGIS: From your experience teaching the humanities, what do you feel is their importance to current college-age students and to the college atmosphere itself?

LEPPERT: College may constitute the last time in your life when you can dedicate concentrated time to the broad topics associated with liberal education, unless [you] go on to some other kind of professional training or graduate school. In terms of what the humanities offer people at that time of life, it is largely a matter of trying to understand some things about how the world works. It's a way of coming to terms with the way that individuals come to be [how] they are (for better or worse); the way that societies get constructed; the way that differences in race, class, gender, age, religious belief, and political belief get formed and play out in society. The humanities are certainly not the only forms of inquiry that address these questions. After all, that goes on in the social sciences in particular as well. I think it boils down to a way of learning about yourself and learning about the world you live in and, as we all know, that kind of knowledge is crucial for being able to function. Higher education in general, and especially in the humanities and social sciences, help us [to] responsible citizenship, or at least it gives people the opportunity to understand issues of politics, ethics, morality, and so

on that are usually thought to be crucial to free societies and to societies that have some claim to being decent.

AEGIS: Do you feel that flows into the world outside of higher education?

LEPPERT: Yes, that's what I mean. Another way of saying it is that it is one of the means by which the next generation of adults is educated for life, educated in order to live both a richer and a better life - a fuller life - and not just for themselves.

AEGIS: Would you say that the same sort of contact with the humanities is available to people who aren't put into the college experience?

LEPPERT: I think it is certainly true that people can gain access to the humanities by means other than formal education. To use a parallel example, learning a foreign language: there are various ways to do it. One, of course, is through language study within a college where you have formal training. Another is to be put in such a situation where that's where you hear the language.

AEGIS: What do you think is the present state of the humanities, and would you agree that there is a somewhat declining interest in its study and research?

LEPPERT: I think that's a complicated question. Part of the difficulty is that what people mean to include within the terrain of the humanities has changed a lot in the last thirty years. Let me give a concrete example in music: when I was of college age, there was literally no possibility within a college or university setting to talk about popular music. It was not considered worthy of being discussed within the humanities. Obviously, today that has changed. Probably most music departments teach various forms of popular music, whether rock of various types, or jazz, etc. But certainly when popular musical genres were first entering the academy, there were huge debates about that (which today are still not entirely settled); the more conservative side basically saw this as the barbarians at the door and thought the humanities were being destroyed because of the encroachment of popular culture. That is not my view, but it is one that held a good deal of sway and at least holds some sway today. In a more direct answer to your question, and again sticking to music, I think quite arguably precisely the opposite is true, that there is a great deal more interest in the humanities today than there has been in a very long while if you understand by the humanities more than already-sanctioned canonic cultural practices. If you think about the number of kids today, beginning in junior high and on up through high school and into college, who make music, the numbers are staggering. On the other hand, if you mean how many kids today are interested in nineteenth-century opera or symphonic music, those numbers are declining, though how greatly they are declining by comparison with the history of my generation may not be all that great

AEGIS: Would your definition then include popular culture, and how would you use popular culture in academic study and inquiry?

LEPPERT: Insofar as I'm concerned, it very much does include popular culture. [Currently]

I teach an upper division course principally taken by juniors and seniors called “Music as Discourse.” I make absolutely no distinction between various forms of classical music and popular music; in fact, I rarely use the term. I simply come in, and I talk about music. So, during a single class period, we may talk about a piece of avant-garde, early Twentieth Century classical music; a piece of 1960’s jazz; a piece of folk music; and maybe some punk, or reggae, etc. We discuss lots of issues including one surrounding aesthetic quality. But I make it very clear that the issue of good music and bad is not defined by whether it’s classical as opposed to popular. I think that kind of essentialist posturing is intellectually irresponsible and dishonest.

AEGIS: Does your approach to art music and popular music help students also see them as without a distinction?

LEPPERT: The distinction is one which everybody understands: there’s a certain group of music called classical and there’s a certain body of music called popular. I acknowledge the fact that we have these categories; what I don’t acknowledge is that the music in one category is necessarily good and the other is necessarily bad. What I felt was sort of interesting with students of recent years, at least with those that take this class, [is that] a couple weeks into the term, I pass out a survey form and there are two questions on it. The first question is, “What kind of music do you like to listen to, or, if you are a musician, to play?” The second question is, “What kind of music do you NOT listen to currently but which you would like to know more about?” As you’d expect, most students are most connected to various forms of popular music, and often in highly specific categories of popular music. What has surprised me in the last few years in terms of the second question - “What do you not know much about but would like to know more about?” - a number of students mention various types of classical music and a lot of them mention opera. The only thing I’ve wondered about that is whether [it is due to] the popularity of music videos, because there’s a bit of similarity between music videos and opera. Whether that makes people more curious about it, I don’t know. But I had been surprised at the number of students who are interested in classical music or would like to know more. But I should add one other thing: the students in this class are not music majors. The students who take the class from me are not building up professional careers in formal music training, whereas in a music school or in a music department you’d expect many more students to say they were interested in classical music, but I wouldn’t have expected that in the general student population.

Dr. Richard Leppert is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. As annual visiting Humanities Scholar, he presented his lecture, “Paradise, Nature, and Reconciliation, or A Tentative Conversation with Wagner, Puccini, Adorno, and the Ronettes.”

Stirring the Great and Noble Horse of Athenian Democracy: The Elenchus as a Preserver of Athenian Law

● ● ● Jason Carney

I. Establishing the Autocrat of Democracy

In order to diagnose Socrates as either anti-democratic or pro-democratic, we must first localize the most basic attributes of a democratic government and a non-democratic government. To begin defining these basic attributes, let us consider two possible parties in every governmental relationship and a consequently created entity, which we'll denote as the law. In any governmental relationship there seems to be a governed body and a governing body. It could be the case, as in direct democracy, that the governing body and the governed body occupy the same role at the same time. It could also be the case, as in autocracy, that the governed body and the governing body occupy completely different roles.

One might be attracted to characterize the difference between democracy and autocracy on the basis of the presence or absence of a governing body separated from the governed body. To illustrate: in a given autocratic government there is a king, empress, oligarchic council, etc., who binds the people by his, her, or its commands. In autocracy, the governing body becomes the law as such. Compare this to theoretical democracy, wherein the governed people, through egalitarian collaborations, draft the very government to which they will ultimately subjugate themselves. In democracy, the law is an extension of the will of those who will be bound by it. Yet, in considering this distinction it does not seem correct to refrain from considering democracy an autocratic government. Even in democracy the individual is ultimately subjugated to the law of the will of the people as a whole, a law which seems autonomous.

It seems that individual freedom is the primary good sought in democratic governments. Individual freedom is theoretically preserved in democracy by dispersing the reins of a subjugating law to the subjugates. If we consider the primary goal of a government to be the establishment of the best possible environment in which individuals have the highest potential for attaining happiness, then the presupposition inherent in the democratic ideological scene is that individuals know what is best for themselves. The reverence for personal freedom in democracy assures that individuals have this fundamental necessity for happiness. The paradox seems to be that, although democracies are established presupposing a requirement for individual autonomy (variously justified: for example, Paine's natural rights of man, or Rousseau's social contract theory), they must ultimately subjugate the individual to the law established by their collective decisions, that is, the general will.¹ Therefore, it seems incorrect to say that in a democracy the people are autonomous; it is rather the people's law that is autonomous. What I would like to emphasize is that, even in a democracy, the relative power of an individual to influence the people's law grows weaker as the governed population increases. Even in democracy, there is an autocrat running the show.

II. The Task of Athenian Democracy

The fundamental attribute of Athenian democracy was participation. A population of approximately sixty-thousand to eighty-thousand slaves served forty-thousand to forty-five-thousand adult male citizens in order to construct an environment in which Athenians could have adequate time and energy to devote to public affairs. The *demos*, a Greek concept referring to the “common people” (complete with pejorative undertones), was theoretically the sovereign governing body of the city. Official written decrees passed by the Athenian assembly employed the language, “by the demos,” instead of “by the ecclesia,” or, by the assembly.² This implies that Athens was greatly interested in propping up the symbolic representations of the law as the product of the people’s, the demos’, egalitarian collaborations. In other words, Athens apparently needed constant reminders that autonomy was not in the hands of an autocrat; rather, it was in the hands of the men who tread up the Pnyx on frostbitten mornings.

Looking awry at any democracy, we can attempt to identify its autocratic kernel, and, in the case of the ancient Athenian democracy, this kernel is the decree of the demos: not of the individual constituents of the demos – the farmers, the wine-sellers, and the drunks—but of the established decrees of the demos as such, removed and existing independently. It seems correct to attribute the execution of Socrates to this entity. Accordingly, it seems incorrect to attribute the execution of Socrates to the individual jurymen who voted for his death by hemlock. These votes established the agency which ultimately carried out the execution, but the votes themselves did not tip the chalice.

If we consider the execution of Socrates as an objective injustice, we can attempt to localize the error necessarily present in the course of events that entailed his trial. It seems the demos that constituted the assembly to whom Socrates appeals in *The Apology* brought into consideration three quantities of knowledge:

[A]. The older accusations of Socrates; that is, the rumors of the masses. As characterized by Socrates in *The Apology*, age-old rumors charge him with “busying himself studying things in the sky and below the earth; he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches the same to others.” Socrates continues, “You have seen this yourself in the comedy of Aristophanes, a Socrates swinging about there, saying he is walking on air and talking a lot of other nonsense about things which I know nothing at all” (*Apology* 19b-c).

[B]. The second, more recent accusations brought forth by Meletus for “corrupting the young and of not believing in the gods in whom the city believes in, but in other new spiritual things” (*Apology* 24c).

[C]. Socrates’ defense of himself against the two previous quantities of accusations.

Let us consider all three quantities of knowledge as a single entity, [ABC], which contains within it the possibility of illustrating the correct decision to a governing body – in our instance, to the demos that made up the specific assembly present at Socrates’ trial. Let us conceive of [ABC], presented to the assembly, as a kind of Rubix cube which contains a potential quantity of justice. The assembly was charged with confronting and deciphering this Rubix cube. Ultimately, they failed. But why?

III. Plurality as a Harbinger of Irrationality

Consider Socrates' characterization of his first accusers who posit [A]:

Those who maliciously and slanderously persuaded you – who also, when persuaded themselves then persuaded others – all those are most difficult to deal with: one cannot bring one of them into court or refute him; one must simply fight with shadows, as it were, in making one's defense, and cross-examine when no one answers. (*Apology* 18d)

Socrates believes [A] will be the most difficult to deal with. It seems the characteristic that makes [A] so difficult is the medium in which it travels – that is, from the mouths of many people rather than from the mouth of one. In a manner of speaking, one could correlate the rumors of ill-repute regarding Socrates, established by a collaborative agency on the part of the numerous Athenians who “when persuaded then persuaded others,” to the law established through the egalitarian collaborations fundamental to democracy. What I mean to emphasize is that it seems Socrates is turned into an atheist, a metaphysical scientist, and a sophist, in some way along the same method that the general will is turned into a subjugating agency in democracy. Socrates understands that the opinion of the many is a terrible foe to come up against: “You know what I said earlier is true, that I am very unpopular with *many* people. This will be my undoing, if I am undone, not Meletus or Anytus but the slanders and envy of *many* people. This has destroyed many other good men and will, I think, continue to do so” (*Apology* 28b). Socrates understands [A] carries great power. The attribute of [A] that makes it the most threatening for Socrates we shall denote as its *plurality*, and by plurality I mean that [A] is established by numerous people in a sort of shared way rather than in an individual way.

Therefore it seems [B] differs from [A] in that it lacks plurality. Socrates believes [B] to some extent to be not nearly so threatening, which is illustrated by his bold claim that he has sufficiently cleared himself of those accusations: “I think myself that I have been cleared on Meletus' charges, and not only this, but it is clear that, if Anytus and Lycon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the vote” (*Apology* 36b). It follows that Socrates' defense, [C], lacks the attribute of plurality as he is only one man setting forth the arguments. From the beginning, it seems Socrates is handicapped, for his defense lacks plurality and it must contend against [A], which possesses plurality, and [B], which does not possess plurality.

It is the plural nature of [A], supported by Socrates' obvious acknowledgement of its difficulty, that has a very direct influence upon his death. Once more I am positing that it is not the numerous propagators of the rumors entailing [A] that cause Socrates' execution. That is, those who suffered from the elenchus – the politicians, the poets, and the craftsmen—do not tip Socrates' chalice. It is in fact the agency their general will established, namely [A] as such. In the above conception of democracy, I've attempted to show that, although numerous individuals come together and collaborate to establish the general will, they effectively relinquish their autonomy. The fallacy of continuing to consider the individual as autonomous merely because he/she had some role in establishing the foundational autocrat of his/her government can be applied to the establishment of [A]. In other words, *numerous* rumormongers

of Athens came together and created the completely autonomous monster [A], which ultimately brings the axe to the block for Socrates.

IV. The Irrational Autocrat of Athenian Democracy

But what does this mean for Socrates' stance on democracy? What can we ascertain by comparing the autonomous [A] to the autonomous law of the people established in democracy? At least Socrates is confident that he can contend with arguments which lack plurality, yet he repeatedly reaffirms the more difficult nature of dealing with an argument possessing plurality. Let us consider the assembly charged with finding justice in [ABC].³ Such an assembly met in the open air on a hill called the Pnyx, near the Athenian acropolis, where thousands gathered. In M.I. Finley's book, *The Ancient Greeks*, he states, "In a sense, amateurism was implicit in the Athenian 'definition' of a direct democracy. Every citizen was held qualified to share in government by the mere fact of his citizenship, and his chances to play a part were much intensified [$\frac{1}{4}$] by the wide use of the lot" (79). Not only was this assembly made up of citizens generally unfamiliar with the art of legislation, law, civic theory, etc., Finley reports it was curtailed by emerging demagogues who, by "pandering to the *demos* in the Assembly and the courts [did so] at the expense of the higher interests of state" (Finley 79). Socrates seems to criticize the functionality of the assembly as such in the *Apology*:

Be sure, men of Athens, that if I had long ago attempted to take part in politics, I should have died long ago, and benefited neither you nor myself. Do not be angry with me for speaking the truth; no man will survive who genuinely opposes you or any other crowd and prevents the occurrence of many unjust and illegal happenings in the city. A man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public life, if he is to survive for even a short time" (*Apology* 31e).

But Socrates cannot be criticizing the individuals who make up the assembly; rather, he criticizes the agency established by their general will – the irrational autocrat that is the people's law.

It seems in the above quotations that Socrates and Finley posit two faults of the assembly: (1) The assembly as such is unfit to seek out justice in [ABC]; (2) Opposing the assembly alone almost always results in failure or even death, insofar as if you are truly seeking justice you must avoid the assembly. Upon what are these two faults founded? They are founded upon the attribute of plurality that is present in the assembly, as the subtraction of plurality from the assembly takes away both faults. Let us localize these two faults and consider their possibility without the presence of plurality in the assembly:

1. The assembly seems unfit to seek out justice because it is made up of amateurs who are further curtailed by demagogues, who then pander to their whims at the expense of the higher matters of state.
2. To oppose the assembly while it possesses plurality inevitably results in failure or death.

To what do these faults amount? Plurality in the Athenian assembly seems to bring a quantity of irrationality to the autonomous agency it establishes. Considering [A], Socrates implies that

reasoning with plurality is like “fight[ing] with shadows, as it were, in making one’s defense, and cross-examin[ing] when no one answers” (*Apology* 18d). In a perfect world, the subtraction of plurality would also mean the subtraction of irrationality, but this is not always the case, considering leaders like Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Emperor Palpatine. Socrates believes that the subtraction of plurality inherently takes away a large quantity of power from irrationality (for example, compare [A] to [B]), making it easier to refute, and that in some sense the subtraction of plurality is also the subtraction of irrationality only insofar as it paves the way for the institution of rationality. This sense is taken from Socrates’ apparent lack of faith in the demos as a unified entity, expressed in such criticisms as “a man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public life, if he is to survive for even a short time” (*Apology* 31e).

But, if Socrates had his way, would he truly subtract plurality from the Athenian government? Would Socrates opt for the establishment of a proper autocracy (my use of the term *proper* autocracy allows for the consideration of a democracy as an autocracy, considering within it the people’s law is ultimately autonomous)? I think it would be too quick to say yes.

To some extent, Socrates cannot be against the reverence of individual freedom associated with democracy, because he enjoys it and needs it every time he applies the elenchus to anyone (especially the situations in which he applies it to politicians). What I believe Socrates truly opposes is the irrationality associated with the plural nature of the Athenian democracy. If Socrates could, he would subtract the irrationality from plurality, and, in a manner, it was his mission to do just that. Socrates would see the assembly keep its plurality, for this would assure that the law to which he is subjugated affords the individual freedom necessary for philosophy, art, and the search for happiness through one’s own means; but he would also see the assembly lose the irrationality associated with plurality. To put it briefly, I believe Socrates desires an assembly with plurality that could decipher the Rubix cube of [ABC]. The question is whether irrationality is separable from plurality. In other words, could the Athenian assembly ever possess plurality while at the same time lacking the irrationality associated with it?

