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CONTENTS

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Because I Could Not Stop for Death

THE SYNTHESIS OF IMAGERY AND TONE

by Ann C. Murphy

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

by Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling on the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

"BECAUSE I Could Not Stop for Death" treats a subject which has a long and rich poetic tradition. Among lyric poets death has always been a favorite topic for poetic speculation. The originality and success of Emily Dickinson's poem does not depend, therefore, upon her choice of subject matter. Nor is her achievement primarily the result of an unusual or startling attitude toward death, although this element constitutes the theme of the poem and is one of its chief merits. Miss Dickinson conceives of death as a trusted friend who gently and care-

fully guides her on her journey from time to eternity. The bare statement of such a concept, striking though it may be, would probably stimulate only a fleeting interest in the poem were it not for the poetic structure within which the statement is arranged.

Using the ballad measure as her stanza form, the poet describes by means of simple narrative the events which lead her to a realization of the nature of death. In addition to the narrative framework, the poem displays certain other elements that are characteristic of the ballad: the simple, almost homely diction; the lack of elaborate description; the emphasis on the development of tone. Unlike the ballad, however, this story is told in straight narrative by a first person narrator. The poem, therefore, must be considered as a lyric rather than a ballad; yet those characteristics of the ballad which the poem does possess contribute in a great measure to the total imaginative effect. By selecting only such details as will most stimulate the imagination, the poet moves as quickly as possible to the point of the poem.

The one stylistic device, however, which definitely identifies the poem as a lyric and which contributes most to its imaginative effect is the poet's use of figurative language. The events which lead to the poet's realization of the nature of death are presented in the image of a carriage ride. In the opening stanza of the poem the image is established. Death is personified as a courteous gentleman, taking a lady for a ride. Immortality is their companion in the carriage. The next three stanzas are simply a development of this figure — a description of the details of their drive. The final stanza contains the climax toward which all of these stylistic and structural devices have been building. The poet indicates her attitude toward death and implies within it her concept of the nature of death.

The poet's success in developing her theme, however, is not a direct result of an adept use of form and imagery. In "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," form and imagery work together to establish and develop a third and, in this poem, more important element, tone. It is the tone of the poem, and particularly of the last stanza which indicates the poet's attitude toward death. An attempt to define the tone and to see how this quality of the poem is established and developed by form and imagery will show its relationship to the statement of the theme.

In the first stanza Death is the gentleman who "kindly" stops for the lady. Up to this point the lady "could not stop for Death" because she was too preoccupied with the cares and the affairs of life. Death, therefore, had to come to her in a familiar and pleasant guise in order to wean her gently from the world. A relationship of trust and confidence is established in the first stanza, although it is evident that the

lady is not fully aware of the significance of her ride. She recognizes their companion, Immortality, but again we have the feeling that she is not fully aware of the relationship between her two companions. Immortality, connoting both unending existence and undying fame, is probably present to help death reconcile the lady to her fate.

The relationship of confidence between the lady and Death is more firmly established in the second stanza when the lady renounces at least momentarily all of her worldly preoccupations "for his civility." Death "knew no haste" in his journey because he wanted the complete trust of his companion before he revealed to her by a gradual process the true significance of their ride. Death's slow progress also prefigures their passage from time to eternity where haste has no meaning.

Stanzas three and four describe the scenes that they view on the drive. The succession of sights is the gradual process used by Death to awaken in the lady an awareness of her destination. They pass successively "a school where children played," "fields of gazing grain," and "the setting sun." The nature and order of these sights — a progression from a simple, concrete tableau filled with active children to a magnificent view of an intangible, inanimate object — indicate the lady's gradual detachment from the affairs and demands of the world. The presence of death is emphasized by the individual images within these scenes. The grain is gazing like a field full of mourners, and the sun is experiencing its own daily death. The carriage pauses finally before the lady's grave, "a house that seemed a swelling on the ground." This resting place of her earthly remains is the lady's last link with the world. Death pauses here because the lady is now ready to be told the significance of her ride. That she is ready to accept its consequences is signalled by the fact that she refers to her grave as a "house," or place of habitation for her body. The lady easily bids farewell to this last link with life. With this gradual realization by the lady comes a barely perceptible change in the tone of the poem. From a simple feeling of trust and confidence in a gentleman caller, her attitude has developed into an all-pervading sense of wonder and joy. This development is revealed by a similar change in the tone of the poem. Although the change in tone and attitude is hinted at in the fourth stanza, it is not fully effected until the climactic fifth stanza. The lady, accompanied and aided by Death, has made the passage from time to eternity. The passing of centuries has had no meaning for her since the first moment that she realized her destination. Once she had no time for death; now death has given her infinite time — eternity.

