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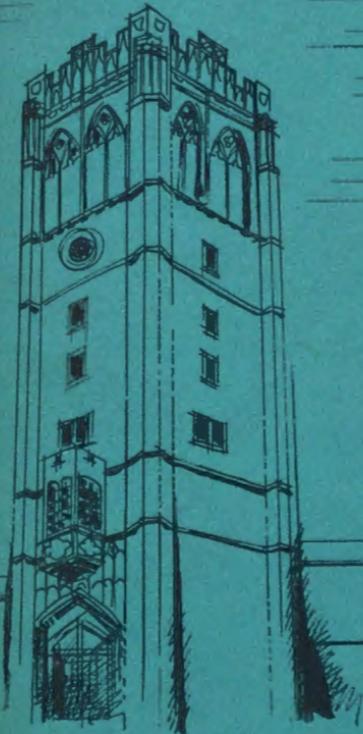
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Prose Rhythm in *The Vein of Iron*

By Gordon Gay

MISS ELLEN GLASGOW, in her preface to *The Vein of Iron*, implies that character may be delineated by means of prose rhythm. "I treat subjectively five different points of view in the family group gathered before the fire in the manse on a December evening. As I used it, this seemed to be an innovation, and I employed the device not only because, in my creation of the Fincastle family, I needed these reflective views, but, in a measure at least, because the device was experimental and daring."

The five characters which Miss Glasgow wanted to portray are Grandmother Fincastle, in the state of falling asleep reluctantly; John Fincastle, in his metaphysical consciousness; the practical Aunt Meggie; the intuitive Mary Evelyn in her reflections; little Ada musing fancifully. Grandmother Fincastle is the only one which Miss Glasgow has treated in her preface, even cursorily. She has scanned a few lines which she considers to be wholly metrical, and which are to show Grandmother Fincastle nodding and dropping off to sleep.

"Weáving ín and óut óf her bódý and sóul, and knítting her ín to the pást as she knítted lífe into stóckings, móved the famíliar rhythms and páuses—nów of the hóuse; and móved as a cásuál wáve, as bárely a mínúte's ébbing and flów, in the tímeless súrge of predés-tínátió . . ."

Though Miss Glasgow, in writing these five chapters on character delineation, was concerned mainly with the effect that prose rhythm was to achieve, and not with the three types of classical cursus (velox, tardus, and planus), she included many instances of these cadences. On the whole, the native cadences occur more frequently, possibly because they are more diversified, and because modern English adapts itself less readily to the types of cursus. But they do appear and must be taken into consideration and classified.

There are two problems to be reckoned with in dealing with these five chapters of Miss Glasgow. The first is: "How does Miss Glasgow

effect character delineation through prose rhythm and has she succeeded?" The second follows logically from the first: "Is prose rhythm an adequate means of character portrayal?" The first question may be answered by an analysis of sections of each of the five chapters.

At the beginning of the chapter on Grandmother Fincastle is a paragraph which not only sets the scene but which also sets the tempo of Grandmother's drowsiness. The recurrent periods of waxing wakefulness which diminish into more extended periods of dozing are represented in this chapter depicting Grandmother falling asleep. Such is this paragraph which begins with a slow thumping beat and ends with the throb of consciousness:

"Bénding óver with díffícúty, she eásed her fóot, which hád begún to swéll, from the squáre clóth shóe with elástic sídes and strétched it óut on the wárm brícks, whére the kéttle stéamed, the firelíght shífted, and á skéleton spíder, pále as a ghóst, was spínning a síngle stránd of cóbwéb óver the píle of bácklógs néar the chímney. For an ínstant, whíle she ráised her héad, she félt that the róom recéded and swám in a rúddy háze befóre it emérged agáin in its trúe páttérn. The matérial fórm had díssólved ínto a flúid, ínto a mémory. Thén ónce móre the áctúality tríúmphed; the ímmédiáte assúmed its óld pówer and sígníficance."

The beginning of the paragraph is notable for its series of long monosyllables. There are other syllables or words, here given a short beat by comparison, that might, in another context, require a stress. The outstanding rhythm is native, no example of classical *cursus* being found until the end except, possibly, a variation of the *velox*: "and a skeleton spider" (7-5-2). Several successions of iambs, and trochees, which form the familiar native cadence 5-3-1, may be seen, although another type of native cadence, somewhat uncommon, makes several appearances, 4-2. At the end, when reality jolts Grandmother Fincastle, each of the forms of classical *cursus* appears (though this is not necessarily significant), as well as two uncommon feet, one of six syllables ("the actuality") and another of five ("the immediate"), both employing the staccato beat of the short syllable to imply wakefulness.

Toward the end of the chapter Grandmother Fincastle's head begins to nod and Miss Glasgow, in the following sentence, employs

PROSE RHYTHM

all native cadences, especially 5-3-1 and 4-2, by using recurrent trochees, to achieve the effect of creeping torpor:

"Fróm the chángeless pást and the slów accrétió of tíme, the dáy and the scéne emérged into the fírelíght . . . fróm the fálling léaves . . . ánd the sífting dúst . . . ánd the cóbwebs . . . ánd the míldew . . ."