I imagine Socrates standing near a pomegranate cart in the center of a mass of toga-wearing people, frantically pulling carpenters, priests, and potters aside as they tread towards the Pynx for a meeting of the assembly. He has already found out through his experience with the thirty tyrants that the Pynx is no place for him, and yet it seems that a sense of loyalty to Athens compels him to snake his influence into the throng. The clarifying question is, does Socrates believe the autocrat of Athenian democracy to be so flawed as to justify its replacement by a non-plural autocrat, or, as Plato would say, by a philosopher king? The answer is no. Socrates understands that the flaw of the Athenian autocrat is its irrationality. While valuing the personal freedom democracy affords him, he attempts to cure the masses, to remove the irrationality from the senate by seeing it composed of men with human wisdom:

I was attached to this city by the god – though it seems a ridiculous thing to say – upon a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by a kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. (*Apology* 30e)

To label Socrates as anti-democratic would imply that he has no faith in his fellow Athenians coming together and establishing through their general will a *rational* autonomous

agency, a people's law that to confront is not like "fighting with shadows." Socrates' elenchus is not an attempt to show that the masses will always make the wrong choices. It is not an attempt to show the Athenians the ultimate flaws of their government. By demanding wisdom and virtue from the men who create Athens' autocrat, Socrates' elenchus is an attempt to preserve their democracy.

Notes

1. "The general will" is a term coined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which describes decisions made by the citizens of a republic, before which they set aside their private or partisan aims to seek out a general good.
2. "Every male citizen who had reached his eighteenth birthday was eligible to attend [the assembly] whenever he chose, barring a few who lost their civic rights for one offence or another. The assembly, in a word, was a mass-meeting and to address it required, in the strictest sense, the power of oratory" (Finley 77-78).
3. In this situation it seems only technical to point out that it is not actually the individuals who make up the assembly that are charged with finding justice in [ABC]; rather it is the assembly itself, an entity necessarily separate from the individuals whose general will, and, in this instance, whose labors constitute it.

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Le héros nietzschéen dans Le

● ● ● Ashar Foley

En relisant l'introduction de R.J. Berg sur *Le Cid* dans *Littérature Française: Textes et Contextes*, il était étonnant qu'une comparaison soit faite entre les héros cornéliens et le héros idéal du philosophe Friedrich Nietzsche. En citant Nietzsche, Berg écrit: "Qu'est-ce qui fait...l'histoire de chaque jour? Considère les habitudes qui la composent. Sont-elles le produit d'une foule de petites lâchetés, d'une foule de petites paresse—ou celui de ton courage et de ton ingénieuse raison?" (Berg 254). Mais à mon avis, et m'appuyant sur mes études récentes de la pensée du célèbre philosophe allemand, je trouve que le héros cornélien n'est pas du tout maître de son propre destin à cause de cette "ingénieuse raison." Au contraire, leur raison les plonge dans les lâchetés et les paresse car ils sont paralysés par leur adhésion absolue à un code d'honneur. Sans doute, Chimène, Don Rodrigue, et Don Diègue sont-ils héroïques dans le sens conventionnel et chevaleresque car ils restent toujours dans l'éthique, mais ils sont loin de l'*übermensch* de Nietzsche, l'homme selon lequel nous devons modeler nos vies.

L'auteur du *Cid*, Pierre Corneille, était peut-être plus proche de l'*übermensch* que ses personnages. Bien que sa pièce eût été très populaire à ses débuts—Berg mentionne que c'était à la mode de savoir quelques scènes par coeur (Berg 255)—l'Académie Française l'a attaquée parce qu'elle ne suivait pas les règles du théâtre. Corneille a rejeté la convention de la vraisemblance, où les personnages se trouvent dans les situations quotidiennes, en préférant décrire des situations élevées dans lesquelles ses personnages doivent prouver leur grandeur d'esprit. Corneille a défié l'Académie en s'affirmant comme auteur dramatique avec ses propres règles. Par conséquent, ses pièces sont parmi les plus lues et les mieux connues des pièces françaises.

Cependant, comme j'ai déclaré dans ma thèse, pour la plupart les héros de cette pièce ne s'approchent pas de la grandeur de l'auteur dans ses efforts pour transcender la convention. Dans toute l'oeuvre, il y a seulement un personnage que l'on peut considérer vraiment nietzschéen: le comte. Pour prouver ma thèse, voici mon premier argument:

Le comte, le père de Chimène, est en colère quand il apprend que Don Diègue, un gentilhomme de plus basse extraction que lui, a reçu le titre de gouverneur de Castille. C'est un vrai affront à l'honneur et à l'orgueil du comte, et il veut affirmer son pouvoir et son influence dans le royaume; il déclare que son nom "sert de rempart à toute la Castille" (Corneille 260)¹. Toute chose que Don Diègue entreprenne se fait dans l'ombre de la protection du Comte. Bien sûr, il faut que Don Diègue se défende, et les insultes s'intensifient jusqu'au "coup mortel," le soufflet que le Comte donne audacieusement à Don Diègue (Corneille 262). Cette action casse le code d'honneur, elle marque la manque de respect envers le roi et son cadeau du titre au Don. C'est vraiment incroyable—si tous les hommes se défendaient d'une manière semblable, il n'y aurait aucun ordre. Mais le Comte défie le code; il se pense au-dessus des lois qui gouvernent les masses car il se considère comme un homme d'une plus noble espèce. De plus, le roi n'est pas indemne d'injures: le Comte déclare plus tard au noble Don Arias qu'il n'a pas peur d'un roi qui règne avec "un sceptre qui sans moi tomberait de sa main!" (Corneille 265).

En osant se présenter comme un individu au-dessus du groupe et au-dessus de l'éthique, il entre dans "La Grand Santé" de Nietzsche, la condition la plus enviable dans laquelle un homme ne fait pas référence aux autres systèmes ou règles en constituant sa propre manière de vivre. Un homme avec cette condition est authentique, il est son propre individu. Dans son oeuvre, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche décrit cet état, disant que "the more one allows the individual and the incomparable to raise its head again" le plus sera-t-on dans la grande santé (Nietzsche 140). Cet individu fait ses propres règles sans scrupule et ignore le code imposé sur lui par le monde, et donc il vit une vie supérieure car c'est une vie sans souci envers la question morale. C'est vrai que le système du Comte implique l'honneur, mais ce n'est pas le même honneur qui régit les autres personnages. Leur idée de l'honneur les situe absolument sous le roi, alors que l'honneur du comte surpasse la hiérarchie. Donc ce n'est pas encore nécessaire qu'il "brood over the moral value of [his] actions" (Nietzsche 147). On pense au Comte aussi dans cette déclaration de Nietzsche: "It will be the strong, domineering natures who, in such a compulsion, in such a constraint and completion under their own laws, will savor their most refined joy" (Nietzsche 144). En ignorant la loi du roi et du royaume, la loi du code social, le Comte montre la grandeur de son âme aussi bien que son intrépidité face à l'adversité.

Bien que cet orgueil soit curieux et choquant pour les gens soumis au comte, Don Sanche offre une sorte d'acceptation nietzschéenne de son caractère quand il suggère au roi qu'une "âme accoutumée aux grandes actions/ ne se peut abaisser à des submissions" (Corneille 268). Néanmoins, ni la société ni le roi n'acceptent cette explication. Le code requiert que l'offenseur admette son erreur et qu'il ait honte. Mais le Comte refuse, et par conséquent il est tué.

Il est clair que Le Cid est vraiment une pièce éthique, où les personnages, sauf le Comte, luttent pour rester dans l'éthique. Dans ce monde social, il n'y a pas de place pour un vrai héros nietzschéen: selon l'univers cornélien, puisqu'il a refusé l'éthique, le comte ne peut plus servir l'état et il ne fait plus partie du monde social. Comme on verra partout dans cette analyse, il y a seulement deux choix dans le monde de l'éthique—la participation ou la mort, figurée ou littérale. Le comte a reçu une mort littérale, mais qu'en est-il des autres pour qui l'honneur social est si important?

Pour le héros cornélien, rester dans l'éthique est la seule façon de vivre. Demeurer en dehors de l'éthique est une mort figurée, mais plus grave. On voit cette croyance en Don Diègue, qui ne peut pas comprendre une existence en dehors du système. Son honneur est mis en question quand le Comte affirme que Don Diègue n'aurait pas reçu le titre de gouverneur sans l'aide et la gloire du Comte. Pour le héros cornélien dans cette situation, ne pas restaurer sa dignité, ne pas prendre l'action, est l'équivalent de "mourir sans vengeance, ou vivre dans la honte" (Corneille 261). En conséquence, les seules options que Don Diègue présente à son fils sont "meurs ou tue" (Corneille 262).

Mais pourquoi ne transgresse-t-il pas l'éthique? Pourquoi ne peut-on pas le considérer héroïque comme le Comte? Sans aucun doute, il désobeit les lois en demandant à son fils de tuer le Comte. Mais il ne les transgresse pas parce que sa croyance en l'obligation de restaurer l'honneur est partagée par toute la communauté. L'honneur est la trame de l'état, la chose grâce à laquelle le roi pèse la valeur de ses sujets, surtout ceux qui aident à gouverner. Quand Don Diègue parle de la honte qu'il aura s'il "perd[ait] de la force," il parle de la réaction négative de la société qu'il sert. Sa réponse sanglante aux insultes du Comte fait

référence au monde social; elle est en accord avec les attentes du code. C'est vraiment un paradoxe: pour rester dans l'éthique, il faut que Don Diègue viole la loi de ce système. Il serait ignoble s'il prenait un cours d'action moins drastique. Cependant, il faut qu'il aille plus loin. Le code requiert qu'il se soumette à la punition, quelque chose que le Comte a refusé de faire. Le Don offre sa tête au roi. En le faisant, il vit encore.

Mais il a un autre problème—il doit présenter l'action de son fils comme quelque chose d'héroïque. Comment le fait-il? Il explique son action sous un angle méritoire: Don Rodrigue a obéi à son père et il a restauré le nom de sa famille. Son père décrit un fils qui est "digne de moi,/ Digne de son pays et digne de son roi" (Corneille 272). Ainsi, il offre son fils comme outil du roi et de la communauté. La manière de cette présentation reflète l'observation de Nietzsche que "whatever profits [the community] in the first place [...] is also the supreme measure of the value of all individuals [...] individuals are led to be functions of the herd² and to attribute value to them merely as functions" (Nietzsche 138). Il est clair que Don Rodrigue a les qualités d'un citoyen idéal, qu'il a le potentiel d'être loyal à l'état. Le roi verra la valeur de ce jeune homme et il verra le service qu'il rendrait; donc, il le pardonne.

Don Rodrigue est justifié selon le roi, mais il a une double loyauté éthique et un problème plus compliqué. En plus d'être un gentilhomme concerné par l'état, il est l'amant de Chimène. Mais, comme Don Diègue, il faut qu'il reprenne son honneur après avoir violé une loi, et aussi il faut qu'il s'amende. Avec l'aide de son père, il fait ses excuses au roi, mais, parce que l'homme qu'il a tué était le père de son amante, il doit aussi en faire à Chimène. Mais elle ne les accepte pas.

Avant qu'il venge son père, Don Rodrigue prévoit sa colère et la possibilité de perdre son amante; il pèse les répercussions de la vengeance et son devoir envers les deux en disant, "Je dois à ma maîtresse aussi bien qu'à mon père" (Corneille 264). Il conclut, cependant, que son devoir immédiat revient à son père, à son sang, et à la position de sa famille dans la société. Il est le seul concerné par cet amour, et donc cet intérêt ne peut rivaliser avec l'éthique. De plus, on voit que dans cet univers cornélien, une incapacité d'agir reviendrait à perdre l'honneur et la place dans l'échelle sociale. Il arrive à considérer son amour comme un intérêt inférieur à son devoir familial et social: "Contre mon propre honneur mon amour s'intéresse / Il faut venger un père, et perdre une maîtresse" (Corneille 263). Même après le meurtre du Comte, Don Rodrigue affirme à Chimène qu'il le ferait encore. Aussi, il réalise que, selon le code, "un homme sans honneur ne [...] méritait pas" l'amour de sa dame (Corneille 277). On a un autre paradoxe—il faut qu'il tue le père de sa dame pour avoir la valeur qu'elle requiert. Il faut qu'il regagne son honneur, en tout cas.

Malgré sa tristesse de perdre Chimène, il n'y a aucune doute dans son âme que le devoir prend la plus grande importance. Don Rodrigue est donc un exemple superbe du héros cornélien. Bien qu'il lutte avec ses émotions, il ne connaît pas une réelle hésitation entre le devoir familial et l'amour particulier. Maintenant qu'il a restauré l'honneur de son nom, il attend le bon-vouloir de Chimène pour être pardonné. Il offre sa vie et son service—si elle veut qu'il meurt, qu'il se batte en duel, qu'il s'engage dans l'armée, qu'il disparaisse, il le fera. Le code l'attache à la volonté de Chimène.

Dans le cas de Chimène, cependant, son hésitation entre le chemin éthique et le chemin particulier est plus visible. C'est évident qu'elle brûle d'amour pour Rodrigue, mais elle ne peut pas oublier l'image de son père, saignant à mort dans ses bras. Elle approche le vrai héros nietzschéen dans son désir violent d'épouser Rodrigue, mais elle reste dans le domaine

du tragique par son incapacité de choisir le particulier au-dessus du devoir. Comme Don Diègue, Chimène explique son problème sous l'angle d'un problème social—sa vengeance serait dans le meilleur intérêt de Castille. Elle essaie de persuader Don Fernand que le meurtre de son père représente un affront pour lui parce que le Comte était un homme de même rang et il était un homme de grand mérite dans le royaume. Ce n'est pas qu'une affaire tout à fait personnelle. Donc, elle dit au roi que son cours d'action rejaille sur lui et sur Castille: "Immolez, non à moi, mais à votre couronne,/ Mais à votre grandeur, mais à votre personne;/ Immolez, dis-je, Sire, au bien de tout l'état" (Corneille 271). À la lumière de cette déclaration, le crime de Don Rodrigue devient un crime contre le royaume et contre l'honneur de ses citoyens.

Mais, pour Chimène, tuer et refuser d'épouser Don Rodrigue est équivalent à faire le plus grand sacrifice de soi. Si elle se venge, elle se suicidera ou habitera dans un cloître. Elle l'aime passionnément et son amour est la source de son désespoir. Elle veut choisir cet amour et elle-même—elle offre le compromis du duel entre Don Sanche et Don Rodrigue (un moyens éthique de résoudre le problème parce qu'il permet une résolution honorable de la querelle), et elle dit à son amant de fuir au lieu d'être puni. Elle approche la satisfaction de sa passion, mais elle est continuellement paralysée par son adhésion au code et par son désir de réhabilitation du nom de son père. Par exemple, elle dit à Rodrigue qu'il doit gagner le duel pour qu'ils puissent se marier, mais, l'ayant dit, elle sort de la chambre, honteuse.

Il semble qu'elle a une âme très forte, et dans l'univers cornélien, c'est vrai. Mais vraiment, on voit facilement que le choix le plus difficile pour Chimène est le choix de soi. Ce qu'elle considère sa force n'est que sa faiblesse. Nietzsche reconnaît que le choix de l'individu est le plus dur. Être seul en dehors de l'état est quelque chose d'affreux—une sorte de mort. Dans *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, il se réfère aux temps plus anciens, quand "there was nothing more frightful than being single" (Nietzsche 138) et "being alone was bound up with every misery and every fear" (Nietzsche 139). Chimène ne pense qu'à la honte et au mépris qu'elle recevra si elle ne résiste pas à son amour. Elle voit sa résistance comme une qualité—elle est une fille loyale à son père et une bonne citoyenne—elle trouve mal que des criminels ne soient pas poursuivis dans "un lieu de franchise" (Corneille 289). Elle pense que sa vraie valeur est dans l'éthique.

Donc, de tous les personnages dans *Le Cid*, Chimène est la plus éloignée de la grande santé; elle voit le chemin de l'individu mais elle le refuse. Elle reconnaît son grand amour, mais elle le rejette et, en le faisant, elle se rejette aussi. Nietzsche considère cette dénégration de soi comme une maladie, et que l'effort à cacher cette maladie (ici, derrière l'honneur) n'est qu'un déguisement: "What can it matter to us with what kind of tinsel the sick dress up their weakness? Let them display it as their virtue" (Nietzsche 168). Peut-être que Chimène perdra de son insistance sur la vengeance pendant l'année que Don Rodrigue passera à l'armée du roi, mais dans l'action de la pièce, elle ne secoue pas le joug de l'éthique; elle ne réalise pas la grande santé du héros nietzschéen.