How to Write a Poem

by Thomas W. Groutt

MANY consider writing poetry a difficult and painstaking task. But this is a misunderstanding; many people write poems in just no time at all. Take Keats for example. He wrote a new form of the sonnet in the time it takes a man to shave. Oh, some novices have a little trouble now and then, but this is because they don't know how to go about it. Others take a lot of time and effort because they would like to have people think of them as literary martyrs or something. Most of this slow type realize that they could do it in about half the time, but somehow or other they just never get around to doing it. Another of this slow variety is the lazy poet or *poete paresseux*. Aristotle saw and recognized this; he called their work *ars non hurrium*. They have their excuses, but the fact remains that if they would have stayed home evenings and not gone tramping all over the Continent on their little tours the work would have been done on time.

The first thing a poet must consider is the style. Rime royal was used by Chaucer, and I think Beowolf wrote some of his poetry this way. There are many forms and even more variations. A good dictionary is a wonderful aid. As examples prove most helpful in this type of thing, I will, from time to time, as I go along, create new verse to illustrate my point. Rime royal, which I have mentioned above, is something like this.

> Oh reap the corn in all the little fields,
> For some men say 'tis better there you know;

You see how simple it is. Of course there should be five more lines to complete the stanza, but one gets the idea. Doesn't one? The industrious reader might even attempt to finish these lines as a practice. They have splendid potential.

Just now while paging through the dictionary I notice feminine endings. Yes, these too are simple — if one knows how. The history of the feminine ending is long, much too long to go into right now, but the basic idea will prove of some value. It was first used by Lord Byron, or maybe James Joyce, or Francis Scott Key. I'm not too certain on this point, but no matter, it was used. Whoever it was who composed it wrote it to Lady Jane Grey. She was a woman, *ergo* feminine, *ergo* the name of the form. The feminine ending is mostly used for love poems to beautiful ladies. Actually Lady Jane was not beautiful, not even pretty,

but as it happened she was mistaken for someone else who was. As I remarked before, a poem to a girl, *etc.,* must rime femininely. Do you see the point? An example of the feminine ending is rather involved, and I would just as soon not go into it at this point; however, I may come back to it.

There are many things which enter into the make-up of a poem concerning the rime and meter, but now I should like to get on to the next step, the language of poetry. Plato was rumored to have solved once and for all the problem of language, but it involved burning all existing books with language in them and was never given a second thought. Frankly, I doubt if this was Plato's idea. Getting back to the subject, the language must be beautiful. By that I mean it can't be un-beautiful. Really there isn't too much more to say about language. Oh, one might expand a little, but I have given the central thought, and that is what counts. One can't deny that. Can one?

One of the essential, *really* essential, points of poetry is the subject matter. The whole action, or theme as it were, revolves around the subject matter. The topic must be fitting; that is, it must suit. For example one could write for days on end about birds or flowers or Grecian urns and such, but there would be some difficulty in attempting to compose an epic or tragic narrative on say a bar of soap or a cement block. But perhaps this hair-splitting is confusing. In fact one can write on most anything. Yes. That's it. Anything. Of course he must then chose the type and language to accompany it. One composes a friendly poem to a friend; or an unfriendly poem to someone he dislikes. It isn't too awfully hard. What I'm getting at is that an awkward situation might arise if one wrote an elegy to his wife who is still living, or something of that nature. Clear isn't it?

Very closely related to the subject matter is the theme, the treatment of the subject matter. This was adequately taken care of in the preceding paragraph, but a few more words are in order. The theme is not synonymous with the subject matter but distinct from it. Thus the subject matter of Dante's "Inferno" would be "Hell," whereas the theme might be how hot it is down there. This was a poor poem to pick for an example, because I have never looked into Dante very much; however the general idea should be clear. Another, and for the most part simpler, example is the story of the three little pigs, Huey, Duey, and Louey. The three little pigs constitute the subject matter, while the situation of the wolf stopping them on the way to their grandmother's house and how they drank his porridge would be the theme. This should make the two elements very clear, and there ought to be no trouble whatsoever after some little consideration.