In the next three chapters Miss Glasgow has not been as successful showing the prose rhythm of "metaphysical consciousness," "practicality," or "intuitiveness" as she has with the expression of the plodding insistence of encroaching sleep.

Perhaps we should try to analyze how a metaphysical consciousness would sound in prose rhythm. We would expect the person in a metaphysical consciousness to be closely akin to the peace of sleep. It consists of reminiscences which John mulls over; different are the memories which overcome Grandmother and evolve into dreams. We expect with the prose rhythm a degree of the sibilance of a whisper.

"For yéars the idéa had láin búried. Yét in thóse yéars áll he wás, and thóught, and félt had gáthered to the báre óutline and clústered óver it as bárnacles clíng to the sídes of a súnken shíp. But whén he begán the íntrodúctiún to his hístory, the idéa cáme agáin to the súrface and he fóund that it was nót déad but alíve. In the énd he had been dríven ínto obscúriety, ínto póverty, ínto the stránge kínd of háppiness that cómes to the mártyr and the drúnkard. Why? Why? Whó could ánsWER? He míght have been fálse to hímsélf, and whó would have súffered? Bút he had cráved trúth (yét whó knóws what is trúth?) as anóther mán míght cráve a drínk or a drúg. Wás thís éndless séeking an inhéritance from the pást? Wás it a survíval of the wéstward thrúst of the píonéer?"

In this passage we find an unusual number of short syllables which, however, do not make for a staccato dog-trot, because they are softened by the recurrence of the "s" sound. Many of the feet have three short syllables in them; the long monosyllabic foot found in Grandmother Fincastle's chapter is absent; the ending of a cadence is usually a short syllable; the iamb, trochee, anapest, and dactyl are dominant. The types of cadence are diverse and patternless, but native cadence predominates.

The next chapter, according to Miss Glasgow, represents the intuitiveness of Mary Evelyn. There should be some similarity between

the thoughts of Mary Evelyn and John Fincastle for both are reflecting. But Mary Evelyn's intuition is more evanescent than John Fincastle's introspection. Mary Evelyn fastens on smaller things. She is constantly fretting over trivia. She chastises herself for her small failures. As Meggie puts it, "Energy had fastened on her like a disease."

What are the characteristics of this type of thought from the point of view of prose rhythm? It would seem appropriate to look for the energy that Meggie speaks of.

"Flightiness was her infirmity, Máry Évelyn músed, fóliding her wórñ hánds in her láp, and trying to restráin the ímpulse to júmp úp and swéep the héarth cléar of the wóod émbers that had júst bróken and scáattered. Líttle thínigs fílléd her thóughts. They ráttled abóut in her mínd, líke dríed séeds in a pód. Impórtant fácts wóuld slíp awáy but her whóle ínner wórld was clúttéréd úp with the swéépings of yésterday—meré stráws in the wínd."

"Bút there were óther tríals, tóo, so smáall that she was ashámed of them. Thóse bláck brístles in the móle in Móther Fíncastle's éyebrow! For twélfé yéars, éver sínce Jóhn had bróught her to líve in the mánse she had wórríed óver those brístles. If ónly sómebody wóuld dó sómething abóut thém!"

In these two passages we see a type of prose rhythm a little different from the two previous types, though the difference cannot be distinguished readily. Neither is it possible to patternize the present type. Though there are more short syllables than in Grandmother Fincastle's passage, there are also more spondees than in John's. It seems somewhat of a combination of the two with no regularity of intervals between spondaic type and pyrrhic type.

Although the first paragraph contains several instances of developments on the planus anglicus, 4-1, this pattern is upset in the second paragraph where all but one of the cadences belong to cursus; three planus, one velox and one tardus.

It is hard to imagine how a practical nature would appear in prose rhythm. Some of the indications of practicality could be a clipped rhythm, one which hews to a set pattern. Perhaps it could be termed unimaginative.

PROSE RHYTHM

"It's blówing up cólder, Méggie thóught, as she pícked up her hóoked crochéting néedle and retúrned to the cóunterpane she was crochéting. Í'm glád Jóhn ménded that léak in the róof. Hálf of her mínd was stíll in the néxt róom, whére she had túrned dówn her ówn and her móther's béd, stártd a fire to undréss by and húng twó óúting níghtgówns and twó réd flánnel wráppers on a smáll clóthes-hóirse in frónt of the flámes."

"For hersélf, she had néver thóught of lové-máking or márríage. It wásn't that she had been pláin or unattráctive. She was bétter-lóoking than móst, espécially when she had been plúmp and frésh, with a néat fígure. Bút she cóuldn't rún áfter mén the way sóme gírls díd éven in Íronside."

In these passages the flitting nature of Meggie is seen on several different tacks. She is the worrier. She is the doer, and if things are not done it is because she has not had time to do them. No foot predominates, and the cadence, too, seems to conform to no particular type and a wide selection is noted including an oddity "counterpane she was crocheting" (8-2).

A great number of short syllables pervade the passages and suggest a constant rhythmical flow, such as the monotonous click-click of railroad wheels. Meggie's mind is forever churning. One sentence in particular should be cited: "It wasn't that she had been plain or unattractive." There are only three stresses in the thirteen syllables. Yet there is still no distinctive pattern.