On peut dire la même chose de tous les personnages qui placent leurs devoirs avant leurs désirs et leurs propres valeurs. En refusant de se choisir, ils renforcent le système qui a déterminé leurs actions. Ils maintiennent leur esclavage à l'état, à l'honneur, et à toute autre considération sauf eux-mêmes. Nietzsche a dit que la faiblesse éthique n'est qu'un "instinct of weakness which, if it is true, does not create religions, metaphysical systems, and convictions of all sorts—but conserves them" (Nietzsche 154). Donc, il faut voir ces héros corné-

liens comme ce qu'ils sont. Pour trouver un vrai héros, un héros au-dessus des masses, il faut chercher le personnage du Comte.

Notes

1. Berg, R. J., ed. *Littérature Française: Textes et Contextes*. Vol. 1. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1994. À cause de quelques omissions par R. J. Berg, les vers et les scènes ne sont pas numérotés comme une version complète de *Le Cid*. Donc, je cite la page du texte de la citation.
2. "The herd" est le terme général que Nietzsche emploie pour décrire la société et l'intérêt collectif. Ce terme au un sens négatif suggère que les participants dans "le herd" agissent sans penser, selon ce que font les autres.

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Exploring the Tapestry: Oedipa's Embrace of the Journey in *The Crying of Lot 49*

● ● ● Teresa Moore

Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* depicts a society based upon an elaborate system dependent on language to regulate people's wants and desires. Oedipa, the novel's heroine, confronts fantasies that both support and attempt to undermine the predominant capitalist system. While sifting through these conflicting narratives advanced by the men in the novel, Oedipa faces the theory that all fantasies contain flaws or voids, what Lacanian psychoanalysis designates as the Traumatic Real. Though she recognizes the reality of the latter concept, Oedipa renounces both the other characters' fantasies and the philosophy of embracing the Real as a source of truth. As Oedipa begins to assert her own desire into the symbolic order, Pynchon contends that the *search* for meaning and truth is the vital aspect of existence.

Recognizing the Fantasy: Capitalist America

Oedipa slowly recognizes the symbolic nature of the overriding Californian consumer culture and the dissenting voices such a culture hides. Oedipa's reluctance to face the instability of the system can be partially explained by her past relationship with Pierce Inverarity. Inverarity represented the ideal citizen of the consumer society. Indeed, he was a millionaire who virtually built the city of San Narciso; he owned the major company that employs the city's citizens as well as most of the land on which they live. More importantly, Inverarity is never presented above the symbolic level in the novel. The reader, and perhaps Oedipa, never encounters a *real* person in Inverarity. In fact, one of the few direct depictions of his character is a phone conversation with Oedipa wherein Inverarity takes on the personas of a Transylvanian Consulate, a comic-Negro, a Gestapo officer and Lamont Cranston (Pynchon 2-3). Nothing in the novel indicates that Inverarity ever used his real voice. Without an individual persona, Inverarity exists entirely in the fantastical world of capitalism. Oedipa's run-in with Mexican anarchist Jesús Arrabal later in the novel supports such a reading. Upon meeting Arrabal on vacation in Mexico, Inverarity once again played a part, this time that of "the rich, obnoxious gringo." From this collision of ideals, Arrabal describes Inverarity as a miracle, "another world's intrusion into this one...he is too exactly and without flaw what we fight...as terrifying to me as a Virgin appearing to an Indian" (Pynchon 97). Inverarity is the perfect capitalist with no holes, no gap, no void in his persona that would question such a system.

Within the company of Inverarity's pure fantasy, Oedipa is stifled by the ideology he represents. Mark Conroy finds the repetition of consumer culture in Oedipa's relationship with both Inverarity and Metzger. In a capitalist system, "the ideal self-image is in its essence the functional equivalent of someone else's ideal image, which the consumer then appropriates for his or her own" (Conroy 49). Such is the case with Inverarity: he does not have a distinct image but instead takes on stereotypes present in the prevailing society. This image is then

presented to Oedipa for her to adopt. The problem of transference then becomes apparent – “that...this mechanical reproduction is mistaken for renewal is one of the crucial features of the narcissistic self of consumer society” (Conroy 49). Oedipa finds herself in this trap while in Mexico with Inverarity. She had mistaken the relationship as liberating; however, she recognizes the mere repetition of the relationship through a painting by Remedios Varo. The painting, titled “Bordando el Manto Terrestre,” depicts Rapunzel-like women locked in a tower weaving a tapestry that is the world. This scene reveals to Oedipa “that what she stood on had only been woven together a couple thousands miles away in her own tower, was only by accident known as Mexico, and so Pierce had taken her away from nothing, there’d been no escape” (Pynchon 11). Oedipa, then, only imagined the renewal in the relationship. Instead, her alliance with the pure representation of the system only further immerses her in a defined place within a society. Oedipa has not obtained the freedom to pursue her own desire (or even Inverarity’s desire) because the symbolic level conceals the Real, or the realm of desire. Without a flaw in Inverarity’s symbolic order, no desire can be present. Thus, her relationship with Inverarity was not an escape but a replication of past confinement.

Oedipa completes the repetition when she returns home, taking her place in the over-riding system by marrying Mucho Wendell Maas and becoming a housewife. It is not until Inverarity’s letter spurs her affair with Metzger that she finds herself once again faced with the capitalist fantasy. Metzger, as Inverarity’s lawyer, is an advocate of the patriarchal, capitalist lifestyle as well; however, unlike Inverarity, Metzger cannot contain the gaps of the system within his personality. Pynchon indicates this by an interruption in the narrative of *Cashiered*, a movie Metzger starred in as a child. The storyline of the movie, now incomprehensible, must be questioned. Initially, the confusion of the *Cashiered* narrative and the resulting questioning is not transferred onto the narrative of a patriarchal society. Indeed, they bolster one another; Metzger, the dominant male, has the answers to the gaps in the movie, and in such a way patriarchy can maintain its hierarchy. However, Metzger’s answers are superficial, obvious ploys to seduce Oedipa and reveal a possible level of desire in Inverarity. After he has “laid” Oedipa, Metzger tells her that Inverarity believed she “wouldn’t be easy” (Pynchon 30). Such a comment links Inverarity to the sexual desires displayed by Metzger, showing them to be the catalyst of the capitalist story. The submerged desires of the system are revealed and, consequently, Oedipa begins to recognize that the fantasy does not contain pure answers, but ones tainted by personal desires and that the fantasy itself is born from such desires.

Fantasy as Escape: The literal symbolic

Following her trip to Mexico and her new awareness of her confinement in society, Oedipa attempts to reconcile herself to her place (or tower) within the fantasy through her marriage to Mucho. Mucho, however, is fleeing from the idea of a paramount fantasy. He uses words at a literal level to stabilize the fantasy and overcome any possible inadequacies. He is terrified that perhaps these words lack real meaning. For instance, Mucho’s recurring nightmare features the National Automobile Dealers’ Association (NADA) sign at the used car lot where he used to work. Mucho dreams of “just this creaking metal sign that said nada, nada, nada against the blue sky” (Pynchon 118). Nada, an alternative for nothing, indicates Mucho’s fear that words have no real significance. He shrinks from the idea that truth lies beyond the words and is in fact inexpressible. Mucho wishes to bolster the fantasy through its primary linguistic devices in order to convince himself of the reality of an infallible nar-

rative. He ultimately achieves these ends by the use of LSD. In a drugged state, Mucho can connect the entirety of the world, without acknowledging a fundamental lack, through the use of language. He tells Oedipa, "Everybody who says the same words is the same person if the spectra are the same only they happen differently in time, you dig? But the time is arbitrary. You pick your zero point anywhere you want, that way you can shuffle each person's time line sideways till they all coincide" (Pynchon 116-117). With such a theory, Mucho is capable of connecting every person on earth by uttering "rich, chocolaty goodness" and ignoring the "nada" of language.

Because Mucho's theory of assimilation through language is immediately unacceptable to Oedipa, she pursues therapy with Dr. Hilarius in order to better incorporate herself into the patriarchal fantasy. Hilarius initially echoes Mucho's form of escape by urging Oedipa to join his studies on the effects of LSD. However, by the end of the novel, Hilarius has changed his position. In the past, he had not allowed for the inability of language to confront all mental activity. He "tried to cultivate a faith in the literal truth of everything [Freud] wrote, even in the idiocies and contradictions... and part of me, must really have wanted to believe... that the unconscious would be like any other room, once the light was let in" (Pynchon 109-110). When this dependence on language inevitably fails (Hilarius never took the drug he prescribed for his patients), Hilarius creates a paranoid fantasy "where at least I know who I am and who the others are" (Pynchon 111). This paranoia manifests itself in Hilarius's belief that he is being pursued for war crimes committed while working with Nazi physicists, a belief that also ignores the possible faults in the capitalist fantasy. His split with such a literal reading of Freud and the talking cure is quite right; however, he misjudges the ability of a different hierarchy to explain away the problems of the old system. Instead of accepting the limitations of symbolic systems in general, Hilarius suspects that the situation is unique to himself and treats the decay of the symbolic as if it were an instance of personal persecution. Indeed, his belief that he is under attack is as absurd as believing in the contradictions in Freud's texts. It merely misplaces the capacity for objective knowledge from language to an unknown pursuer.

Oedipa, however, has difficulty in accepting an all-knowing agent. She considers the possibility that Inverarity has formed a plot in his will to fool her; however, as I shall discuss shortly, she is unable to believe that he can completely explain the underworld she glimpses. Consequently, both of Oedipa's counterparts in her hometown, Kinneret, have failed to help her assimilate into the patriarchal system both before and after her affair with Metzger. Oedipa cannot accept a psychotic stance to words like Mucho nor the paranoia of an omniscient other like Hilarius.

Faith in Fantasy: The system of the symbolic

After confronting the breakdown of the system caused by her relationship with Metzger, Oedipa tries to assume a faith in fantasy that ignores or allows for the presence of inconsistencies. John Nefastis and Mike Fallopian present ideologies that fill the gaps of the prevailing capitalist system with corresponding symbolic explanations. However, they overlook the flaws in these replacement fantasies and propose a blind faith in their fantasies. Thus, these men differ from Hilarius and Mucho in that they do not search for an all-knowing subject and hardly try to discover the implications of their beliefs. Rather, these two men allow for what Gregory Flaxman calls distortion (45), a reference to the inadequacy of language to confer an idea or story from person to person. Nefastis and Fallopian not only allow for

this distortion through the multitude of possible interpretations but also through the lack of interpretation.

For example, Fallopian focuses on the process of the system rather than its meaning. His narrative includes the W.A.S.T.E. system, an alternative to the government-run postal service, but he cannot provide Oedipa with a meaning behind the system. Indeed, the messages sent through the service are mere words. For Fallopian this is not as important as keeping the system running: “It’s the principle . . . to keep it up to some kind of reasonable volume, each member has to send at least one letter a week through the Yoyodyne system” (Pynchon 39). Here, the system of the symbolic assumes the focal point rather than the words themselves. In Fallopian’s fantasy, it is the process of communicating that anchors the narrative rather than the verbal story. It is this process that takes on the aura of rebellion rather than a cause that spurs the revolt. Such a stance is supported by Fallopian’s ignorance of the origins of the Peter Pinguid rebellion, the event that established the society in which Fallopian participates. The story itself does not matter – he does not “make scripture out of it” (Pynchon 36) – it is enough that the rebellion happened, though the winner and the cause of the rebellion are unclear. Likewise, Fallopian uses an act of rebellion, the use of an alternative mail system, to reject the inadequacies of the patriarchal system and to provide a definitive reason for the inadequacy of that system. Fallopian does not trouble himself to understand the import in his rebellion or the specific flaws of the system against which he rebels. Thus, like Mucho and Hilarius, Fallopian attempts to provide answers to the faults in the prevailing American society. However, in opposition to his Kinneret counterparts, Fallopian does not ignore the gaps in his own symbolic fantasy nor does he believe these gaps to hide any inexpressible meaning. In fact, he glories in the very chaos of the incomplete story.

Similarly, Nefastis presents a blind faith in his system surrounding Maxwell’s Demon, a being in a box that can sort molecules. According to his theology, a “sensitive” can communicate with the Demon and cause a miraculous creation of energy. Nefastis’s belief relies on a reordering of a closed system and a linguistic communication, a metaphor. The formulas for entropy and information theory resemble one another and, when spliced together, create a metaphor that would allow communication to increase the order in a closed thermodynamic system and create heat energy that can be proved through the objective manifestation of the heat transfer. Oedipa, however, immediately questions faith in a system created entirely of words. Feeling like a heretic, she asks, “but what . . . if the Demon only exists because the two equations look alike? Because of the metaphor?” (Pynchon 85). She cannot believe, as Nefastis does, that the metaphor stands for a larger entity, a larger meaning. Indeed, because the very origin of the system lies in its symbolic manifestation, there can be no underlying cause of the system. Like Mucho, Nefastis has taken words as the literal meaning. However, unlike Mucho, Nefastis’s system can see the possibility of the system not containing the answers. Indeed, Nefastis has not encountered a “sensitive.” Thus, like Fallopian, his belief is in the act of believing and not in the truth of the system.

Oedipa’s rejection of a system based on a belief in the workings of that system ultimately stems from the confusion and disorder believing creates. This disorder is innate within the idea of Maxwell’s Demon and any sort of system-based belief. Oedipa finds that “imposing patterns upon random, unordered data produces more disorder in the process” (Leland 50). By trying to place explanations upon the Trystero system she encounters, she only becomes more confused. Oedipa sees her situation as a multiplied version of Nefastis’s. Nefastis has

made the coincidence of the identical formulas “respectable with the help of Maxwell’s Demon.” Oedipa, however, is faced with a “metaphor of God knew how many parts...had nothing but a sound, a word, Trystero, to hold them together” (Pynchon 87). Oedipa finds that this word, in its subjective nature, is a flimsier connection than the Demon. However, this discovery arises from Oedipa’s questioning of the symbolic order as the only available level of meaning. But she eventually finds that, even if the metaphor of the Demon were to be true, this truth could not provide the answers for which Oedipa is searching, creating instead what Anne Mangel calls a “perpetual motion machine” (90). Such a machine would only provide limitless interpretations of the true metaphor. Mangel sees this already beginning in Oedipa’s search: “The clues she gathers yield more clues in an infinite process. Opening out into more and more suggestions, they yield no conclusion” (90). Language then cannot provide such connections because they always lead to more metaphors and explanations. Indeed, Oedipa senses that there are an infinite number of interpretations that arise from the linguistic and symbolic clues she discovers. Pynchon, by providing her (and the reader) with so much room for interpretation, creates a situation where certainty is unattainable. Thus, Oedipa cannot bring herself to believe blindly in a system based wholly on the act of communication or a coincidence within this communication. For her, such a conviction would ignore the flaws innate in communication.

Driblette’s Subjective Real

In contrast to the other men along her journey, Driblette does not present Oedipa with a new fantasy. Instead, he offers a theory that rejects fantasy as a form of covering the meaning of experience, proposing that placement of an experience within the symbolic world strips it of the very essence of living. This essence is presented as a fleeting recognition of an unspeakable, abstract element of being. Driblette’s rendering of the play *The Courier’s Tragedy* attempts to enact and produce a collision with this essence through silence, acknowledging that meaning cannot be spoken or sensed: “Heretofore the naming of names has gone on either literally or as metaphor. But now...a new mode of expression takes over. It can only be called a kind of ritual reluctance. Certain things, it is made clear, will not be spoken aloud; certain events will not be shown on stage” (Pynchon 55). Thus, Pynchon proposes a new paradigm for Oedipa to pursue. Rather than seeking a fantasy to replace the flawed American system embodied in Pierce Inverarity, Oedipa can now seek engagement with the Real. This “new mode of expression” provides Oedipa with another possible source of meaning outside any narrative fantasy.

Moreover, this philosophy of an incommunicable meaning, by its very nature, is a subjective experience. When Oedipa tries to coerce Driblette into explaining his directorial decisions to her, he refuses, arguing that the meaning she is searching for is not something he can put into words but is a part of himself. Indeed, he urges her to look past the symbolic:

“you’re like the Puritans about the Bible. So hung up with words, words. You know where the play exists...in [my mind]. That’s what I’m for. To give the spirit flesh.

The words, who cares? They’re rote noises to hold line battles with, to get past the one barriers around an actor’s memory, right? But the reality is in *this* head.

(Pynchon 62)

Thus, Driblette does not try to convince Oedipa of an overarching, objective being that supplies meaning; there is no text or conversation that could translate the purpose of the play to

Oedipa. Instead, Driblette points to a subjective aspect in each person, to the truth of reality resting in personal experience rather than in others. He tells Oedipa, “If I were to dissolve here...be washed down the drain into the Pacific, what you saw tonight would vanish too. You, that part of you so concerned, God knows how, with that little world [of the play], would also vanish” (Pynchon 62). Oedipa has experienced a piece of Driblette by watching the play; however, that piece cannot be understood or examined, but instead remains within Driblette’s being. In this way, Oedipa’s previous interactions in the novel are merely the meeting of others’ fantasies that have been made into their personal realities. Driblette encourages her to encounter these realities as her own personal experiences and “project” a reality of her own. His philosophy is to confront the voids ingrained within any fantasy rather than uselessly strive to decipher them.