Every poet must have a Muse. Truly, above all else, this makes the poetry great. As one can find little written about Muses I shall, for the most part, rely on personal experience. The Muse, in our sense of the term, is a lady friend of the poet who helps him when the going gets rough. I say it is a lady, but I really can't be too sure, I just assumed. I have known several Muses who did nothing more than proof-read and type the final draft of the poem. But sometimes this works the other way around, or *vice versa,* as St. Thomas puts it. In this case it is the poet who scribbles his John Henry on the bottom of the page and sends it to the publisher. This is not quite cricket on the poet's part, but that doesn't prevent it from happening. The Muse should not go beyond the point of inspiration or, at the very most, an occasional word or two. Some Muses sharpen pencils.

Plagiarism among Muses is strictly forbidden, but it still goes on. One of those things, I guess. If I may prescind from my thesis for a moment I might, by employing the idea of the Muse, shed light on the question of who wrote Shakespeare's plays. At the time they were written there was a rumor to the effect that a coterie of Muses came upon the idea of filing their material — something that still goes on in undergraduate Pre-Med schools today. It seems that the Bard's Muse was on the outside looking in, and in a fit of jealousy broke open the cabinet which housed the cherished thoughts of Marlowe, Bacon, Walt Kelly, and Francoise Sagan. Incidentally, time means nothing to Muses. I sincerely think that if this line of thought were pursued a little further things might begin to pop in the literary circles. To say the least.

In closing I might add that many people, college students among them, do not appreciate poetry for the simple reason that they do not understand it. Never let this detail come between you and the poet. As often as not the poet himself doesn't understand it, other poets rarely. Just keep in mind the words of Lord Tennyson who thought that his fellow poet, Ben Jonson, "appeared to move in a wide sea of glue." People are funny that way.

Unless the Dead Forgive

Unless the dead forgive,
The living are accursed:
Who proffer in a sieve
Water of love rehearsed.

— *John A. Conley*

Uncertainty

by John P. McLoughlin

LT. PATRICK RAWLINGS crouched in his foxhole. The weather was damp and cold, like March or November. Tiny rivulets of brown water made a complicated network of canals converging at the brown puddle in the bottom of his muddy foxhole. Everything either was or seemed brown. The ground — except for an occasional island of damp snow — was a wet dirty brown, offering no contrast or relief from the brown tents and brown vehicles and brown soldiers in the area. "Area B" it was. They were in Area B of the 14th combat zone. Men who were really in the know said confidentially that the 14th combat zone was one of the most important in the whole of "Theatre C." He wondered where he was. Most of them had decided it was Europe; maybe they were in Germany, or Austria, or maybe right in Russia itself; but no one was sure. No one was ever sure about anything any more.

A while back, maybe a year — maybe two, his outfit had boarded one of those big new jet transports in the States and flown a long time before landing at a large airfield during the night. Since then he had seen no one very closely except his own soldiers. The Russians weren't far off, however, because one was aware of the rumblings and flashes of their big guns close by — maybe two miles, maybe twenty . . . long range guns nowadays. New weapons were developing so fast that one couldn't keep track of them — at least that is what they were told. No one that he knew had ever seen any. He still carried a modified M-1. They had ceased long ago to wonder or even care what was going on or why the soldiers were told nothing. It was ironically humorous, how, back in high school, he had laughed when reading in the paper about the Mongolian soldiers — rushed in to quell the Hungarian revolt — who had thought they were in the Suez zone to fight Americans. It wasn't strange now. Maybe he was even fighting Mongolians right now. They were never told that the enemy was Russian. It was an assumption.

High school. That was a long time ago. No one figured by days or months now. Things were either a long time or a short while ago. The seven notches on his modified, improved M-1 told him that he had been here at least a week, but he had stopped making notches a long time ago.

High school. Hungarian revolt. Four-minute mile. Elvis Presley . . . A long time ago. He had graduated with honors and received an engineering scholarship to the State University. When the war came he

would be able to serve with the Engineers Corps if he took the ROTC course offered at school. When the war did break out, and many of his buddies were drafted out of school into the infantry, he had congratulated himself on his foresight. Now he smiled and fingered his modified, improved M-1. Foresight.

He had met Theresa during his senior year, while his buddies were in combat training. It had been a great year. They agreed to ignore the war and future and have a good time. It had been a successful agreement. They were married a week after graduation. The two-week honeymoon was cut in half by his orders to report for active duty. Fort Benning. They didn't need engineers just now, "but he would probably be transferred in a little while." It seemed that the objective now was to tear down rather than build up.