The last chapter portrays the young Ada "musing fancifully" to herself about many things. Just as a child gets pleasure from certain repeated sounds or words because they have rhythm and melody, the musings of a child in prose should have a similar rhythmic beat. The tempo begins with a childlike skipping quality. Curiosity is Ada's childlike trait and we may expect it to fasten on sundry subjects. Her imagination runs wild. Her young energy takes an interest in everything, and even when tired and sleepy, she derives a childish bliss in falling asleep. She falls asleep to a rhythmic beat.

"The táste of súgar is líke pínks, Áda thóught. It's líke verbéna and swéet alyssum. Íf ónly a táste wóuldn't mélt and fáde as sóon as it had góne dówn! Ánd whén you hádn't hád swéetness for a lóng tíme (Fáther had wáited becáuse he could get cóffee and súgar chéaper from a whólesale hóuse óver in Dóncaster) it tásted dífferent and

shárper. She wished pléasant things lásted lónger, and óther things, like évening práyers when you were sléepy, wóuldn't drág ón foréver. Fáther wásn't góing to réad toníght. She wánted dréadfully to héar what háppened néxt in *Old Mortáality*, but Móther had whíspered in the kíchen that she mústn't ásk him to réad. If she cóuldn't lísten to thát, she wíshed they wóuld lét her shút her éyes till mórning."

"Toníght, áfter she had sáid her práyers and slípped ínto her trúndle-béd and dráwn the blánket úp to her chín, she drópped to sléep sáying, 'It is the sóugh of the wínd amóng the brácken.' Thóse wére glórious wóords to háve in your héad; they séemed to go róund by themsélves."

In these two passages the melodic beat is quite insistent and a pattern is developed. Of the fifteen easily scanable clauses, or periods, in the first passage, five of them, or a third, are either *velox* (7-4-2) or a close variation of it, (7-5-2, 7-5-4-2). Six more are variations or extensions on the *planus anglicus* (4-1, 6-4-1, 6-2-1, 3-1). The subtraction of a short syllable from two other cadences would produce a form of *velox* (8-6-2, 8-6-5-2). Of the remaining cadences one is a *tardus*; the other is a hybrid. In the second passage there are three extensions of the *planus anglicus*. The other two end on a light syllable but may not be included in the classical group of *cursus*.

Though prose rhythm may be determined, or categorized, by scanning the last few syllables before a syntactical unit, this method is not wholly adequate, except in terms of accented or unaccented syllables. A long clause may not permit full scansion, though the same, or similar, rhythm persists throughout. When scanned, the rhythm, if native, often cannot be classified specifically; and often variations and extensions on a basic type of rhythm are not even covered by authorities. Because of the inadequacy of the systems of prose scansion it is hard to classify cadences found in a prose paragraph

It would seem that Miss Glasgow's character delineation through prose rhythm has fallen short of her original plan in the cases of John Fincastle, Mary Evelyn and Meggie. There seems to be no definite pattern as there is in the following paragraph of Grandmother Fincastle, already quoted:

"Weáving ín and óut of her bódý and soúl, and knítting her ínto the pást as she knítted lífe ínto stóckings, móved the fámlíar rýthms

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and páuses — nów — of the hóuse; and móved as a cásuál wáve, as bárely a mínute's ébbing and flów, in the tímeless súrge of pre-déstinátió . . .”

In this case a 4-1 beat is perceptible throughout the passage. There is a rhythm which extends beyond the cadences which end clauses.

In the chapters on John Fincastle, Mary Evelyn and Meggie, by examining cadences, we can find no conclusive evidence for the theory that the characters were drawn by prose rhythm. If there is any outstanding cadence in John Fincastle's chapter it is the *planus anglicus*, but it is also prominent in passages from chapters on Mary Evelyn and even Meggie. It seems, therefore, unwise to turn to prose rhythm as a complete index to character delineation.

Yet the metaphysical consciousness of John Fincastle does appear. Certainly, the mood was helped greatly by inserting rhetorical questions. There are other devices which are needed and they include the use of strong picture words, onomatopoeia, and words of certain length of stress. The resolution of the problem of prose rhythm seems to lie in the fact that prose rhythm is a garniture: it helps, but it is not a primary ingredient in the delineation of character, or setting a mood.

Many moods are not distinct enough to be distinguished solely by prose rhythms. We have seen that the drowsiness of Grandmother has a different beat from the beat of Ada's fancy. Yet the clause-ending cadences are not always capable of marking the difference in moods such as practicality or intuitiveness. Often the difference lies in the foot, or combination of feet, throughout the sentence.

As an experiment, the five chapters of characterization are novel and commendable, but there is scarcely sufficient evidence that prose rhythm is an adequate means of setting moods. Supposing more research should be done, it may not, and probably would not, show prose rhythm any more efficient in character delineation or mood-setting than it is now.

In olden times, when twenty-three,
A B.A. sought his Ph.D.
But now, from Sammy, all for free,
He gets the title, Pfc.

—Harry Gauzman.