This philosophy is ultimately enacted in Driblette’s suicide by walking into the Pacific Ocean. The ocean is described in the novel as the keeper of the Real. As Oedipa approaches San Narciso for the first time she notes that beyond the symbolic circuit of the city: lurked the sea, the unimaginable Pacific, the one to which all surfers, beach pads, sewage disposal schemes, tourist incursions, stunned homosexuality, chartered fishing are irrelevant, the hole left by the moon’s tearing-free and monument to her exile, you could not hear or even smell this but it was there, something tidal began to reach feelers in past eyes and eardrums, perhaps to arouse fractions of brain current your most gossamer microelectrode is yet too gross for finding. (Pynchon 40-41)

The sea that Oedipa could not recognize with her senses is the Real that Driblette tries to produce with the absence of sensual display in *The Courier’s Tragedy*. However, the sea of the Real does present itself in an abstract, subtle hint through “fractions of brain current.” I read this to relate to the indescribability of the Real, the ability to encounter but not explain or understand. Moreover, this massive presence of the void ignores systems and methods of identification that develop around its edges. Indeed, these symbolic artifices and fantasies, Oedipa believes, can be “integrated or assumed...into some more general truth” that is the “true Pacific” (Pynchon 41). Though Oedipa comes to acknowledge the lack of “general truth,” her sense that the faults in all fantasies lay within the void is correct. The sea, then, is identified as the home of the Real, and Driblette, by walking into it, merges with the Real, becoming the enactor of his belief that meaning can only be found within the void.

Oedipa’s Traumatic Encounter

Ultimately, Oedipa rejects direct contact with the Real. She experiences the silent void Driblette presented in his play in her night of silent passivity in San Francisco. She confronts the lack throughout the city by merely witnessing the side of society that does not fit within the narrative provided by Inverarity and Metzger. Oedipa is reluctant to fit this underside of the city into another system surrounding the Trystero. Instead she adopts a theory of silence for the night that, as Mark Hawthorne points out, “enables her to transfigure mere words” overcoming her need to name and understand (87). Her vow not to immediately define her situation allows Oedipa to encounter Driblette’s Real, culminating in her meeting with an old sailor. Rather than use words, Oedipa is “overcome all at once by a need to touch him, as if she could not believe in him, or would not remember him, without it” (Pynchon 102). Through this meeting, Oedipa recognizes the subjective reality Driblette proposed. She imag-

ines the sailor's mattress burning and killing not only the sailor but also "the set of all men who had slept on it, whatever their lives had been, would truly cease to be, forever, when the mattress burned" (Pynchon 104). These men's lives will lose all episodes and wisdom connected with the mattress once it is gone. Likewise, Oedipa will lose part of her engagement with the mattress and the sailor through the same process. Here, Pynchon directs our attention back to the idea Driblette first advanced: life is contained within individual minutes that can only be felt within that specific minute. Outside of the moment, the meaning is lost. Gregory Flaxman, also proposing a psychoanalytic reading of the novel, finds that this relational void, this loss, this death is the very clash humans seek to overcome:

[Oedipa] encounters the mattress in all its grotesquery as the phenomenal intrusion of the Thing into reality. Irrupting into exteriority, the Thing pulsates and swells with all the fluids of jouissance. Oedipa stands in front of the mattress-Thing only to realize that the Real of desire is not desirable, that she has come face to face with the very antithesis of fantasized possibility or Sovereign Good. (54)

Following Flaxman, we can see that Oedipa confronts the unspeakable void of desire that Driblette alluded to. However, she finds herself helpless in the situation, unable to keep the sailor, the mattress, and their meeting from going up in flames. Moreover, Oedipa herself, as a distinct entity, is lost in the fire. Flaxman's reading suggests that Driblette's encouragement to pursue the void would not be a satisfying answer for Oedipa. Indeed, this conflict proves more frightening than the choice of a paradigm on which to rest belief.

Consequently, Oedipa's search remains stalled after this confrontation. Her experiences following that night are filled with more clues and possible narratives supplied by Genghis Cohen and Emory Bortz. However, Oedipa has become "reluctant about following anything up," ignoring the clues, "anxious that her revelation not expand beyond a certain point. Lest, possibly, it grow larger than she and assume her to itself" (Pynchon 137). Oedipa avoids looking for answers because she is no longer sure she wants them. She worries that she will lose herself, helpless in another confrontation with the Real or insignificant as a mere piece of the narrative – both threaten to engulf her.

Oedipa's Rejection of the Real

When Cohen provides Oedipa with yet another clue, a possible encounter with a stamp collector interested in the Trystero stamps that Inverarity collected, Oedipa definitively rejects the Real. She endows the stamp collector with the potential to be the flawless incarnation of the Trystero narrative (much as Inverarity had been the pure embodiment of the capitalist system) or the catalyst for another encounter with the Real. Oedipa then turns back to the clues she has been presented throughout the novel and her choice between fantasy and the Real. She gets drunk and drives with her headlights off down the freeway, an attempt at suicide. Unlike Driblette, however, she is unable to merge with the Real that has now moved from the Pacific Ocean to engulf America. Indeed, Oedipa can no longer find the distinction between the two:

She stood between the public booth and the rented car, in the night, her isolation complete, and tried to face toward the sea. She had lost her bearing. She turned, pivoting on one stacked heel, could find no mountains either. As if there could be no barriers between herself and the rest of the land. San Narciso at that moment lost...gave up its residue of uniqueness for her;

became a name again, was assumed back into the American continuity of crust and mantel. Pierce Inverarity was dead. (Pynchon 146-147)

This passage denotes Oedipa's return to the symbolic. Panicked that the entire world has become the Real, and she, within it, insignificant, Oedipa returns to a world of names without meaning. Simultaneously, she relinquishes the idea of an overriding fantasy of Inverarity's America. San Narciso, the city of Inverarity's power, is engulfed in the void of America, which has been engulfed by the Real of the Pacific. Thus, Inverarity and the fantasy he supported are lost, dead, devoid of possible meaning.

Oedipa's choices then are to embrace the paranoia of a Trystero plot or become lost in the lack of fantasy and immersed in the Real. However, both options provide equally stifling futures. Oedipa, in the plot mastered by the will of Inverarity, would be a mere pawn to another's will. If the reality of the Trystero clues are true but a mere coincidence, Oedipa will be engulfed in the Real as she was when faced with the loss of narrative in her encounter with the sailor's mattress. Oedipa considers these options in terms of a matrix of ones and zeroes:

Another mode of meaning behind the obvious or none. Either Oedipa in the orbiting ecstasy of a true paranoia or a real Tristero. For there either was some Tristero beyond the appearance of the legacy of America, or there was just America and if there was just America then it seemed the only way she could continue, and manage to be at all relevant to it, was as an alien, unfurrowed, assumed full circle into some paranoia. (Pynchon 150-151)

America here functions as the Real and Trystero as the conspiracy. Oedipa believes that the only way to escape the burdens of one system is to accept the other. But Oedipa is not satisfied with choosing between another's reality and the lack of a symbolic reality. Through the very fluctuation in her decision-making, Oedipa maintains her right to choose a future and, consequently, her own distinct identity.

Oedipa's Return to the Symbolic

The next morning, Oedipa again begins her pursuit of answers, attempting to find the identity of the mystery stamp collector. She attends the auction without having made a choice of paranoia or assumption into the Real. Instead, Oedipa realizes that the search for the answer to this duality defines the self. Oedipa, while searching for the answers to clues, while actively questioning the hierarchy of either the capitalist or Tristero system, is able to assume an identity of her own. In her discussion of Oedipa's triumph over a patriarchal confinement, Cathy Davidson notes that "she has come to execute her own will. That last meaning, however, is calculatigly ambiguous" (49). Davidson proposes that the ambiguous end indicates possibilities of Oedipa's death or arrival at the ultimate truth. However, I read these possibilities to fluctuate between Oedipa's death through the loss of her identity by accepting some sort of truth or the continuance of her search for clues.

Pynchon ultimately presents the reader with this latter choice. The book ends without the reader gaining ultimate knowledge of the answer to Oedipa's search or even her conclusions. Oedipa then is capable of pursuing both the answer and avoiding the answer indefinitely. Likewise the reader (and critic) is capable of projecting a multitude of individual narratives into the space Pynchon created in the novel without assurance of the truth of their narrative. Oedipa is searching for the search, the level in which she is capable of maintaining her individuality. While not denying outright the possibility of truth in any of the narratives

presented to her by the men she encounters, Oedipa refuses to accept them without question and revision. Thus, she continues her search, a decision wherein, though she is not let out of fantasy's tower, she is given knowledge of the tower and free reign to explore the tapestry created within it.

Notes

1. Inverarity, by existing only on the level of the symbolic word, denies reality. As Slavoj Žižek proposes, "Reality is nothing but an embodiment of a certain blockage in the process of symbolization. For reality to exist, something must be left unspoken" (*Looking Awry* 45). Inverarity does not present a blockage in his discourse, and, thus, Oedipa cannot encounter the unspoken reality.
2. This is indeed a replication because of the oppressive role Oedipa plays in this relationship as she does in others. Oedipa, looking at the tower, sees her lack of power in her relationship with Inverarity. Cathy Davidson discusses the patriarchal dominance over Oedipa and defines Oedipa's tower as "[male] assumptions about Oedipa – seeing her only as wife, mistress, experimental subject, sex object" (45). Davidson convincingly argues that Oedipa overcomes these roles along with their restrictions by taking on both male and female aspects during her journey.
3. The light referred to here is Freud's belief that talking would trigger manifestations of unconscious desires, what Anna.O., an early patient of Freud's, called the talking cure.
4. Such a fantasy contains a flaw, pointed out by Slavoj Žižek: "The paranoiac's mistake does not consist in his radical disbelief, in his conviction that there is a universal deception – here he is quite right, the symbolic order is ultimately the order of a fundamental deception – but rather, in his belief in a hidden agent who manipulates this deception" (*Looking Awry* 81).
5. Edward Mendelson provides a comprehensive discussion of Pynchon's allusions to faith through metaphor in "The Sacred, the Profane, and *The Crying of Lot 49*." Working from Pynchon's definition of a metaphor as "a thrust at truth and a lie, depending on where you were: inside, safe or outside, lost" (Pynchon 105), Mendelson likened being inside the metaphor to belief in the metaphor. Likewise, being "lost" outside is likened to a lack of faith. Nefastis is obviously devoted to the metaphor and thus sees the truth of it. Oedipa, however, "did not know where she was" (Pynchon 105), and so she struggles either to believe or see the metaphor from the outside as a violent lie produced by a paradigm to form a system.
6. Oedipa's declaration that Inverarity was dead at the end of the novel when he has been acknowledged as dead throughout the novel is odd. However, I read this statement as a symbolization of the complete annihilation of Oedipa's belief in the capitalist system. After her night amongst the disinherited, she can no longer see the truth in such a system. Pierce, as "Master" of that system, dies along with her belief in it. However, "the suspension of the Master, which reveals impotence, in no way gives rise to liberating effects: the knowledge that 'the Other doesn't exist' imposes on the subject an even more radical servitude than the traditional subordination to the full authority of the Master" (Žižek, *Plague* 158). Oedipa is thrown into a more confining world where, rather than having infinite choices, she has none.

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“To Any Dead Officer”: A Study of the War Poetry of Siegfried Sassoon

● ● ● Nathan Weller

The First World War affected many different aspects of society, including literature. In particular, an especially large group of poets expressed their feelings about the war. In the British Army alone there were many talented poets who had their work regarding the war published, in some cases post mortem. Some of the more famous British War Poets, as they came to be known, were Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen, Charles Sorley, Rupert Brooke, and Edward Thomas, all of whom died during the war. Although both Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves lived through the conflict and continued to write, it was Sassoon who became well known for his verse. A detailed study of Sassoon’s verse written during and after the war reveals a shifting view in his attitudes: prior to the battle of the Somme he wrote in favor of the war, during the post-Somme/Craiglockhart period he wrote against it, and following the war he wrote against all war in general. Later in his life, however, during World War II, his views shifted once again, ultimately making a full circle.¹

Prior to the Battle of the Somme

Although he was neither well known nor held in very high acclaim, Sassoon had had some poetry published prior to World War I. His most notable work, *The Daffodil Murderer*, was published in 1913. While satirical in nature, “The Daffodil Murderer” and some of his other pre-war poems, such as “Hyacinth” and “Amyntas,” were pastoral pieces.²

In light of the strong nationalism throughout England and much of Europe, it is not surprising that on August 1, 1914, the day Germany declared war on Russia, Sassoon was the first of the British War Poets to join the army.³ Sassoon first joined the Sussex Yeomanry because he loved and wanted to stay with his horse. His love of horses was well known, and in September he was asked to temper an officer’s new horse. While doing so, the horse threw Sassoon, and he suffered a badly broken arm.⁴ This break caused him to miss deportation to France with the rest of his unit, and he remained in England.

In May of 1915, Sassoon made 2nd Lieutenant and decided to switch regiments. Through connections he had made, he joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers. The Royal Welch Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion, 7th Division of the British 4th Army⁵ was a distinguished unit within the British Army and had fought in all the major battles of World War I up to that point.⁶

His transference to the Royal Welch Fusiliers coincided with Robert Graves’ enlistment. Robert Graves, also a published poet prior to the war though not well known, proved to have a strong influence upon Sassoon. When Sassoon and Graves met, Graves was already writing about the ugliness of the war and encouraged Sassoon to do the same. Graves was attempting to demonstrate the ugliest side of the war, while Sassoon was still painting it as a glorious endeavor.

Indeed, when Sassoon finally reached the front in 1916, he described himself at the time as a “happy warrior.” This belief may have been a false one, a belief that he himself pro-

moted. As he puts it in his semi-fictionalized memoirs, “It was that period, before the Somme battles began, which now seemed to have acquired an insidious attractiveness. No, in their reality I had intensely disliked those times.”⁷ Either way, his first war poem, “Absolution,” which appeared in *The Old-Huntsman and Other Poems*, reflects his belief in the necessity of the war for the liberation of Belgium as well as his belief in the great brotherhood that exists between soldiers:

The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes
Till beauty shines in all that we can see.
War is our scourge, yet war has made us wise
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.

Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,
And losses of things desired; all these must pass
We are the happy legion, for we know
Time’s but a golden wind that shakes the grass.
There was an hour when we were loath to part
From life we longed to share no less than others.
Now, having claimed this heritage of heart,
What need we more, my comrades and my brothers?⁸

Sassoon’s decree, “Fighting for our freedom, we are free,” promotes the idea of fighting for the freedom of occupied Belgium and of rescuing invaded France. The “happy legion” marches off to war gloriously with the same “heritage of heart.” This poem glorifies the camaraderie that can develop during war. The imagery, the word choices, and the ideas put forth in his first war poem are anything but anti-war. However, during this early period when he was new to the front, Sassoon changed from the happy warrior to the vengeful, suicidal warrior.

In 1915, the Allied forces were involved in the Gallipoli campaign to establish a strong link with their isolated ally, Russia.⁹ This continued for almost all of 1915, until the Allied Forces were finally forced to retreat after suffering horrendous casualties. The total Allied casualties were approximately 250,000 men,¹⁰ among these was Sassoon’s brother, Hamo. Sassoon received the devastating news of his brother’s death around the time he learned that his good friend David Thomas had been shot and killed.¹¹ Shortly after these deaths, Sassoon started volunteering to go on as many raids into No-Man’s Land as he could, earning a reputation for being daring to the point of being suicidal. His recklessness earned him the nickname “Mad Jack” among his men.¹²

The effects of these two deaths are also reflected in several poems by Sassoon. One of them is a very emotional piece written for Hamo, “To My Brother.” Here, Sassoon still puts forth his pro-war feelings, asking his brother not to be ashamed of him as he will go on fighting and win victory. In another poem where this is evident, “France,” Sassoon stresses the glories of France and how worthy She is to fight and to die for: “And they are fortunate, who fight/For gleaming landscapes swept and shafted/And crowned by cloud pavilions white.”¹³ Despite the tragedy of losing his brother and close friend, Sassoon still adhered to the idea that the war was being fought for a noble cause, such as sustaining France, and that those serving in the army were fortunate to be doing so.