He wondered if Theresa had a baby. They weren't allowed to receive letters. Most of them had written letters for a while, but rumors said that they were never sent out. "Let the men write letters. It's good for their morale." Rumors also had it that New York and Detroit had been bombed. Theresa had been living in Jersey, working in a defense plant. All the women and 4-F men were working in defense plants now — at least they had been when he left. Maybe the defense plants and everything else had been bombed. That might explain why they still used modified, improved World War II equipment, and why they received no letters.

The low morale of the entire army was beginning to take its toll on Lt. Pat Rawlings. When they first arrived in Area B he had been optimistic. Everybody expected that it would be over in less than six months. No group of nations — not even the invincible Eastern Communist Empire — could withstand the gigantic blow that the Western Democratic Empire was capable of administering. All the Democratic experts had said so. Pat had planned on returning to the West within a year to start his engineering career during the tremendous post-war boom which would result inevitably. "Don't worry," he had said to Theresa, "I'll be home before you can find a house for us." Now he doubted if the war would ever end. It didn't seem like it now. Why didn't they use H-bombs in combat? It would probably end the war much sooner. He decided they weren't used because the side that was going to win — if a victory ever did come — wanted something left to be a victor of; or maybe neither side really wanted to win. What possible use to anybody was he or his outfit when there seemed to be no purpose in being there. He would be much better off and more useful at home . . . if there still was one.

Lt. Rawlings shivered with a cold chill as he put his numb hands

into the damp, waterproof pockets of his jacket, combat, K-113, insulated. He wiggled his cold feet in the soggy socks of his boots, combat, S-37, waterproof, and tried to find a more comfortable position.

* * *

Vladimir Kroynov wondered where he was. His comrades had decided that they were in England, or somewhere in America, because they had heard that the Capitalistic Democracies had been pushed entirely out of Continental Europe and complete victory was certain within the year. Although he had been in the service of his country for eight years this was his first mission outside the fatherland. Young soldiers were very seldom sent out in their first few years.

Vladimir remembered how he had been inspired when the news reports reached his small home town of Uvenesk, telling of the tremendous victory won by the Russian soldiers against the American, English, and Hungarian Rebel forces in Hungary. He remembered the hardships, the superior manpower, and the overwhelming odds which their Army overcame in order to place Hungary among the free nations again. He had been nineteen then. Work on the collective farm was boring and besides he wished to serve his country more nobly and courageously than a farmer ever could.

His father had fought gloriously against the Nazis in the siege of Moscow. He had been killed, leaving Vladimir and his oldest brother to support their mother. When his brother — an aspiring medical student — confessed to the police about his espionage activities he was sent away and never heard from again. Vladimir wanted to vindicate his family's name, and also he would be able to send more money home as a soldier than as a farmer. Because of his brother's record, he was rejected as an officer, but he served faithfully in the ranks, and he was now considered among the best soldiers in the whole company.

During his training, Vladimir had envisioned himself marching triumphantly down the streets of Paris, London, or New York, the cheers of the crowd indicative of the joy and relief the citizens felt after being freed from the yoke of Capitalist oppression. Now the enthusiasm which characterized his early days in the army had lessened considerably. He had joined to fight gloriously, to protect his homeland, to free the unfortunate people of the Western World, but he was doing none of these. Maybe the Western people didn't want to be free. Maybe the masses were content to live in squalor while the few enjoyed excessive riches. Recently he had been struck by the parallel between this life in the decadent West and the life he had lived in Russia. The commissars and party members enjoyed many more privileges and favors than the regular citi-

zens like himself. He was told that this situation was necessary for the present, but was obviously only temporary since the basic tenet of Communism was equality for all. Equality for all? Why was he rejected as an officer? Why was his mother's meager pay cut after his brother's confession? He was curious to see how these Capitalists lived . . . why they should have to be liberated. If they were so poor why had the clothing and equipment of the few prisoners he had seen been equal, if not superior, to his own?

Vladimir wished he could go home, but his mother was probably dead by now. He had received no news "for a long time." What was the sense of growing old in an uncomfortable foxhole or risking one's life to liberate people who might not even wish to be freed?