The Bicycle

By Kevin Tobin

THE final evening, so long imagined and dreaded, had come at last and now wasted into its dying minutes. The moment had come to say goodbye.

They had spent most of the evening on the front porch, rocking gently on the glider, laughing and acting as though there were really nothing at all different about this evening. Truly, it seemed no different from the many such evenings they had spent on the front porch that summer, only that now and then a leaf broke loose and floated down into the light of the lamppost and settled skittishly to rest along the curb. The night seemed longer and stranger than before.

He had felt warm and strong, as he always felt when he sat beside her there on the glider. Now and then he paused in his expansive conversation to look at her. There was nothing more delightful to him in the world than to gaze on her when she looked up into his face and laughed over something he had said. And how beautifully and often she would laugh. He amazed himself with the ease with which he could amuse her. She inspired him; he could go on for hours being funnier than he had ever known he could be.

Of course they didn't always joke. Many nights they spent in serious discussion of grave matters. They spoke most often of life. Life was something they seemed to have discovered together, a wonderful, frightening something which they suddenly found all around them. It was a mystery into which they had curiously searched in small stages. He was often pleasantly surprised to find that she, too, felt just as he did about some aspect of life. These were the conversations which had led them to talk about their futures, and here he had found that he wanted to go into the future with her. With her beside him he felt that what was to come could hold no fear.

THE BICYCLE

They were standing now. He leaned back gently on the porch rail and held her close, as he had done every evening when it was almost time to say goodnight. But now he had begun to feel the difference. He realized for the first time that there would really be no tomorrow night—never. It was not goodnight; it was goodbye.

She was quiet, and scarcely seemed to breathe in his arms. He wondered what she was thinking of. He wondered if she felt as he did.

"You will write to me always, won't you?" he asked.

Her reply was soft. "Yes," she said. She buried her head in his shoulder. Still he could tell that she had not yet begun to cry.

"You know," he said, "this might not be for good. Your dad's firm could call him back here on a minute's notice. Or even if they don't it won't be long now until I finish school, and then I could get a job and save some money and come after you."

She shook her head into his shoulder, a despairing, delicate, movement. "No," she said, "your father and mother want you to go to college next year. They won't let you work, or come after me."

"You don't think I'd let them stop me, do you? I'll come. I'll get the money, and I'll come." He said the words, but he knew that she was right. He would never be able to come after her, not for years. The amount of money he would have to save to get to California was too big an obstacle. The whole future seemed crushing and empty. He stopped thinking about it. They stood for a long time, not moving.

A car went past behind him. He could hear the leaves blow about and settle down in its wake. It was getting late, he knew.

"We've got to say goodbye." He spoke softly, almost inaudibly.

"Yes . . . let's walk around back to your bike."

"All right." He seemed not to hear what she had said, yet they started down the front steps and walked across the lawn to the driveway. The moon was full in a clear sky, and the roofs of all the houses glowed brightly against their starry background. She looked beautiful to him with the moon softly illuminating her features. Her eyes sparkled as she smiled gently up to him. They walked slowly arm in arm up the driveway, not speaking a word.

In the grass of the back yard lay his bicycle, the polished chrome handlebars shining in the moonlight. Suddenly he realized an awful thing. He had to say goodbye forever, and then get on his bicycle and ride on down the driveway. The last thing she would remember of him would be his riding down the driveway on his bicycle. He flushed. What in the world had ever caused him to ride it over to her house on his last date!

"What's the matter?" she asked. He had been staring at the bicycle.

"Nothing, nothing at all." He turned to her. She was looking sweetly up at him, the moonlight accenting the concern in her face.

"You know," he said, "I'd like it much better if you went up into the house before I leave."

"Now, silly, you know I always watch you leave before I go in, and I want to do it the same as always tonight, for the last time."

"But . . ." She stopped him by putting her finger across his lips, a trick of hers which he had always liked. "Now," she said, "promise me again that you'll write me always, every week."

"Every day," he said. He was trying to gather himself back into the mood.

"Now, silly, you know you'd soon get tired of that."

"No I won't. I'm going to write every day. I promise."

"All right, all right, every day then. But I warn you, I'm only going to write once a week."

He felt a vague disappointment at this. Didn't she feel the same way about him as he felt about her? But that was silly. He knew better.

"All right," he said, "you write once a week, but make it a long letter, and tell me about your new home and friends, and don't leave a thing out. Promise?"

"I promise."

"And . . . Joan?"

"Yes?"

"Joan, don't get a new boy friend right away, will you? Not for a while."

"Oh, silly, I won't."

THE BICYCLE

He kissed her, and held her close for a long, tender, moment. He thought of the bicycle.

"Joan . . . couldn't you go in before I leave?"

"But why?"

"Well, it's just that . . . well, I . . ."

She put her finger on his lips again. "Now I'll not hear another word. I want our last goodbye to be the same as always. I've always thought of it that way."

He was silent. Then, after a long moment, he resigned himself. Giving her a last, tender kiss he parted from her and turned toward his bicycle. He was strangely aware of every part of his body. He seemed to be apart from himself, passively observing his own movements. He saw his hands grasp the shining handlebars and lift the bicycle, but he felt nothing, and seemed not to will what he was doing.