Sassoon was also beginning to paint the war realistically rather than as an abstract ideal, probably because of his first-hand experience with it. His realism is first seen in the poem “Golgotha.” The title itself paints a very foreboding picture of death, since it is the Hebrew word for “Skull Hill” as well as the place where Christ was crucified.¹⁴ The poem describes a lonely sentry on duty with only rats for companions:

Through darkness curves a spume of falling flares

That flood the field with shallow, blanching light.
 The huddled sentry stares
 On gloom at war with white,
 And white receding slow, submerged in gloom.
 Guns into mimic thunder burst and boom
 The sentry keeps his watch where no one stirs
 But the brown rats, the nimble scavengers.¹⁵

Indeed, rats in the trenches of World War I were a terrible problem. The rats were attracted to the unburied corpses and the food which was left out. Also, one pair of rats can produce eight-hundred-eighty offspring in one year; with the conditions of the trenches in WWI, the rats were everywhere.¹⁶ This was a problem that troops on the front line had to deal with just as they dealt with the enemy: daily and brutally. The appearance of rats into the imagery of his poems is important because it shows a direct shift away from the heroism of war he had previously promoted. Instead, this poem deals with its ugly reality.

The next remarkable work in Sassoon's first book is "In the Pink," the first true questioning of the war evident in any of his poetry. In the last stanza he writes:

And then he thought: to-morrow night we trudge
 Up to the trenches, and my boots are rotten.
 Five miles of stodgy clay and freezing sludge,
 And everything but wretchedness forgotten.
 Tonight he's in the pink; but soon he'll die.
 And still the war goes on—he don't know why.¹⁷

Aside from the obvious questioning statement of the last line, perhaps the most anti-war aspect of the poem is its use of the word "sludge," a man-made waste. It shows that the soldier is thinking, in every definition of the word, what a waste the war has become.

It is interesting to note that, during the time these poems were written, Sassoon received a Military Cross for a night raid he led into No-Man's Land. He had taken no German prisoners, but Sassoon had successfully brought back all of his men, including the dead. Regarding the Military Cross, Sassoon noted, "The M.C. was a comfort to me. It was a definite personal possession to be lived up to."¹⁸ Even though Sassoon had started writing poetry displaying the human suffering caused by the war, he continued to fight and did so superbly. More than that, he was still rather proud of his accomplishments.

Speaking to this seeming contradiction, in his article, "For You May Touch Him Not," James Campbell explores the complex question of active passivity regarding Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Campbell defines "active passivity" as a war participant speaking out against the war, but still fighting. He argues that the "trench officer" (as he refers to Owen and Sassoon) embraced passivity because of the suffering of the men whom he led. Yet at the same time, the responsibility of being an officer was often more than he could bear, resulting in verbal violence against non-combatants and physical violence against the enemy.¹⁹ Violence against the enemy, and paradoxically against the British, was about to ascend to an unprecedented degree and Sassoon would experience it first-hand.

The Battle of the Somme and Craiglockhart

The Germans had launched a large attack upon Verdun, a series of forts in France. Their attack was aimed more at hurting French pride and manpower rather than at gaining ground or at achieving a strategic objective. The French were under heavy pressure to defend their forts, and the British forces decided to relieve some of this pressure by launching an attack upon the German Second Army defending the Somme sector.

The British Fourth Army (of which Sassoon's Fusiliers were part) and Third Army attacked the Germans on June 24, 1916. The losses on the British side were appalling. On the first day, the British took 60,000 casualties, of which 19,000 died. The total casualties for the battle were nearly equal at about 615,000 for the Allies (overwhelmingly British) and 650,000 for the Germans. For all this loss, however, the Allies only gained about eight miles during the entire eighteen-week battle.²⁰

Though Sassoon fought little and his battalion did not suffer heavily in the early part of the battle, he did observe the fighting and at one point saw his friend killed by a sniper. As Sassoon recounts in his memoir, he went mad with rage and attacked a German trench by himself.²¹ He actually succeeded in taking it over, although, not being able to hold it alone, he was shortly forced to retire. Once again, here was the conundrum that James Campbell addresses: Sassoon was actively participating in the war while writing against it. While Sassoon would later emerge to be completely against the war, he would never cease to participate very violently in the fighting.

Another issue Campbell addresses in his article is the idea of verbal violence against non-combatants. This idea of verbal violence towards those not participating in the war or those remaining complacent towards it is seen in poems directed towards the Anglican Church. Two excellent examples of this are “They” and “Stand-to: Good Friday Morning.” While “Stand-to” includes more religious questioning, “They” is a more direct attack upon the Church for supporting the war:

The Bishop tells us: “When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they’ll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades’ blood has bought
New right to breed an honorable race,
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.”

“We’re none of us the same!” the boys reply.
“For George lost both his legs; and Bill’s stone blind;
Poor Jim’s shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert’s gone syphilitic: you’ll not find
A chap who’s served that hasn’t found *some* change.”
And the Bishop said: “The ways of God are strange!”²²

Sassoon remarks that while walking home shortly after writing the poem: “[He] actually met ‘the Bishop’ [of London] and he turned a mild shining gaze on [him] and [his] M.C.”²³ Reading the poem and Sassoon’s following remark, one almost feels Sassoon’s anger towards this Bishop who knew nothing of what the front was like, evident in his seeming pride of Sassoon for fighting and in his encouragement of the war. Sassoon wrote this poem while on sick leave in England. It was while he was there that he truly began to acknowledge the anti-war feelings he was experiencing, which he reflected in his poetry.

When Sassoon was in England, he had the good fortune to stay with Robert Graves, who had been wounded in the Battle of the Somme. During this leave, his battalion took part in an attack upon Delville Wood. The battalion lost 200 men in three days, and Sassoon likewise lost many of his friends. It was shortly after the news of this battle that Graves was deemed in good enough health to return to the front, leaving Sassoon alone. He also left behind a publication, an anti-war propagandist magazine.²⁴

Sassoon began to read this magazine. It stated that “the sons of Europe are being crucified on the barbed wire because the misguided masses are shouting for it.”²⁵ These words stirred something that had been building inside Sassoon, causing him to put the war into question. As he remarks in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, “Was this really the truth, I wondered [...]. I thought of Dick Tiltwood [...] Fernby [...] Kendle, and all those others whose violent deaths had saddened my experience. David [Robert Graves] was now returning to be a candidate for this military martyrdom.”²⁶ He then reflects upon all he had seen during the past years of his service. He speaks of the “Commander with his rows of medal-ribbons,” of his dead friends, of all the men who had come and gone, and he wonders how many of them had been killed since then. He reaches the conclusion of his internal conflict, for he states, “Bellicose politicians and journalists were fond of using the word ‘crusade.’ But the ‘chivalry’ [...] had been mown down and blown up in July, August, and September, and its remnants had finished the year’s ‘crusade’ in a morass of torment and frustration.”²⁷ Sassoon had reached a decision on how he truly felt about the war, and his second war-time book, *Counter-Attack*

and *Other Poems*, demonstrates his anti-war feelings superbly.

Unlike its predecessor, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*, *Counter-Attack* does not have any poems unrelated to the war. While *Old Huntsman* opens with an eight-page poem about pre-war days and fox hunting, and finishes with thirty-three lyrical, pastoral poems to balance out the thirty-five poems on war, *Counter-Attack* opens with a biting poem entitled "Prelude: The Troops."²⁸ "Prelude" describes the passage of an army Sassoon dubs "the un-returning army that was youth/the legions who have suffered and are dust."²⁹

He follows this poem with a vivid description of battle in "Counter-Attack," a piece which tells of a unit having just taken a sector, now preparing for a German counterstrike. The account of the subsequent battle is not the glorious description a newspaper would publish, but rather is full of uncomfortable war imagery. Finally, the poem ends with death and the line "the counter-attack had failed."³⁰

The poems Sassoon places after "Counter-Attack" all use moving language. Many of the poems leave the reader asking, "Why?" Was this war or battle truly necessary? "The Rear-Guard," which follows "Counter-Attack," has a man, tired from "days he'd had no sleep,"³¹ who stumbles upon a body and asks it for help only to discover the person is dead. Sassoon then moves swiftly into a poem that tells the story of any typical wiring party in "Wirers," but ends on a satirical note: "Young Hughes was badly hit; I heard him carried away/Moaning at every lurch; no doubt he'll die to-day/But we can say the front-line wire's been safely mended."³² The ending seems to invoke a questioning of the war. Was this man's life worth mending the wires that protect the trenches? Will it make that much of a difference in the end? Such inquiries lead Sassoon into literary attacks upon those who supported the war, complacently or actively, such as journalists and generals, as well as women.

In "The Effect," Sassoon uses a quote from a war correspondent as an epigraph upon which to base his poem. The correspondent had observed, "the effect of our bombardment was terrific. One man told me he had never seen so many dead before."³³ Sassoon capitalizes on the statement, "He'd never seen so many dead," and uses it as the beginning lines of his first two stanzas, the effect of which is a satirical attack upon the journalists and the war. Sassoon keeps up his attack on the press in the poems "Editorial Impressions" and "Fight to a Finish." In "Fight to a Finish," Sassoon states that, when the war is won, the soldiers will take on the press and the politicians behind the war: "I heard the Yellow-Pressmen grunt and squeal/And with my trusty bombers turned and went/To clear those Junkers out of Parliament."³⁴

A few poems later, Sassoon shifts his point of attack from the journalists to the generals. The poem, "The General," is short but straight to the point, stating that the generals running the show are "incompetent swine":

GOOD-MORNING; good-morning!' the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack
But he did for them both by his plan of attack³⁵

Sassoon ends the poem with a powerful statement, indicating that it is the general's fault that the men are all dead. He keeps with this line of reasoning in "Base Generals"; here, he says that if he "were fierce, and bald, and short of breath" he'd stay behind the lines of trenches "and speed glum heroes up the line to death."³⁶

Next, Sassoon's poetry assaults the parents supporting the conflict. In "The Fathers," Sassoon describes overhearing two old men discussing their sons' performances in the war. One father is proud of how his son is fighting; the other is disappointed that his son is still training and hasn't yet been shipped off. The poem has a satirical air to it, as do many of the poems in *Counter-Attack*.

Sassoon then switches to an attack upon the women backing the war in a very mov-

ing poem titled, “Glory of Women.” In this poem, Sassoon accuses the women of encouraging the violence by worshipping heroes, by finding chivalry in a soldier’s attitude, and by making shells for the troops. He also satirically notes how women perpetuate the idea that British soldiers never “retire” and how utterly wrong they are in that belief.³⁷

This poem shifts interestingly at the end, as many of his poems do, humanizing the enemy soldier and thereby opposing the propaganda that was a large part of the war effort in World War I: for example, the idea of the German Hun killing helpless Belgian babies was widespread. In “Glory of Women,” Sassoon shifts towards the last lines to focus on the German mothers and soldiers: “O German mother dreaming by the fire/While you are knitting socks to send your son/His face is trodden deeper in the mud.”³⁸ This idea of humanizing the enemy is subtly mentioned in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*. Here, Sassoon is fascinated with the dead Germans and how human they are, even going so far as to examine one corpse.³⁹ In another passage, he describes a re-captured trench and the Germans’ corpses trampled into the mud, an obvious precursor to the last line of “Glory of Women.”

Being complacent towards the war was a crime in Sassoon’s eyes. Perhaps his most evocative piece in *Counter-Attack* directed at the complacent is “Suicide in the Trenches.” “Suicide” tells what could be the story of any young British soldier who goes off to the war and finds he cannot endure the consequent mental anguish. “Suicide in the Trenches” is very straightforward in its language: the first stanza tells the story of a happy soldier boy “who grinned at life in empty joy”; the next stanza describes how, when he reaches the front, he finds he cannot stand the conditions. The last six lines show the results:

He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you’ll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.⁴⁰

The last stanza is reserved for those who remain complacent with the war. By changing the direction of the narrative from “he” to “you,” Sassoon successfully changes the entire feeling and launches an attack upon the reader, in this case British citizens resting safely at home in England and helping the war effort.

Sassoon’s anti-war poetry was not first published as a book of collected works: he wrote poems and sent them off to various magazines for publication. *Cambridge Magazine*, an anti-war magazine, published many of his poems and introduced him into some pacifist and conscientious objector circles.⁴¹ They were immensely influential to him, as was the overthrow of Czarist Russia, inspiring Sassoon to continue writing about the war.

In a bid to end the war, the new Bolshevik government in Russia had made public the Allies’ secret treaties regarding the post-war division of German colonies. This led Sassoon to believe the war was being carried out for economic gain and not for the liberation of France or Belgium. Sassoon began to feel that his poetry was not enough, that he must do more for his fellow soldiers who were dying in the trenches in France. Accordingly, Sassoon decided to write his infamous “Soldier’s Proclamation.”⁴²

This declaration was one of conscientious objection against the prolongation of the war, how Sassoon had come to view the current fighting. He sent a copy of his declaration to his superior officer, to Parliament, and to Robert Graves:

‘Finished With The War’
A Soldier’s Declaration

I am making this statement as an act of willful defiance of military authority, because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.

I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defense and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and

my fellow-soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them, and that, had this been done, the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust.

I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.

July, 1917.

S. Sassoon⁴³

The military saw the letter as treasonous and so was forced to deal with Sassoon. Not wanting to make a martyr of him by shooting him, (thanks to the maneuverings of Robert Graves to get Sassoon put before a medical board) the military declared Sassoon was suffering from war-neuroses, or “shell-shock.” Sassoon was sent to Craiglockhart, a mental hospital in Scotland, where he came under the care of Dr. W.H. Rivers, who was studying shell-shock victims. As Sassoon recounted in *Sherston's Progress*, he felt that Rivers knew he wasn't suffering from shell-shock, but they debated the validity of the war and so helped Sassoon deal with his emotional frustration. Rivers also influenced Sassoon to write the poem “Repression of War Experience,” the title of which was directly taken from one of Rivers' lectures.⁴⁴ Many of the poems in *Counter-Attack* were written during Sassoon's stay at Craiglockhart.

While staying at the hospital, Sassoon had some very important revelations concerning how he viewed the war. One example is that he had come to understand that true reality for him was the war and not life behind the lines. Another is that he began to feel guilty about his brother soldiers dying in the trenches while he remained in Scotland, playing golf and writing verse with his new-found friend, Wilfred Owen. In *Sherston's Progress*, Sassoon writes of dreams he had in which he sees the ghost of “Young Ormand” walking around the hospital at night.⁴⁵ Sassoon addresses these feelings in two powerful poems, “Sick Leave” and “Banishment.”

“Sick Leave” describes the dead visiting him while he sleeps. They ask him why he was not with them in the front line. He awakes and comments, “When are you going out to them again/Are they not still your brothers through our blood?”⁴⁶ He then moves on in “Banishment” to explain why it was that he wrote the “Soldier's Proclamation” and why he will be returning to the front line soon: “By grappling guns. Love drove me to rebel/Love drives me back to grope with them through hell.”⁴⁷

After Craiglockhart and the War

Sassoon departed from Craiglockhart and set about to return to the Western Front. By returning to the front, he demonstrated the active passivity that James Campbell discusses in his article: though having been sent to a military hospital for a mutinous statement about the war, Sassoon willingly returned to the front.

By continuing to fight in the war, he served the very arm-chair generals whom he had attacked in his poetry. It was during this time period that many of the poems for his third book, *Picture Show*, were written. His poems now move to a very despondent look on life. They reflect the idea developed at Craiglockhart that no one can stop war. His poems take on a bitter tone, and, while they do not support the war, there are not as many outright condemnations of war as there are in *Counter-Attack*. The title poem reflects this helpless feeling towards the war, as the speaker is forced into a role of useless observance of men fighting and dying:

And still they come and go; and this is all I know-
That from the gloom I watch an endless picture-show,
Where wild or listless faces flicker on their way,
With glad or grievous hearts I'll never understand
Because Time spins so fast, and they've not time to stay
Beyond the moment's gesture of a lifted hand.

And still, between the shadow and the blinding flame,
The brave despair of men flings onward, ever the same
As in those doom-lit years that wait them, and have been...
And life is just the picture dancing on the screen.⁴⁸

The Great War came to an end on November 11, 1918. The numbers of casualties were staggering. Out of a total sixty-five million men mobilized on both sides, eight million died and another twenty-one million were wounded.⁴⁹ The victims of the war are often referred to as the lost generation, a title Barbara Tuchman gives a fitting mathematical illustration in her book, *The Guns of August*. In it she notes that "the known dead per capita of population were one to twenty-eight for France, one to thirty-two for Germany, one to fifty-seven for England and one to one-hundred-seven for Russia."⁵⁰ Many families were dealing with the loss of a loved one, and it was immediately after the war that Sassoon wrote the poem "Reconciliation."

"Reconciliation" deals with families mourning their losses. In the poem, Sassoon once again compares the war to Golgotha, the place where Jesus was crucified, and which translates into "Hill of Skulls." Sassoon also reminds the suffering, allied mothers that, if they go to the graves in France, they might find "the mothers of the men who killed your son" grieving as well.⁵¹ Thus, he again brings to the forefront the humanity of the Germans. Even the title, "Reconciliation," hints at more than just coming to terms with the grief of loss. The poem may very well be Sassoon's attempt to urge his fellow country men not to be vengeful towards the Germans. He urges the reader to remember "the German soldiers who were loyal and brave." Appropriately, while "Reconciliation" was being written, negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles were taking place. The Treaty of Versailles would make Germany claim responsibility for World War I as well as pay reparations to the allied countries.