* * *

The bleak afternoon dimmed into a bleaker dusk. Almost simultaneously two soldiers, quite similar in age and appearance, left their foxholes. Two commanders had decided that a night reconnaissance of enemy positions was in order. The two men started out — each from his own camp, each in the direction of enemy lines. They moved slowly and cautiously — almost soundlessly — for both were good soldiers. One had in his veins the blood of pioneers who had made similar silent marches against the Indians, who had contested their right to the land. The other had inherited the cunning and ability of the Cossacks, once the elite of European soldiers. They moved thus for quite a while, both now headed towards the crest of a small hill which afforded a good view of the surrounding terrain. They must have reached it at the same time, for neither was aware of the other's presence until they came face to face at the top. A pregnant silence preceded the blinding flash and simultaneous crack of two rifles. The recurring echoes of the report sounded taps as one of them slumped to the ground. The other fired two more rounds into the quivering body and hurried down the side of the hill. One of the soldiers was dead; the other might never get to live.

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend —
The kindest and the best."

A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man

JAMES JOYCE IN PERSPECTIVE

by Francis M. Sheehan

IT IS generally believed that Stephen Dedalus tried to escape from the country and culture which produced him. It is easy to conceive the dissatisfied intellectual leaving the Church and community in which he felt he did not belong. It is considerably more difficult to picture the artist as a seeker after "the loveliness that has not yet come into the world." It is just this difference in approach which makes the *Portrait* and its central figure understandable. The young artist is a near-sighted seeker after the beauty and truth in the world. But a novel which questioned the entire moral sensibility of its age and influenced many of the major writers in the two generations after it appeared, warrants special consideration.

First of all: why is Stephen a seeker? Is it this need for fulfillment which makes him an artist? Stephen is a seeker because he is an outsider; he feels always that he is on the periphery of life and longs to be at the heart of it; he longs to

> meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld . . .

Stephen's namesake, the great artificer Dedalus, not only sought to escape from King Minos (and the labyrinth that he built himself), but wanted to soar above his fellow men. Stephen wanted to escape from the mediocrity into which he had been born; he wanted to be even better than the sons of magistrates. So he sought for the holy grail of happiness and found himself at the Altar of Art.

Stephen represents a world-type; he bears a striking resemblence to Thomas Mann's Tonio Kroger. Tonio feels a gulf between himself and other people; he knows from an early age that he is somehow different; he realizes that he can never be satisfied by the simple pleasures of other people. The maturing artist Tonio learns that he can not hide in art; he can not shun life to ply his art, for the very object of art is to portray life. Life then to Tonio, includes the simple, the commonplace. But Stephen is more of an extremist. He rejects all that is commonplace to

live in an atmosphere so rare that survival is nearly impossible. In going back to the myth, it can be seen that Tonio more closely resembles Dedalus, who desired to help other people, who limited his art. Stephen is better compared with the son of Dedalus, Icarus, who, thrilled by his power of flight, flew too close to the sun.

If Stephen's choice is less humanistic, it is more bold. Tonio compromised to satisfy his two longings, but Stephen "was willing to make a mistake," even an eternal one! Stephen, despite his attitude toward the Church, has faith; when given certain qualities of art, he makes an act of belief hoping that it will merit salvation. Stephen does not realize it, but he takes Kierkegaard's "leap into darkness."

To give his new and higher religion rationality, the artist had to make it its own end. This proved to be a metaphysical foundation on which he built with the aesthetics of Aristotle. When Stephen made his decisions between Catholicism and the religion of art, he was unconsciously making the same choice of Nietzsche, who chose the Dionysian to the Apollonian. Both chose the life-giving god because it is just that life which they most urgently desired.

We must sooner or later ask why the artist made the choice that he did and just what motivated the choice. We must first realize that the artist is still a religious person,

> a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of ever-living life.

There is something monkish about Stephen's denial of the world. He sees a life of loneliness ahead of him "battling against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind." His conversion to art is really his second attempt to find peace; his conversion during retreat was the first.

It is important that we realize at this point that despite the artist's intellectual precosity, he did not make intellectual decisions. Most of his decisions were made after emotional outbursts. Certainly his decision to serve the Muses was just this:

> Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life. A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth . . .

This is the basic conflict in Stephen's mind, this antagonism between instinct and intellect. But he is one of Schopenhauer's instinctive men, a creature of will using his intellect as a tool for helping the will achieve its end. This would help to explain his irrational attraction to the beautiful, the alter-ego of the Church.