He put the bicycle upright, and turning it down the driveway, he lifted one leg over the seat and stood there, looking at her. She was small and boyish in the moonlight. She moved over to him, and he held her with one arm and kissed her again. He felt his chest knotting with emotion. He wanted so to stride manfully down the driveway, without turning back to answer her tears. But he felt himself on his bicycle, trapped in shame, and she had not yet begun to cry.

He kissed her once more, and then moved away, not saying a word.

He put his bicycle into motion, and started down the driveway. His whole back burned under her eyes. To say goodbye forever, and then have to ride off on his bicycle. He longed to get to the street and turn, to be free in his agony of her gaze.



Medical Science its hat must doff,
To the unfailing health of the college prof.

Gordon the Gay

By Patrick Trese

GORDON GAY is down to his last razor blade. Gordon has been down to his last razor blade for the last six months. A year ago September he bought a package of ten and today they are gone. It is a sad world.

Several months ago, Gordon invested in a haircut and refuses to visit the barber shop until after Easter, or at least until he is reasonably sure that he will get his money's worth. But Gordon's hair grows with such vehemence that if and when he does descend upon the barber again, our economic system will be shattered. I doubt that a dollar has gone so far since Walter Johnson hurled his silver one across the Rappahannock.



When he left Chicago two years ago, his mother dropped forty-two potatoes per week from her grocery list and left the responsibility of sustaining the union of Gordon's soul and medium-sized body in the hands of his friends. Friday night, when we were playing pinochle in Jack Wulfhorst's room, two of the boys dropped in on their way back from "chowing-down."

GORDON THE GAY

"Got some fish for ya', Gordon," they said, proffering their baked rosefish, wrapped in paper napkins.

A look of gentle gratitude crept into Gordon's horn-rimmed eyes. "Just put them on my pile on the desk there. (I'll open for thirty.) Thanks."

Friday is Gordon's day to "make-out" because the quality of the food is generally inferior and food is just food to him: quantity is vital, quality incidental. His pile, if I remember correctly, consisted of five fishes, two questionable tuna fish sandwiches and a half-consumed bottle of milk. For breakfast Saturday morning he ate a cold fish and a glass of water.

In his sartorial habits, Gordon is more consistent. He once wore the same pair of pants for nine weeks. They were the kind of trousers that the men from Coca-Cola wear, khaki with a red pin-stripe. When he perceives that his shirt is too dirty, which is seldom, he goes to the laundry bag and selects one a little less offensive.

Gordon makes strange noises, too. His laugh suggests the monkey house at Brookside Zoo. And his belch!

Last spring, one of the sprinters was working out alone on the track, about three hundred yards away from our room in Rodman Hall. Gordon was standing by the window, idling over his Tacitus, when the wondrous workings of the Gay digestive tract burst forth in gorgeous cacophony. The sprinter stopped dead in his tracks, gaped in our direction and collapsed on the ground, laughing.

Last night when I went down to Gordon's room to consult his Greek dictionary, I showed him this composition. A thunderous clatter wrenched me from my contemplation of a verb. Gordon had thrown himself backwards in his chair onto the floor.

"You can't hand this in!" he screamed from his prone position. "There's not a shred of truth in it!"

What can I do? Gordon does my homework.

PROVERB

"Men who eat," the Chinese say,

"Will live to eat another day."

—*Ho Hum*

Critique of Beyond the Horizon

By Fred Fisher

BYOND THE HORIZON, the Pulitzer Prize play of 1920 which established Eugene O'Neill as a major dramatist, is a prime example of early 1920 tragedy. At that time dramatists believed that some sort of unrelieved frustration must be injected into any play which was to be of any worth, and O'Neill's play indeed presents a picture of bleak frustration. In the words of Robert Mayo, the protagonist, his fall from a promising young man full of great dreams and ideals to a beaten old farmer of thirty-one can only be attributed to "Kismet."

A synopsis of the plot becomes quite lengthy; suffice it to be stated quite simply this way: Robert, who dreams of adventure in far-off lands, gives up a world tour because of his love for Ruth. He marries her while his brother Andrew, a born farmer who loves farm life, goes on the voyage because he too loves Ruth, and couldn't stand to live on the same farm with her as Robert's wife. The play then relates the gradual downfall of each brother.

As was said earlier, the play presents a dismal picture of human frustrations. Robert, the scholar who was always intrigued by thoughts of adventure "beyond the horizon" is brought to physical and mental collapse within the prison-like hills which surround the small farm; while Andrew, the solid farmer "with the soil in his blood," who wanted nothing more from life than a chance to build up his farm, becomes a greedy, reckless speculator kept from the farm by his greed for money.

And yet, neither of them meets his downfall through any real fault of his own. The beginning of the trouble is when Robert decides that Ruth is more important than his world cruise—and you can hardly call mature love a tragic flaw. Andrew's natural reaction is to escape by taking the cruise, and each of them is thus put in a way of life which is directly opposed to his temperament.

From then on Robert meets defeat after defeat. Although he works hard to keep the farm going, he is neither natural farmer

CRITIQUE

nor business man, and slowly but surely the farm and its occupants sink into the mire of frustrated despair. Robert suffers his defeat through no fault of his own—his only "fault" is falling in love, and from then on his earnest efforts at farming are thwarted at every turn by the Three Sisters of Fate.