Only about half of the poems in *Picture Show* continue in the fashion of *Counter-Attack*'s bitterness towards the war and Sassoon's attempt to bring the truth of the war to public awareness. Clearly, Sassoon was beginning to move away from writing solely on World War I.

The final poem, "Everyone Sang," seems at first glance not to be about the war. Upon closer examination, however, it is about Sassoon's war poetry and the war's end. Stuart Sillars discusses "Everyone Sang" in great detail in his book, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing: 1910-1920*. Stuart interprets "Everyone Sang" as Sassoon reacting almost bitterly towards the end of the war. The poem starts out as a celebration that the war is over, and the ending lines make the reader feel as though Sassoon's role as anti-war literary leader is over and done with: "O, but Everyone was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done."⁵² Poetry is often referred to as "songs," and, reevaluating the last line in that context, Sassoon might very well have seen no more need for his poetry. The war was over. As millions of soldiers return from the front—and millions more do not—the true horror of the war was exposed without a doubt: the words of a soldier poet were no longer needed because the true ramifications of the war were now evident to the citizens who had stayed at home.⁵³

Accordingly, the rest of the poems in *Picture Show*, while still displaying some of his anti-war feelings, also portray his attempt to adapt to the coming literary times with non-war themes. Poems such as "Butterflies," "Idyll" and "Slumber Song" all discuss non-war ideals.

Sassoon produced many semi-autobiographical accounts of the war and of his life,

most notably his *Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man*. Sassoon also continued to write poetry. *Satirical Poems*, *The Hearts Journey*, *The Road to Ruin*, *Vigils* and *Rhymed Ruminations* were all written and published after the war. The majority of these books did contain a few anti-war poems. The inclusion of such poems in his later works suggests that Sassoon was still against war to the same extent that he was during the war, especially since all of the poems deal with the First World War with the special exception of *The Road to Ruin*.

The Road to Ruin appeared in 1933, a slim volume of eight poems condemning war in general.⁵⁴ This was an important shift in how Sassoon viewed war. Previously, all of his poems had attacked World War I only; *The Road to Ruin* was not about any particular war, but about the general idea. In the title poem, "Road to Ruin," Sassoon sends his hopes into the future; however, none return. Finally, a ghost of his hopes returns to warn him, "No, not that way; no, not that way."⁵⁵ Given the fact that in less than ten years the worst war the world had ever seen would begin, this first poem is a chilling foresight. The title poem is followed by a quote from Albert Einstein that lays the charge that war is promoted by a "small but determined group" responsible for "manufacture and sale of arms" and encouraging war simply "to advance their personal interests."⁵⁶

Following the Einstein quote are seven more strong anti-war poems. None of the poems have the same descriptions of brutality as the war poems that Sassoon produced during the Great War, but rather they argue that war in general is bad, not just because of what the soldiers experience, but because of the total death, carnage, and brutal acts involved.

In the next poem, "At the Cenotaph," Satan prays to God for war and encourages men to fight. Following this poem is "Mimic Warfare," in which Sassoon happens upon a mock battle by English troops while riding his horse in the countryside and is disheartened to see them want to practice war. He also attacks the press again, writing, "No casualties occur in such manoeuvres/(Blandly reported in to-morrow's *Times*)."⁵⁷ "A Premonition" and "The Ultimate Atrocity" discuss the terrible inclusion of technology into war. "News from the War-After-Next" discusses the rise of a military state and the death of idealism, as well as another attack upon the role the Church seems to play in war: "The last Idealist was lynched this morning/By the Beelzebub's Cathedral congregation."⁵⁷ In the second to last poem, "An Unveiling," a speaker discusses how, in the past war, no one died in vain. Apparently nothing was resolved either, however, because the government still decides to create a gas and bomb-proof shelter.

It is important to view these poems in relationship to the time. During the ten years prior to 1933, while much of Europe worked on disarmament, Germany focused on rearmament. The Nazi party was on the rise in Germany and in 1933 Hitler became Chancellor.⁵⁸ Mussolini rose to power in Italy and held hopes for a new Italian empire through military conquest. Indeed, the last idealist that Sassoon spoke of may have been Giacomo Matteotti, killed in 1924 for opposing Mussolini.⁵⁹ These events drove Sassoon to remind the world of the horrors of war through his poetry.

In 1945, Sassoon added an interesting poem to *The Road to Ruin*, "Litany of the Lost." In three stanzas, this poem attempts to summarize what Sassoon must have felt upon the conclusion of World War II: "Deliver us from ourselves."⁶⁰ He describes his loss of faith in human good and the realization of a world with atomic weapons. What is surprising about "Litany of the Lost" is that it is not a condemnation of war like so many of his other poems, but a poem which paints a cynical picture of humanity.

Even more surprising are two poems he wrote at the very beginning of World War II. They present a brief shift in his feelings toward war. "The English Spirit" and "Silent Service" were both written during the Battle of Britain, during which England, and especially London, were subject to continuous bombings from German planes. Both poems recognize that war may be necessary at times.

"The English Spirit" tells the story of Apollyon (the devil) employing armaments and bombing cities into oblivion. The end of the poem calls upon the strength of the English people, saying the heroes of the English past have returned to stand with "us now in unimpassioned ranks/Till we have braved and broken overcast/The cultural crusade of Teutonic

tanks.”⁶¹ This language is evocative of First World War propaganda, bringing to mind the medieval image of a German as a Teutonic knight, leading a charge of tanks against the British people standing side by side with their dead heroes. “Silent Service” is even more outspoken in support of the defense of England against Germany. Sassoon calls upon all of England to defend Earth’s freedom: “None are exempt from service in this hour”⁶².

These two poems and “Litany of the Lost” pose an interesting dilemma in Sassoon’s progression of anti-war ideology. Suddenly, two poems seemingly carry Sassoon’s literary stamp of approval for the use of force while “Litany of the Lost” is more of a cynical view of the future than a poem against war.

Together, the three poems force the conclusion that Sassoon was against war, but understood that at times it was necessary. Sassoon watched the appeasement of Hitler fail and realized the only thing left with which to meet fire was fire. Upon this realization, Sassoon felt he had a duty to endorse this specific war against German aggression, and wrote two poems calling upon his fellow citizens to do what they must to defeat the enemy.

Thus, Sassoon had almost made a full circle. Entering the First World War full of the belief in the liberation of Belgium, he quickly became disenchanted and disillusioned with the motives of those waging the war and began to write against it, eventually refusing to serve for the brief period that he spent at Craiglockhart hospital. He would never return to the “happy warrior,” having already once experienced the reality of war. But, even during the midst of the First World War he hinted at certain situations when war is necessary and just. In his “Soldier’s Declaration,” he states that he entered the war because he saw it as a “war of defense and liberation.”⁶³ Certainly, his declaration makes it clear that acts of aggression are not “acceptable,” for he speaks out against “war of aggression and conquest.”⁶⁴ After Germany had taken over most of Europe and began to bomb Great Britain, Sassoon realized the extent of German aggression and the necessity of liberation; Sassoon watched appeasement fail and realized that victory through war was the only option left. Thus, he returned to the medium that made him famous for protesting war, writing two poems encouraging his fellow citizens to defend themselves. Ultimately, however, after the dropping of the atomic bomb and the devastation of the Second World War, Sassoon exhibits a loss of hope towards humankind, for, as he says in “Litany of the Lost,” “In breaking of belief in human good...save us from ourselves.”

Notes

1. In researching various authors’ interpretations of Sassoon’s poetry, I have found that most poetic analyses center on Sassoon’s homosexual feelings and how he veils these feelings in his war poems. I have not yet found any single work that only examines Sassoon’s anti-war growth through all of his war poetry. I must allow for the possibility that such a work does exist. Certainly, during my research I came across works that examine his anti-war sentimentality and how it is expressed in his poetry, but all of these critiques only focus on one or two of his poems at a time, using only those written during World War I.
2. Patrick Campbell, *Siegfried Sassoon: A Study of the War Poetry* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1999), 18-19.
3. Jean Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon: The Making of a War Poet* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 180.
4. Wilson, 183.
5. Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1930).
6. Wilson, 192.
7. Siegfried Sassoon, *Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937), 658.
8. Siegfried Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems* (New York: EP Dutton & Com-

pany, 1918).

9. Trevor and Ernest Dupuy, *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History* (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1993).

10. For more information on the battle, see *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1044.

11. See Wilson, 239.

12. See Wilson, 245.

13. Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*.

14. John 19:17, *Life Application Study Bible; the New Living Translation* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996)

15. See Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*.

16. Spartacus Education Webpage, n.d., <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWrats.htm>>.

17. See Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*.

18. For a better description of the night raid, see *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, 65.

19. James Campbell, "'For You May Touch Him Not': Misogyny, Homosexuality and the Ethics of Passivity in First World War Poetry" (ELH 64, 1997).

20. See Dupuy and Dupuy, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Military History*.

21. See Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*.

22. Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*.

23. Siegfried Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon: The War Poems*, arranged by Rupert Hart-Davis (Chatham Faber and Faber Ltd, 1983), 57.

24. Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, 142.

25. Ibid, 143.

26. Ibid, 143.

27. Ibid, 144

28. Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*.

29. Sassoon, *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*.

30. Barth, "Sassoon's Counter-Attack" (*Explicator*, 1991). Barth argues in his article "Sassoon's Counter-Attack", that this poem is a literary attack upon Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" and the entire British literary tradition of glorifying war.

31. Sassoon, *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. See Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, 75.

40. Sassoon, *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*.

41. Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That* (New York: Doubleday, 1929).

42. Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*, 587-600.

43. Graves, 260.

44. Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon: The War Poems*.

45. Sassoon, "Sherston's Progress," in *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*, 644.

46. Sassoon, *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*.

47. Ibid.

48. Siegfried Sassoon, *The Picture Show* (New York: EP Dutton & Company, 1920).

49. For a detailed breakdown of total casualties, see Dupuy and Dupuy, *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1083.
50. Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), 439.
51. Sassoon, *The Picture Show*.
52. Ibid.
53. Stuart Sillars, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing, 1910-1920* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999), 135-137.
54. Siegfried Sassoon, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1947).
55. Ibid.
56. Albert Einstein, quoted in "The Road to Ruin," in Sassoon, *Collected Poems*.
57. Sassoon, *Collected Poems*.
58. Dupuy and Dupuy, *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1132.
59. *Grolier Universal Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Mussolini," 213.
60. Sassoon, *Collected Poems*.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Graves, "A Soldier's Declaration" taken from *Good-bye to All That*, 260
64. Ibid, 260.



Philips, Adam. *On Kissing, Tickling, and Being Bored: Psychoanalytic Essays on the Unexamined Life*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993. 138pp.

● ● ● Ashar Foley

Adam Philips' interesting collection of unorthodox essays explores the narrative rather than the curative potential of psychoanalysis, challenging Freud's attempts to ally it with science in order to give it greater validity in the eyes of his contemporaries as well as his own. Philips asserts in his introduction that psychoanalysis in a purely scientific context is stripped of its flexibility and universality: the total merit of the practice is not in its quest for the cure or for a normative life-story resulting from a successful progression of developmental stages, but in its discourse on what makes up a good life and the possibility of "many kinds of good life" (4). Rather than confining its use to that of absolute, diagnostic technique, psychoanalysis is more advantageously employed as a discussion, "worth having only if it makes our lives more interesting" (4). Thus, we can use it to enrich even (and especially) the most overlooked, quotidian minutiae such as those suggested in the title. The author does not dismiss the scientific aspect of psychoanalytic method, however, stressing the need for both ways of talking and writing about psychoanalysis. He merely points out that, when examining life-stories, "a repertoire might be more useful than a conviction" (4).

True to his thesis, Philips' essays are written in a wandering, Lacanian fashion, reflecting the flow of the unconscious rather than a logical, methodical progression of ideas. He draws mostly from the schools of Winnicott and Klein in his examination of the "unexamined"—that is to say the most ordinary phenomena of development and everyday life largely ignored by Freud. As does most of the book, the chapters discussed in this review center around the Winnicottian "holding environment," the developmental phase in which the child first recognizes himself as separate from the mother and begins to investigate his own dimensions and limitations. The main undertaking, then, is to explore the discussions we can have about "normative" behavioral phenomena in the context of holding.

The third of eleven chapters, "On Risk and Solitude," addresses the role of solitude in determining what we value. Although a prevalent mode in infancy, solitude in itself is not discussed in Freud's works, elaborating instead on such abstracted solitary behaviors as mourning, dreaming, and narcissism. Freud associates solitude with absence, a frightening anticipatory state during which the child waits in the dark for his mother. In contrast, Philips posits the fullness of solitude as the mode in which the child becomes aware of his desire, and thus of his Self. Solitude, after all, is only experienced in relation to an object—the child can only know of his aloneness after he has known company. The advent of solitude therefore heralds the end of primary narcissism (the stage prior to any distinction between the Self and that which is exterior to the Self) as the child comes to regard himself as separate from his mother while still within her presence. Because a return to the narcissistic stage is impossible,

the child is unable to regain the former physical and psychical connection with the mother and so develops a desire for her that can never be fulfilled.

This creates ambivalence—although he wishes to be cared for, the child must entrust himself to an Other beyond his control whose desires do not always refer to him—and resentment. The infant thus rages simultaneously for and against dependence; he must find a way both to accept his passivity and assert his freedom. This can only be done through risk, an experiment that provides knowledge both of the Self and of the objects independent of the Self (and therefore dependable). Philips offers Winnicott's discussion of risky adolescent behavior as an example: as the teenager uses drugs or partakes in reckless sexual acts, he asserts his independence from the body/sexuality that eludes his control. At the same time, he tests the dependability of his body, engaging it in a sort of dialogue: "Is it a safe house? Is it reliable? Does it have other allegiances?" (32). In this way, he creates a "holding environment" reminiscent of the one he experienced in infancy. Forming an idea of and confidence in the object enables him to accept her freedom at the same time he accepts her passivity: "His capacity for a beneficent solitude will depend on his being able to entrust himself to his body as a sufficiently holding environment" (32). The patient of psychoanalysis also engages in risk through free association—he entrusts himself to the unpredictability of what he will say next in order to test the expectations and responses of the analyst. A good analyst, like a mother who gives her child space, will allow her patient to create a holding environment in which to explore his thoughts and independently advance his analysis. Therefore, within an environment of his own creation, the analysand does the therapy work in relation to the analyst.

Insofar as the "good life" is concerned, risk permits us to gauge what we value. It is crucial to a healthy, social existence to have concern for others, but it is even more crucial to personal development to suspend this concern in risk. This is so because objects demand concern; in risk we focus on our own desire and suspend concern for the Other, testing both the objectivity of and our relation to the Other. It is only when we feel guilt for this suspension and our reparations are accepted that we acknowledge the Other's subjectivity. Allow me to compare this to a child's attempt to build a tower out of blocks: seeing his mother's delight at his accomplishment, the child knocks over the blocks, suspending his concern for her desire. He then feels guilt and apologizes. If all goes well, she promptly forgives him after showing some disappointment. Through this experiment, the boy learns of his mother's dependability as a loving entity. More importantly, he learns of her desire and therefore of her subjectivity. Here, Philips observes that "two solitudes are created," affirming the connection between solitude, desire, and subjectivity.

Also, the mother's survival of the child's efforts to nullify her sets her apart as something beyond his control—what Winnicott calls the "benign circle" (suspension of concern, rapacious desire, destruction, guilt, and reparation) is a form of risk that establishes the constancy of the object to which the risker entrusts himself (36). The lesson of the chapter is ultimately that we can gain self-knowledge only in relation to the Other, exploring what Lacanian psychoanalysis would designate as the entrance into the Symbolic realm of desire almost exclusively through the terminology and ideas of Winnicott and Klein.

The fifth essay, "Worrying and Its Discontents," examines a different aspect of the holding environment. Philips looks at how children use worries to combat their ambivalence toward their mothers, and thus their ambivalence toward dependence. Guided in part by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the essay flows along the progression of several etymological

inquiries (a technique often used by Freud), mimicking the interpretive component of free association and making it the most loosely organized piece in the book. The author begins the section by relating the comment of a ten-year-old male patient: in response to the question “What are worries?” the boy replies, “Farts that don’t work” and consents that some worries merit keeping (47). Philips promptly picks apart this description of worries, exposing its implications—what is the “work” that worries are not doing? What characteristics do “farts that don’t work” and worries share in common? He concludes the two could be described as obstructions of experience, the exchange of which could cause displeasure in others: “for this boy, then, worrying could be a form of emotional constipation, an unproductive mental process that got him nowhere; and this was part of its value to him” (48). This “getting nowhere” is exactly the static result of ambivalence: the boy both placates his mother with worries for her to solve, earning solitude for himself, and evokes her desire, drawing her to him by way of a sort of oedipal mechanism. As in “On Risk and Solitude,” the subject experiments with his relation to the Other, at the same time “filling in” and appealing to the Other’s lack.