Everything in the play contributes to this feeling of awful frustration. The characters themselves sink from happiness to despair in a quiet, hopeless way which betokens their helplessness in the face of fate. Ruth, for example, is first seen as a happy, healthy girl of twenty-one who has no other worry than the fact that her invalid mother nags her; in the second act she is seen as a tired housewife who is becoming disgusted at her husband's inadequacies as a farmer; and in the final act we see her as a mute shell of her former self who takes every additional downfall with bowed head and a dull shrug of her shoulders. Robert's mother, too, is first seen as a happy middle-aged woman who is proud and contented in her two young sons; she dies in the second act vainly trying to help them although she realizes they are on the downfall.

The scenery and settings are also designed to suggest the slow degradation of the Mayo family. Each act has a scene in the parlor of the farmhouse. At first we see the parlor as clean and well-kept. It has an atmosphere of simple, hard-earned prosperity which the family as a unit enjoys and maintains. In the second act, the same furniture is there but shabbiness and dirt show that the family is losing its pride and dignity. The same room is almost in shambles in the third act—the whole atmosphere is that of habitual poverty too hopelessly resigned to be any longer ashamed or even conscious of itself.

The sub-plots, too, aim at this frustrated feeling. Robert's father dies a broken old man after his dreams for the future are shattered by Andrew's sea voyage. His wife wilts away as she sees her son's hopeless struggle to keep up the farm; and Robert's daughter Mary, his only joy in life, dies at about the age of six—too sickly to live in the squalor of the farm.

Robert's death releases him from his frustrations and helplessness. In his death scene he talks of freedom from the farm—freedom to wander wherever he will. And yet, that is the only meaning

death has for him. He doesn't look forward to an eternal reward for the sufferings God has given him—in fact he has come to such depths that he no longer believes there is a God. His death is mere physical relief. In his own words, "We'd all be better off dead," and, "I could curse God from the bottom of my soul—if there was a God." At his death he is a man who has been beaten down by outside causes and seen in death nothing more than a negative good— a release from his troubles. His suffering then, is made even more depressing when we see it as mere physical suffering which was undergone for no real purpose. It is presented as an end in itself—merely suffering for the sake of suffering, through some quirk of fate.

This deliberate feeling of utter frustration which the play arouses causes it to be a rather poor example of dramatic entertainment. Such a play can hardly be called a tragedy in the traditional sense of the word—there is no ebbing of the emotion, and the play is hardly entertaining.



Regret

By Terry Olatta

Strange shadows flicker through my mind,
 Reflections dim of men and moments
 Whose sóle being has long since died,
 But which linger on in last impressions.
 A shifting darkness obscures the view . . .
 Then a patterned light of thought returns:
 Here again is death's paradox
 That life is continued on through time,
 And though we die, our life is here
 For other men to take and scan . . .
 To weigh its worth, to take its measure
 And come again to a composite truth.

When will men their fullness know
 Except in being called to death.
 In this death their purpose see
 When it is too late to ever be.

"Big Ditch"—African Style

By Frank R. Tesch

HAVE you ever looked down terrain so long and straight that it was actually possible to see the curvature of the earth?

People who make a habit of ferreting out odd and interesting bits of information tell us that the only place in the world where this can be done is on the Suez Canal. From Port Said, the northern terminus of the Canal, due south for almost thirty miles to a grimy little native village called Qantara, the canal cuts a path as straight as a die. When one first enters this part of the waterway, it actually appears to bend over the surface of the earth and disappear some twenty miles away.

While this is probably its most remarkable physical feature, the Suez Canal has never ceased to astound the many thousands of people who annually pass through it. How and when it came to be built is a thrice-told tale, but for the record we might harken to it again. The desirability of a canal to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas has long been realized, and indeed, as far back as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries B.C., some sort of a canal is noted in historical records. The canal was restored and rebuilt often, notably under Ptolemy II and the Emperor Trajan. However, after the eighth century A.D., it was closed and fell into a sad state of neglect that was not corrected until the middle 1800's. At that time a Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps, conceived the idea of a modern canal, and undertook its construction. The work was under way for ten years, and finally in 1869 the canal was opened for traffic.

Almost exactly 100 miles in length, the canal has a minimum width of 196 feet on the bottom, and is never less than forty-two feet deep. Since, through some quirk of nature, there is not enough tide-range in either the Red or Mediterranean Seas to be worthy of the name, it was possible to build the canal without locks. This feature, plus its width and depth, make it possible for the canal to accommodate the largest ships afloat.

But let us take a trip through the canal and see at first hand this modern wonder. As we enter the protecting breakwaters at Port Said, we pass a huge statue erected to the memory of the man who built the canal, De Lesseps. It faces seaward, greeting all incoming ships and bidding farewell to all those which have passed

through this greater memorial to his genius. Next we are boarded by the usual customs and quarantine officials, since we wish to go ashore; and of course there are the canal officials, ever-willing to exact their canal-toll tribute from the ship's purser.

Port Said is built on a peninsula between the canal and Lake Manzalah, which is formed by the Nile on the eastern reaches of its delta. The city was founded by the canal's builders, and today is a bustling metropolis of over 60,000 people. It is a hodge-podge city, though, and a strange mixture of splendid hotels and filthy native hovels, fine shops and smelly fishing boats. Arabians and Egyptians are the world's most zealous traders, they cling to you with the tenacity of glue. They vastly over-price their wares and if you decide to buy from them, it is best that you have a good voice, because haggling is the accepted way of reaching an agreement. On the other hand, if you want to get rid of some particularly noisy merchant, simply divide his asking price by ten, offer that as your highest bid, and he will depart shortly, muttering about the peculiar ways of wealthy Americans.

Our trip through the canal can begin at any time. Traffic moves through the canal twenty-four hours a day, though not continuously in both directions. Our ship will proceed for about four hours, then will tie up to the side of the canal for another four hours to enable northbound shipping to move, after which we will go our way again for another four hours. It takes approximately twenty hours to make a complete transit of the canal, only twelve hours of which is actual steaming time.

As previously noted, the canal is perfectly straight for the first thirty-odd miles after leaving Port Said, and here the phenomenon of seeing the curvature of the earth is visible. Along the canal for these thirty miles are several small, dirty, sun-baked native villages, occasionally a small grove of date palms, and infrequently an oasis, where dromedaries may be seen standing about. Men, women and children find the banks to be a most convenient thoroughfare, and as they walk along they shout to passengers on the ships, begging for food or asking for money or old clothing. The canal is also a natural means of local water transport. The oddly-rigged dhows which ply it are the same now as they were seven thousand years ago, and some of them look almost that old.

"BIG DITCH"—AFRICAN STYLE

Our first stop is just south of Qantara, to let northbound ships go by. Ismailia, the scene of pitched battles in recent years between Egyptian and British forces, is only a short distance over the dunes, and many of its wealthy inhabitants have built magnificent residences along the canal. Well-landscaped and palatial in proportion, these splendid homes present a striking contrast to the miserable little clay hovels only a stone's throw away, in which some lowly fellah and his family live a pitiful day-to-day existence.

After we get underway once again, we come shortly to Lake Timsah, on whose shores stand several anti-aircraft batteries and a British army cantonment. On the drill field a platoon is practising some maneuver with bayonet-tipped rifles, indicative of the constant tension which exists in this unhappy land. Here also is a huge stone marker, set up on a hill back some distance from the lake, marking the halfway point in the canal.

Some ten or twelve miles farther south are the Great and Little Bitter Lakes, through which we pass quickly, re-enter the canal, and then tie up once again. By this time it is getting dark, and the crew prepares to rig up another feature of the canal: a headlight for our ship. Since ships move through the canal all hours of the day and night, headlights are an absolute necessity, and they shine with sufficient brilliance to enable the canal pilot aboard to see both banks of the canal for nearly a half-mile ahead.

Other ships are passing us constantly. Here is a Norwegian tanker out of Abadan, bright and clean even for that dirty kind of ship; then a huge P & O liner, her lights ablaze and the laughter of her passengers filling the night. Next, one of our sister ships passes by. We give her the traditional three-blast salute from our whistle, and call to friends we have on board. Then she is gone into the darkness, and we think what a small world it is indeed that we should meet old friends out here in the middle of a desert.

By now our voyage is nearly done. After we get underway again the canal begins to twist and turn more as the land around us gets quite hilly. Then, almost before we know it, we are anchored outside the breakwater at Suez. There is the formality of dropping the pilot, and then we are off into the dark of night, little realizing that our twenty-hour passage, has saved us twenty days around the Cape of Good Hope.

Dunderhead, the Hero

A Satire in Prose on Beowulf

By Thomas Skulina

WHAT hol! We have read of the glory of mayors, jailors, and jailed sailors, and of their deeds of golden glory; how they fought for law, order, and the pursuit of graft money. Now there once reigned in the magnificent city of Posapolis a mayor of great renown. He could drink any man under the table, and could dash a defenseless beggar's brains out with one blow of his iron-cored "Billy Club." He was a goodly man and a lover of nature. Because of this love he laid out in Posapolis a majestic park, the beauty of which was lauded all over the world.

The park was surrounded by a row of stately, elegant elms. Four tree-lined paths led to a beautiful square in the middle of the park, where there grew a small, square, patch of posies. Here Big Nick, for indeed this was the mayor's name, had built a row of bleachers so that he and his friends could spend their evenings gazing at the moon-kissed posies.

One night as the mayor and his friends were serenely peering at the sweet, delicate, posies frolicking in the evening breeze, there suddenly appeared at the far end of the park a horrible monster. It was Bosch, the bleary, feared throughout the land for his deeds of bloody cruelty. This creature of Hell, with gory locks and grisly paws, with hairy chest and yellow fangs, thundered down on this harmless posy patch and snatched up twenty tender, pink posies. Stuffing the lovely petals into his abyss of a mouth, he turned to the dignified assemblage, the members of which had temporarily stopped stoking in their popcorn, and defiantly spat the stems out at their feet. He was a mean one. The crowd stared dully as the cursed posy-picker picked his way off into the darkness.