Worries in themselves also have a dual aspect. To illustrate this, Philips resorts to the *Oxford English Dictionary* to trace the evolution of the meaning of “to worry.” In its earliest usage, “worry” was a hunting term synonymous to strangulation. It then came to mean “to devour,” and then “to agitate.” Philips notes that, sometime in the nineteenth century, “to worry” became a reflexive action as well as something one does to another person or thing. Thus, we can direct worries at others or use them on ourselves, evoking the possibility of both master and victim relations to our worries. Returning to the etymology of the word, Philips poses the question, what are we trying to devour in others and in ourselves by worrying?

To explore this function of worrying, he compares worries to dreams, immediately noting that there is no “worry work”—that is to say, worries do not mask their meaning: “all of us may be surrealists in our dreams, but in our worries we are incorrigibly bourgeois” (55). Indeed, worries are very specific, so much so that they oversimplify the problem addressed—the worrier as object of his worries oversimplifies or suppresses himself, while the worrier who projects outward suppresses the Other. This suppressive function is underlined by the fact that, while dreams allow introspection, the worry does not call its objects into question; whereas the dream looks back, the worry always anticipates the future. Ultimately precluding external interference and self-appraisal, the worry “regulates intimacy” in an effort of self-preservation (58). Philips compares this to Winnicott’s concept of “False Self,” a relation constructed in self-defense by the infant towards an invasive mother. In other words, when the infant does not feel the mother allows him enough space in which to develop a holding environment, he presents her with a “False Self” to provide freedom for his True Self. Worries, then, are a way to stabilize our psychic environment, keeping others at a comfortable distance as well as “domesticat[ing] self doubt” (58). Although this enables us to maintain our focus regarding certain activities, it is a means of obscuring perceived reality, as do dreams. In a concluding comparison between dreams and worries, Philips states that both phenomena attempt to defy interpretation but neither is completely successful. Ultimately, both provide often profound amounts of insight regarding the desires and anxieties of the subject.

The seventh chapter, “On Being Bored,” adds an unexpected dimension to the holding environment/ambivalent attitude toward mothering. Unsurprisingly, boredom does not appear to be an intriguing enough topic for psychoanalytic examination. In its defense, Philips explains the Freudian and Kleinian psychoanalytic omission of this less spectacular phenom-

ena: “as psychoanalysis has brought to our attention the passionate intensity of the child’s internal world, it has tended to equate significance with intensity and so has rarely found a place, in theory, for all those less vehement, vaguer, often more subtle feelings and moods that much of our lives consist of” (68). Conversely, Winnicott’s work was the first to investigate the more “quiescent” states of childhood, and thus is the most organic to Philips’ thesis and the most appropriate to his discussion of boredom.

Far from being a lack of “something to do,” Philips posits boredom as a mood or attitude in which one waits not on something external but on one’s Self. He describes boredom as a kind of “free-floating attention,” an objectless gaze, a lull in active immersion in one’s surroundings (69). As illuminated above, this boredom employs the two projects children have in relation to their parents—those of self-sufficiency and dependence. These projects are codependent and require the nurturing but *laissez-faire* holding environment that develops in the space between child and parent in order to be carried out properly. The child realizes that he wants the increasingly preoccupied mother in unison with his need for escape from her—the breast, for example, is simultaneously nourishing and oppressive. But in order to find some other object, he must first turn inward and “find himself as the source of possibilities”; he must ask himself what he desires. This ambivalence-inspired occupation of the Self occurs in the holding environment, the maintenance of which is crucial. The mother who recognizes the necessity of allowing boredom becomes a living embodiment of this environment; she serves as a “transformational object, “the “object” (though the infant does not perceive her as such) in relation to which the child makes the transformation into desiring subject. Unfortunately and to the child’s detriment, the seemingly unproductive state of boredom is not well-received with parents and is often discouraged; “it is one of the most oppressive demands of adults that the child should be interested, rather than take time to find what interests him” (70). If a child feels he is “not allowed to be bored” (a quote from one of Philips’ patients), he will compulsively seek out desire by throwing himself into activity and lose his capacity for boredom. This frantic outward display of interest is another manifestation of the False Self discussed in “Worrying and Its Discontents.”

While the bored Self has more potential than the falsified Self, the former is to all appearances empty. Philips compares it to Freud’s definitions of mourning and melancholia (in the latter’s essay of the same name), describing boredom as both an impoverishment of the external world (mourning) and of the ego (melancholia) (74). The resulting lull acts as a space for interest gradually to arise in preparation for something unknown. Because the object of desire has not yet presented itself, boredom cannot properly be called “waiting” nor can it be called an expectant state. Thus boredom protects the individual from anxiety by not disclosing the fact that he was waiting until he has found the object of his desire.

Here, children have an advantage over adults, as waiting takes precedence in adulthood and the disinterested attitude of boredom gives way to a restless, committed anticipation of elusive objects. Adults tend to insist on and invest too much in their desire, neglecting the two opposed advantages of being bored, “the lure of a possible object of desire, and the lure of the escape from desire, of its meaninglessness” (76). Boredom, then, is a variant of waiting that is free of neuroses.

Adam Philips’ collection of essays does not easily lend itself to summary or description. Concisely stating the contents of the arguments is a bit like making a story out of dream segments as Philips meanders from one point to the next, proposes new avenues that are

never pursued, and injects quotes *sans* preface by people from Bob Dylan to William Blake. *On Kissing, Tickling, and Being Bored* is provocative and pleasurable to read, yielding new insights at each reading. What is truly remarkable about the book (and the thesis) is Philips' ability to take a single psychoanalytic phenomenon and elicit several separate and intriguing narratives from it. In addition to the chapters discussed above, he explores the holding environment and ambivalence in the contexts of tickling, composure, the maternal relationship of analyst to analysand, the role of obstacles, and kissing. One may wonder what other discussions would be possible using the paternal aspect of Lacanian psychoanalysis along with the mother/infant theories of Winnicott and Klein, but, insofar as it goes, the overall achievement of the work is its stunning testimony to the plasticity of psychoanalysis in its narrative ability to make life more interesting, and thus more "good."



Scribner, Robert W. For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 368pp.

● ● ● Katherine Helge-

In the book *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, R. W. Scribner studies visual propaganda and its role in the dissemination of the evangelical movement during the first half-century of Reformation Germany. Scribner posits that although much has been written on the spread and use of visual propaganda in the Reformation, it has been the subject of no thorough systematic investigation. He writes that historians in the past have had a blind spot when it came to images and that more interest has been devoted to pamphlets in the assumption that their content reflects the views of those for whom they were intended. Scribner believes that the conjecture that people of any social class in that age gained their knowledge primarily through the printed word is false. Scribner's hope is that, through a study of visual propaganda, we may gain a wider knowledge of how the Reformation appealed to common folk than is possible by concentrating on the printed word alone. Scribner's research strategy throughout this book attempts to "penetrate the visual message of broadsheets by unraveling the language they spoke as a specifically hybrid (oral, print and visual) form of communication" (xv). Scribner's research approach includes methods of iconography, iconology and semiology and focuses attention on the propagandist broadsheets and the slim pamphlets or chapbooks of Germany. His primary sources include images found in print rooms and fine art museums.

Scribner divides his book into nine chapters. In chapter one, he begins his discourse by establishing the visual nature of Reformation Germany. He writes that few were truly able to read and that literacy was concentrated mostly in towns and in the southwest portion of the country. No more than 5% of the population could read, and most people would have had to have broadsheets read to them (3). In fact, some broadsheets and pamphlets actually instructed their readers to pass the message on to those who could not read (6). Scribner goes on to emphasize the visual nature of the culture by citing the increase in mystics and popular devotions such as the veneration of the Veronica cloth and the use of woodcut pictures of saints in prayer. One printed book would be sold to approximately 20,000 readers, but in just one day just as many woodcut tokens of images of saints for pilgrimages would be sold (4). Because of the visually oriented nature of the masses, the effectiveness of the visual message in propaganda needed to be as strong as the written word.

The first point Scribner deals with is images of Luther. Scribner divides these images into three categories. The first category features Luther portrayed as a saint. Early images of Luther place him within the framework of divine history by using symbols or stories from the traditional church. As a saint, Luther's break from the Church is legitimized as he is given authority from a source above and beyond the Church. These images also imply that those

opposed to the source of Luther's inspiration are also opposed to God. The second category of Luther portraits are of Luther as the teacher of true doctrine, opponent of false belief, and expositor of the un-Christian nature of the Church. The third category depicts Luther as a national or humanist hero. One example Scribner shows is of "Luther as the German Hercules." Here the propagandists draw from classical myth, appealing mainly to humanists. Propaganda in this category was circulated little and did not continue as the movement progressed – probably, as Scribner suggests, because the subject matter was not easily identifiable to the common man.

What Scribner shows in the next chapter is that the next step in the propaganda process leads the viewer from one line of argument to another by chain association. The title of this chapter is "Enemies of the Gospel" and shows how Reformation propaganda contrasted the un-Christian practices of the Church with those of the true followers of the Word. Scribner shows how a pre-Reformation tradition of anti-clericalism and anti-monasticism from the late 1500's is continued and strengthened through association with Luther's doctrine. In some cases, images from pre-Reformation criticism of monastic drunkenness, gluttony and sexual vice were directly incorporated into Reformation propaganda. Reformation propaganda furthers this notion by illustrating that monks are not only un-Christian but also enemies of Christ. They then equate the Church with the anti-Christ. To prove their point, they use biblical criteria. They show that monks are anti-Christian because they reject the Bible. To illustrate their point, they reshape biblical situations that the people were sure to recognize—parables such as 'the Good Shepherd' or metaphors such as 'darkness and light' in order to convey the messages. To gain support, Reformation propaganda against monasteries also drew on socio-economic grievances of the time. Many broadsheets equate monkish vice with economic exploitation, particularly appealing to the poor. Many of the broadsheets are binary in composition—a long-held tradition in the church of illustrating opposing images, such as depictions of Heaven and Hell. The Reformers, however, contrasted the "Church's Forgiveness," indulgences which the poor could not afford, with "True Forgiveness," where any man could confess of his own will.

In chapter four, Scribner addresses the use of popular culture in Reformation propaganda. Scribner shows how propagandists appealed directly to the hearts of the simple man through illustrations that incorporated common social customs and cultural symbols of the lower strata. For example, many propagandist images were of play. Scribner writes that the function of play was to reduce the high and serious to the level of the comic and mundane. This kind of criticism robbed the exalted members of the Church of their aura of sanctity, showing them as common men. Here, Scribner focuses most of his attention on the idea of the Carnival, the most popular and universally attended form of play in the Middle Ages. During Carnival there was a suspension of norms. The lower classes parodied the officials including monks and priests, in mock dramas of official offices. Scribner writes that it was only natural to turn these images from realistic to propagandist. In several images reproduced in the book, the Pope is shown as a carnival puppet: because a puppet deceives only the young or foolish, this implied that the Pope was deceiving the masses with his false teachings. It also showed that the Pope's beliefs were of straw and rags (puppet material), while Luther's were of the true God. Another way of reducing a person in the Renaissance was through a letter of strong resentment called a *Schandbild*, which heaped abuses on an enemy. These usually were sent to one's enemy and included an illustration of the person being hung. Hanging was reserved

only for the lowest classes, so this was a great insult. In the Reformation, Luther himself made such images for the Pope and Cardinals. Scribner also writes about the use of the “material bodily principle” in Reformation propaganda. Many images of church officials show them heaped in dung or in some way producing bodily wastes. The intent was to lower the standing these people had in the minds of the masses and to show that they were no different from anyone else. In this chapter, Scribner effectively describes how the propagandists effectively drew from easily identifiable codes and cultural phenomenon of the time to draw attention to their cause.

Chapter five examines how popular belief and its symbols were drawn upon to spread the Reformation message and especially how the popular devotional imagery was reshaped to this end. One of the most influential communal devotions was the procession that occurred during feast days, fairs, or in times of distress to call upon God’s intervention. Processions were very visual and included banners, displays of the sacraments and the hierarchy of the church. In broadsheets, these invocations of the saints became carnivalesque parodies of the excesses and abuses of the Church as they participated in various immoral acts. Reformation propaganda also incorporated many common superstitious beliefs. The Reformation came about in an age of great interest in the Apocalypse due to prophesies proclaiming the end of the world and an increase in astronomical research. Misbirths, deformities and visions all pointed to the end of the world and to alliance with the devil, so much so that people looked for these signs in the world around them. Reformist propaganda preyed upon this fatalistic view and incorporated these signs into their works (for example, they might show the Pope as a monstrous being). Lutheran astronomers prophesied the downfall of the Church and the rise of a new faith built on the Word, while visionaries in the style of Hildegard of Bingen saw Luther enthroned in heaven. All these popular beliefs, Scribner shows, were illustrated in ways the public could understand.

In chapter six Scribner shows how apocalyptic Reformation propaganda developed fully with the Pope emerging as the Anti-Christ in a world turned upside down. Scribner writes that by the end of the fifteenth century, the Anti-Christ was a common figure in works of popular writers and even had his own biography. The use of the Anti-Christ in protest of the church was not new. Franciscan Spiritualist and Joachimite movements had used the figure in opposition to the Church in the past. Since Lutheran propaganda had already established that the Pope stood in opposition to the Word, it was an easy step to identifying the Pope with the Anti-Christ. Most commonly, the propaganda would present the corruption of the Pope and his Church in opposition to the life of Christ. For example, one image might depict Jesus fleeing the Jews who attempt to crown him king, while another image nearby shows the Pope defending his position with cannons and swords. In other depictions, the Pope takes on the form of the three-headed dragon from apocalyptic literature. These scenes show the Apocalypse in full swing in present-day Germany with recognizable people and places. These illustrations of the Last Days, Scribner writes, were perhaps the most moving and influential of all the Lutheran propaganda because they hit home with an audience already obsessed with the Apocalypse. They confirmed that the Last Days were at hand and that the Anti-Christ was in fact the cause of it, giving the public a figure to combat. This lent their argument legitimacy and credence because it was confirmed by scripture, contemporary events and prophesy, which the Lutherans fit into the apocalyptic story. The most important strength of this theme was that the Pope could be seen as the Anti-Christ in both person (as a beast) and in actions (in contrast to

Christ).

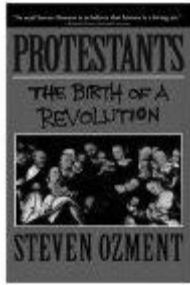
In chapter seven, Scribner looks at Reformation propaganda from the end of the Reformation period that not only characterized the two kinds of belief but also portrayed two separate institutions. Scribner shows how this was established through examples of images of the Lutheran sacraments. Depictions of Baptism, especially infant Baptism, distinguished Lutheranism from Anabaptist belief, while a stress on the real presence in Communion separated it from Zwinglian belief. Many later pieces also sought to establish a kind of apostolic succession among the founders of the movement. For example, one image portrays Wycliff kindling a spark in a tinderbox, from which Hus takes a light. From Hus's flame Luther lights a torch that is passed to Melancthon. Often these figures were put into biblical stories as witnesses or participants. Scribner sees this as a way in which the new church attempted to create its own hagiography and further legitimize its cause.

In chapter eight Scribner ends his discourse by taking a quick look at the surprisingly miniscule amount of counter-propaganda from the side of the orthodoxy, comparing its content with that of the Lutheran propaganda. Scribner finds Catholic propaganda less effective than Lutheran propaganda for several reasons: to begin with, Catholic propaganda relied heavily on text in a mostly illiterate society; secondly, the ideas used were the stock images of often unimaginative, earlier agendas (frequently, counter-propaganda themes were taken directly from Lutheran propaganda); and finally, Orthodox propaganda seldom included references to social or class issues, popular or cultural phenomenon, or popular belief. In essence, Catholic propaganda failed because it lacked the qualities that drew the common man to Lutheran propaganda. According to Scribner, Lutheran propaganda was highly successful in appealing to the masses because it exploited the heritage of the past, used traditional images from popular culture and popular belief, echoed the grievances of common opinion, built upon superstitious beliefs and moods, and built for the future by instructing the masses on the foundations of belief.

Scribner's argument is very convincing. To begin with, Scribner effectively asserts the importance of the inquiry into the visual aspects of Reformation propaganda. After reading about the illiteracy rate and the use of visual elements in daily and spiritual life, it is easy to see how propaganda needed to give equal weight to the image as to the word. Other reviews, as well as the preface of the book (which is in its second edition), indicate that this is the first detailed analysis of the visual aspects of Reformation propaganda. Therefore, Scribner does not dispute any author in particular. He simply maintains that imagery is of equal or more importance to the success of the transmission of ideas during the Reformation.