This destruction was repeated once every other month for twelve years until there were left in the garden but three posies, a violet posy, a yellow posy, and, marvelous to relate, a tri-colored, double-headed, gigantic, super-posy.

DUNDERHEAD, THE HERO



“ . . . but chanced to seize one of Dunderhead's size seventeens.”

Word of these disasters had gotten across the tracks to the well-shaped ears of J. Dunderhead, the world's greatest defender of law and order. So J. D. and his stooges boarded their rusty motor-scooters and shot across the tracks to see if J. D. could get a chance to grapple with the ghastly posy-grabber.

When the people heard of the arrival of Dunderhead there were joyous celebrations. Big Nick mounted the bleachers and made a speech: "Dear J. Dunderhead, (cheers) you have come to us in our hour of need. (Sighs from the women.) You are our defender, you are our deliverer, you are our . . . (pause while those nearby half-heartedly chased pages two to ten, which the wind had unfortunately torn from his hand.) Ah, since we have, er, lost a few pages of my speech, heh, heh, I shall be brief. (Hysterical cheering from the crowd.) J. D., if you save my remaining posies, and if you slay the posy-picker, I shall give you half my take from, er, that is, a reward from the city treasury." Dunderhead then delivered a short, four-hour address about his noble feats of daring.

Night at length cast its somber veil over the trembling posies. And indeed they had reason to tremble, for tonight was the night of the scheduled posy raid. Dunderhead was stretched casually in the front row of the crowded bleachers, his size seventeen shoes sprawled across the path leading to the posy patch. The crowd waited excitedly for the arrival of the monster.

Suddenly a horrible wail was heard from the edge of the park and Bosch once again came thundering down the path for his bi-monthly posy snatch. He seized the violet posy and the yellow posy and thrust them into his cavernous mouth. When he opened that gaping chasm, his breath, a mixture of the fumes of onions, garlic, and old cigars, mixed with a belch or two of stale beer, almost asphyxiated the noble group. The monster then reached to snatch the remaining beauty, but chanced to seize one of Dunderhead's size seventeens. This vile deed stirred J. D. into action, for now the attack was directed against him. He leaped at Bosch. The two rolled and tossed about the ground in a death-grip that defies description. The earth shook, the bleachers rocked, the popcorn was spilled, but our hero would not release his hold.

Then with a sickening "pop" he tore the grisly arm of the monster from its socket and beat the beast over the head with its own bloody

DUNDERHEAD, THE HERO

bicep. But the creature of the dark succeeded in tearing itself away to stumble to its lair to gasp out its last few odorous breaths. The posy-picker would never again ravage the posies of Posapolis.

There followed a period of merriment and song. People clamored to touch the shirt of the hero. Speeches were made in his honor. (Most of these were made by the hero himself.) Big Nick shared the loot and J. D. carted it away in wheelbarrows. Gaiety prevailed in all Posapolis.

But in the grease-pit of Pete's garage revenge was being plotted against our hero. For here it was that the posy-picker's only parent plied her trade, greasing old Pontiacs. When "Old Lady" Bosch saw her one-armed son slither through the grease and expire at her feet, maternal anger welled up in her hideous bosom. She swore revenge on him who had done this deed.

J. D. and his associates were still clapping each other on the back when Madame Bosch crept into the park and fixed her bleary eyes on the tri-colored, double-headed, gigantic, super-posy. With a triumphant shriek she snatched the super-posy from beneath our hero's well-shaped nose and vanished into the darkness.

Big Nick, tears streaming from his eyes, implored J. D. to seek out the monster's mother and avenge his pet posy. Dunderhead immediately delivered a five-hour address on his many noble qualities and then, jutting forth his well-shaped chin he demanded, "What's in it for me?" Stirred on by the promise of three more wheelbarrows full of taxpayer's money, he leaped on his trusty motor-scooter and putted away, waving his lead-filled rubber hose above his head.

There followed a series of events so gruesome that I dare not relate them for fear of petrifying the reader, but at length Dunderhead faced "Old Lady" Bosch. Before she had a chance to grunt "hello" he began pulverizing her skull with his rubber hose. But she was well oiled and the blows glanced off her head. Blind with fury, she wrapped her seven-inch curved fingernails around our hero's throat and squeezed until his fair countenance beamed forth a deep purple. Then J. D. spotted a gigantic monkey wrench leaning against the tire rack. Four strong men could not have lifted this huge tool, but Dunderhead reached over, with one stupendous effort

raised it into the air, and brought it crashing down on the old lady's cranium. Her acid-like blood sizzled and burned as it spouted forth, carrying bits of gore along its crimson path.

Then, wallowing about in the grease, Dunderhead chopped off Bosch's head, to keep as a sort of souvenir. He then merrily wound his way home on his trusty motor scooter, bearing aloft, amid the joyous shouts of admirers, his new-found souvenir. The great Dunderhead had triumphed again.



Replied little Herman, full of glee
To inquiries at age of three
As to what when grown up he would be,
"I'm gonna be a soldier, yes sirree!"
A very accurate prophesy.

—Kevin Tobin

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