Although it is hard to measure the success Reformation propaganda had in persuading common folk to support the movement (and Scribner does not profess to try to do this), it is easy to see that the propagandists used many symbols and cultural elements directly aimed at the commoner. Scribner effectively outlines the iconographical tradition in place and the incorporation of commonly known symbols into the propaganda. He coherently analyzes almost two hundred illustrations of broadsheets and chapbooks for elements of cultural life to back up his argument (all of which are reproduced in the book for the reader likewise to dissect). Scribner's knowledge of common life and customs within the German territories as well as the attitudes of its people is staggering, and he provides a great deal of information on this subject alone. Scribner's organization of the book makes it easy for the reader to follow the progression of his argument as he builds his case from the beginning (when propagandists

used traditional symbols) to the apex of development (when propagandists incorporated their own set of codes and stereotypes from cultural and popular traditions to both gain support and instruct, thus unifying their cause). Scribner's abundance of example work against him, however. For each of the two-hundred illustrations, Scribner goes on to use methods of iconography, iconology and semiology to decipher their intentions, often going into so much detail that the reader loses either interest or the thread of the argument. On the other hand, the number of illustrations is an asset to the book since it stands as a notable collection of reformation propaganda and can be used for reference. In conclusion, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, while an excellent resource for anyone seriously interested in visual propaganda and its role in the dissemination of the evangelical movements, is not a light read and will not appeal to those without a strong interest in the subject matter.



Ozment, Steven. Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution. New York: Doubleday, 1993. 284pp.

● ● ● Jason McKinley

The Reformation had a profound and everlasting impact on German society. Many historians perceive that the Reformation was a failure and that Martin Luther's failings led to the rise of the totalitarian state and the demise of the German culture. Social historian Steven Ozment has a more compassionate view of Luther's desires for Reformation in his book *Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution*. Ozment views Luther's desires for Reformation not as a political or social revolution but as a revolution of the individual. The focus of Ozment's book is sixteenth century Germany and what it meant to be a Protestant. Ozment presents the argument that the Reformation started with the theologians' sermonizing and pamphleteering the messages that then entered into law and public institutions and finally into the lives of the ordinary citizen. Ozment's citation of several primary sources and direct challenges to other historians clearly demonstrates Ozment's belief that Luther's work within the Reformation was a positive achievement for German society.

The study of the pamphlet allows us to understand how the Protestant message was heard by the layperson because the pamphleteers brought theology into the marketplace with their preaching. The pamphleteers wrote on several religious subjects, such as the abuse of the Catholic Church, teaching on doctrine, and how to respond to these changes in everyday life. Ozment explores the works of converted Franciscan friar Heinrich von Kettenbach. One of Kettenbach's pamphlets, entitled *Contrasts Between Anti-Catholic Behavior of the Pope and the Biblical Ministry of Jesus*, exposes the Pope's unbiblical behavior. Fictional stories such as Eberlin von Gunzburg's pamphlet entitled *The Lamentations of Seven Pious but Discontent Priests Who No One Could Comfort* pretends to be a transcript of seven priests who have a private discussion of the burdens of the priesthood.

The pamphlets raised the common person's awareness of the abuse of the church and gave laymen spiritual self-confidence and a sense of equality with the clergy. Ozment states that the pamphleteers tried to "demonstrate the human origins of much church teaching and thereby to inoculate in the laity a healthy skepticism and defiance to tradition" (57). The pamphlets had a major impact on German society for the spread of Protestantism. The printing press allowed these publications to be more widespread. However, Ozment states that without the printing press, the Reformation still would have occurred because Germany was an oral society, relying on spoken word and not print. The preaching and teaching of the average person assisted them in their understanding of the validity of the Catholic Church's practices.

In response to the transformation of the convert's lives, the pamphlet's content was transformed as well. The pamphlet went from calling for change to serving as a guide of how to conduct oneself in daily life. Ozment gives the example of pamphleteer Heinrich

von Kettenbach's experience of acting as a spiritual advisor for an older woman. Kettenbach urged this woman to stop buying church candles and give her life savings to the poor and her relatives. He also addressed her decision to invest her life savings in an anniversary mass in her memory after she died. He challenged her decision and told her that she had a responsibility to her relatives by providing an inheritance and that she was robbing the poor with her lack of discretion. These ideas of religious change had a direct impact on this woman's life. A life-long habit of doing what she thought was religiously necessary was now sinful in the light of her social responsibilities. The reformers found themselves addressing issues such as the validity of last wills and testaments and contracts, as well as the legitimacy of secular and religious taxes. All of these issues were practical and the new convert was instructed in how he or she should act.

The private religious transformation of an individual was a change within the person. However, for the Reformation to have a major impact on society as a whole, the teachings had to become lawful. The princes and magistrates were targets for reform just as much as the average person. Ozment addresses the belief that the German magistrates and princes politically manipulated the Reformation to their own advantage. Ozment believes that "it was the evangelical preachers and their congregations who forced upon magistrates and princes new religious order" (103). Ozment implies that the rulers would have faced division within their lands, so they had little choice but to concede to the will of the people. The Reformation was thus a reaction of the common man rather than the decision of the governing.

Luther's Reformation influenced the change of individuals and institutions but many scholars contend that the young Luther contradicts the old Luther. Ozment specifically challenges Peter Blichle's claim that Luther "assisted in the suppression of the political principles that he had earlier championed" (121). Ozment argues that the two-kingdom doctrine of Luther was consistent from its inception until Luther's death. The two kingdoms consisted of the temporal and spiritual authorities that were to be separate and distinct, yet rule together. The temporal was responsible for all that pertained to the life of the body. The spiritual was responsible for all that pertained to the soul. In Luther's *Open Letters to the Christian Nobility of a German Nation*, he asked the nobility to reform the churches themselves. As time went on, Luther saw the abuses of the nobility and addressed their behavior with the treatise *On Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed*, in which Luther makes distinctions between spiritual and temporal government and the limitations placed on the temporal. The two-kingdom doctrine was only obtainable with social order. Without ruling and obeying, the advancement of society could not occur. Luther expected rulers to administer secular justice with biblical standards. In the case that a ruler was a tyrant, Luther would say that it was better to live under the rule of a tyrant while gradually appealing to them in order to prevent chaos and mob rule.

In response to accusations that Luther's political moves led to the totalitarian state, Ozment affirms that "in Luther's time, democracy as we have come to know it today was entangled with utopianism. If Germans had embraced 'democracy' as it was envisioned by the leaders of communal theocratic movements, it would likely have done Germany far more harm than three centuries of autocratic rule by princes" (133). The consolidation of political power by German princes started in the mid-fourteenth century and extended into modern times. The townspeople of the time had been familiar with the changing political environment; what was new was the adaptation to a new religious life.

In order for the Protestant beliefs to be engrained into society, the development of catechism was initiated. The catechism provided a foundation for German youth and instilled in them the understanding of a godly purpose for their lives regardless of actions, while at the same time making them feel shame for immorality and the fear of its consequences. Contrary to current scholarship, Ozment claims that the catechism did not force conformity and bigotry but was a lesson of good conduct and citizenship. The teaching of the catechism was more the application of the bible to daily life than the teaching of doctrine. The catechism replaced the pamphlet by establishing guidance for all society in practical spiritual applications.

Ozment admits it is a challenge to get an accurate portrayal of what it was like to be an ordinary person during the Reformation. He states that historians often base their theories on generalizations by looking at public records as well as traditional rituals and festivals. Ozment uses autobiographies and letters to establish a more accurate portrayal of how Protestantism affected individual lives.

Ozment's summary of two autobiographies describes individual experiences of two men's responses to Protestant propaganda. The first of Ozment's subjects is Thomas Platter, a convert to Protestantism. Ozment describes his struggles of being accepted by his Catholic family and his decision not to pursue the priesthood. The second subject, Herman Weinsburg, was a lifelong Catholic; his views about the church and clergy were changed because of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

Ozment also conducts a study of letters exchanged by young men with their families to give insight into the experiences of youths coming of age and the development of their beliefs in regard to religion and life. Each young man had different experiences and used their knowledge of faith and doctrine to help them make daily and lifelong decisions. Ozment characterizes the personal experiences under different subject headings that demonstrated piety and provincial understanding, anti-Catholic controversial subjects, self-serving rhetorical Lutheranism, and Lutheran teaching of the forgiveness of sin. The four young men Ozment analyzes belonged to the Behaims, an important Nuremberg family. Of the three that lived to adulthood, one became a politician, another village magistrate, and the third a merchant who owned his own business.

Ozment's study of the autobiographies and letters allows us to see how individual lives were influenced by Protestant ideas. What Ozment fails to demonstrate, however, is how the Reformation affected the lives of the common person. I would suspect that the common person did not write an autobiography. The four boys obviously came from an influential family. Ozment's focus on autobiographies and letters, rather than public records, fails to provide an accurate example of the common Protestant in the sixteenth century.

Much must be considered when attempting to grasp the achievements and effectiveness of the Reformation on German society. Martin Luther and the reformers did not set out to make major social and political changes with the implementation of reformist propaganda. Because of the impact of Protestant ideas and doctrine on German society, many social and political changes did occur. In response to these changes, Luther and the reformers served as guides for societal responsibility in support of the two-kingdom doctrine. Ozment describes Luther as a brilliant reformer who transformed German lives and provided the spiritual foundation for social and political cohesion necessary for Germany to succeed as a people. According to Ozment, if any blame should be placed for the failings of Germany, it should be placed on the German people for not following the teachings of Martin Luther.

In Brief●●●



Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Everything is Illuminated*. New York: Perennial, 2003. 288pp.

Jonathan Safran Foer's novel, *Everything is Illuminated*, is the story of Jonathan Safran Foer, a young American Jew who journeys across Eastern Europe, seeking the woman who may have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. He is accompanied by his translator, Alex, a young Ukranian who is "fluid" in English; his grandfather, an old man who deals with the loss of his wife and his memories of war by pretending he's blind; and Sammy Davis Junior,

Junior, the hyperactive "seeing-eye" dog. While Alex recounts their adventure in his delightfully decimated English, Jonathan imagines the history of his grandfather's village, hoping his fantastic tale can fill in the gaps in his family's past. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* meets *A Confederacy of Dunces*.

~ Allison Barrett



Horowitz, David. *Uncivil Wars: The Controversy of Reparations for Slavery*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002. 147pp.

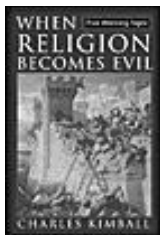
The purpose of this book by David Horowitz is twofold. On the one hand it tells the story of Horowitz's personal experiences following his decision to participate in the public debate over whether or not black Americans should be paid reparations for slavery. On the other hand it is a work written to

address the extent to which the American academic community is dominated by a liberal left that is intolerant of outside viewpoints.

Horowitz reaches the latter purpose through his account of the former. After placing an ad in several college newspapers in which he outlined his reasons for being against reparations, a firestorm of controversy ensued. Horowitz then uses his experiences (and the experiences of others that sided with him) to reveal the extent to which the liberal left dominates American universities and to show furthermore how intolerant many of those within the liberal left are of outside viewpoints. The sharp reaction to his work and the fact that few people anywhere in the academic world came out in defense of his right to free speech (no matter how much they might have disliked what he was saying) surely proves this.

Horowitz writes an entertaining, thoughtful account of his experiences and draws some troubling conclusions from them. Everyone who has contact with the academic world should understand the threat that any single opinion dominating our educational institutions represents. The book is interesting reading not only for those interested in race issues but also for anyone involved in the academic world.

~ Matt Feltner

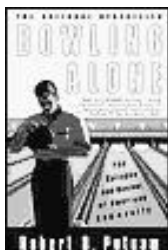


Kimball, Charles. When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003. 256pp.

After September 11, it became clear that religious conviction can intensify to the point of extreme violence. There are certain factors within all religious traditions that inevitably lead to evil and violence: blind obedience, claims about absolute truth, the conviction that the ends justify the means, the establishment of an ideal time, and the declaration of a “Holy

War.” At the same time, Charles Kimball, an ordained minister and professor at Wake Forest University, explains that religion can be life affirming and has brought meaning to the lives of thousands of people. While his argument focuses on Christianity and Islam, the world’s two largest religions, other religious traditions are discussed. The book is made all the more vivid and accessible through Kimball’s use of detail from his experience as a director of interfaith programs and a facilitator in the Iranian crisis.

~ Amanda Knapp



Putnam, Robert D. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000. 544pp.

Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* draws attention to the dwindling sense of communal responsibility in America. Convincingly drawing on data over the past century, Putnam outlines how membership in organizations and even recreational interaction has plummeted starting in the 1960s. Departing from traditional explanations, Putnam links this decline not to the

changing family structure or work schedule, but more decidedly to the exchange of physical capital for social capital in the younger generation. Putnam outlines the severe penalties this lack of involvement has on the American population, including decreased security, a slackening economy and even deterioration of physiological health. He concludes by urging his readers to begin a new era of innovation and involvement modeled on American activism at the start of the Twentieth Century.

~ Teresa Moore



Suri, Manil. *The Death of Vishnu*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. 304pp.

The Death of Vishnu is the first novel written by Manil Suri. Suri begins his intended trilogy with a novel concerning the social and political fabrics of contemporary India, told through the eyes of approachable characters. Varying relationships exist throughout the novel, testing traditional Indian values along the way. For example, dueling households, one Hindu and one

Muslim, argue over petty kitchen issues while their daughter and son sneak off with the intention of eloping. Their elopement not only addresses the religious altercations prevalent on the subcontinent but also confronts the tradition of arranged marriages. The title character, Vishnu, has been the servant of both households in this Bombay apartment building but is now dying. The question becomes who is responsible for this man, and, more symbolically, who is responsible for the mistreatment of the poor in India. Suri names his most prominent character after the Hindu god and preserver of the world; now it is time for his community to take responsibility for the “man” who is to preserve them. Addressing many contemporary issues of Indian society, Suri has written an interesting and accessible novel for the Westerner. By including believable characters with realistic problems, Suri appeals to a wide audience with themes of love, responsibility and community.

~ Lauren Suveges



Zizek, Slavoj. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. New York: Verso, 2004. 96pp.

Part of a series by Verso of current philosophical perspectives on the events and aftermath of September 11, Slavoj Žižek’s *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* is a characteristic combination of Marxist and Psychoanalytic thought, illuminated by examples from current events and popular culture. This work of five essays takes the position that America’s capitalist ideology seems to present us with two clear and seemingly opposite choices after 9/11—either we side with Democracy, the American Dream, and the War on Terror, or we

take up with evil Muslim fundamentalism. Žižek sets out to explain why this is yet another example of an ideology’s displacement of its own inadequacies onto an “obscene Other,” an external element, such as a Jew, a Muslim, or a freed slave, that upsets the balance and harmony of an otherwise perfect state. According to his argument, the ultimate realization we need to make is that there is no choice, only its illusion: in choosing the democratic, American ideology, we also choose the negative backlash that is its consequence. As Žižek states, “Jihad and McWorld are the two sides of the same coin, Jihad is already McJihad” (146). Although the reading of this book may prove difficult without some familiarity with Marxist and/or Psychoanalytic vocabulary, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* is both informative and pleasurable to read as well as a good approach to Žižek’s larger body of work.

~ Ashar Foley

Contributors●●●

● **Becca Blum** is the winner of Aegis' logo contest. A junior Art major with concentrations in visual communications and photography as well as a minor in Art History, Becca hopes to receive a summer internship with a graphic design firm. Following graduation, Becca plans to marry and follow wherever God takes her.

● **Jason Carney** is an ambitious junior with a triple-major in English literary studies, Creative Writing, and Philosophy. After completing his B.A. at Otterbein College, he plans to continue his education in either Literature or Philosophy at the graduate level.

● **Ashar Foley** is a junior English Literature major with minors in Philosophy and French. She feels both glad and fortunate to have this opportunity to commence the tradition of scholarly student publication at Otterbein College.

● **Katherine Helgeson** is a senior Art major with a minor in History. She plans to concentrate her further creative energy in the fields of photography and graphic art.

● **Jay McKinley** is a part-time student and History major, preparing for a career as a high school Social Studies teacher. In his free time, he likes to snowboard and play darts. He would like to extend his thanks to his wife and two children for their love and support, without which he would be unable to realize his goals.

● **Teresa Moore** is a senior English Literature and Creative Writing major. She plans to continue her education at the graduate level next year and looks forward to further involvement with scholarly journals.

● **Lauren Suveges** is a member of the *Aegis* editorial board as well as the creator of this issue's cover art. A full-time Art major and Honors Student, she recently participated in the Otterbein Art Department's trip to India and looks ahead to study in Africa next year.

● **Nathan Weller** is a History major contemplating the addition of a minor in Philosophy. His future plans include teaching at the college level, political activism, and participation in and contribution to a Think Tank.