Perhaps this is why we admire the artist so much. He appears to

be fighting a hopeless battle "against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind." Stephen, true to his nature, sins by himself, and his great sin is pride. When his friend Cranly asks if he is not afraid that he is wrong, will he be able to convince himself beyond a doubt of the rightness of his action, he says: "I do not wish to overcome them." This is the great sin, the turning away from the light (as he saw the prefect of studies do), his rejection of reality.

Stephen summarized his fears and his hopes in one of his many long conversations:

> I say to you that when the soul of man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.

How then, one may ask, can we accept this book when the protagonist is openly against everything traditional? It is true, we want to admire him for his courage; he is a modern day epic hero, like Ulysses, battling against insurmountable odds. It would almost seem that he too, had aroused the anger of a vindictive god. The chief symbol of tradition and order, limitation and control, is the Church. In tracing the growth of Stephen's rebellion, we also learn something of the author's technique. Dante is the first to misrepresent the Church before his eyes, for in her passionate shouts he can perceive how religion has completely captivated her. She shouts again: "God and religion before everything; God and religion before the world!" The second symbol of the Church is Fr. Dolan, the dispenser of pandybat morality. He teaches that the way is not always right, but always narrow. Even Fr. Arnell becomes a symbol of a fire and brimstone religion, no longer sufficiently intellectual for the artist. The Church is not even given the satisfaction of a genuine intellectual conversion during the retreat — it comes as an emotional flood, a spiritual and artistic purgation.

Dramatically the book consists of three rather undramatic climaxes; the awakening of religious doubts and sexual instincts, the cycle of sin and repentance to private apocalypse, and the final break with his past. The beauty of the unity can be discovered only after several readings. The now famous and much-used techniques of regression and revivification are not mere mechanics but a complete outline of symbols and leitmotif patterns to follow.

It is probably Joyce's major contribution that he provided a means, no, even more than that, a system of expression that could communicate the various subtleties of man's emerging mind. By selection, an unsual and brilliant sense of sound and language, and an acute understanding of the mind, he gave 20th Century writers a key that fitted Freud's door leading down to man's interior.

Just because of the personal outlook expressed by the young artist, it is impossible to believe that Joyce was completely realistic. He is not the artist Stephen wanted to be, not like the . . .

> God of creation, who remains . . . within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

Joyce has a certain intensity of style, and a scope which prompts readers to compare him with the other great novelist of his time, Marcel Proust. It is sometimes difficult to appreciate such an influential artist properly. His style has been copied so much, that it is hard to realize the effect it had forty years ago. Some magazines use his style almost exclusively. But nothing is as mesmeric as this story in which an artist "goes to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race."

The Glory of Summer

Trees of infinite loveliness deck
The countryside with dazzling beauty.
Blending in harmonious unison,
Displaying all God's wonderful bounty.
Often, after a morning's work is done,
I relax on the grass, gazing at the sun
Thinking thoughts of those faraway places,
Which in the mind's eye mirror God's praises.
Singing God's praises of golden-flowing days,
Which dash by our short lives in a misty haze.
But it is sad that so few think of the dreams
Ever present in God's beautiful schemes.
Someday — I hope — all shall come to see
The glory of a midsummer's noon.

— *David M. Karnak*

Aengus and Leda

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS AND THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

by Robert E. Hall

IN "The Song of Wandering Aengus," an early poem, William Yeats describes what may only be termed a mystical experience, a vision. Aengus, the Celtic god of love, betakes himself to a hazel wood:

> I went out to the hazel wood,
> Because a fire was in my head,
> And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
> And hooked a berry to a thread;
> And then white moths were on the wing.
> And moth-like stars were flickering out,
> I dropped the berry in a stream
> And caught a little silver trout.
>
> When I had laid it on the floor,
> I went to blow the fire a-flame,
> But something rustled on the floor,
> And someone called me by my name:
> It had become a glimmering girl
> With apple blossom in her hair
> Who called me by my name and ran
> And faded through the brightening air.

The vision now has fled and Aengus is left alone. But this vision has been exactly that, a vision only. The glimmering courier was *seen* only. Aengus has been involved only briefly, of a sudden, and non-essentially. I say *non-essentially* because there has been no communication, no intercourse, between the god and the shining girl; only a lure, the hint of a complete answer. There has been the mystical experience, yet Aengus is no mystic. Certainly he is not, nor will ever be, the man he was before the vision. Equally certain is the fact that Aengus wants very much to become a mystic. He wishes to participate actively within his vision. He must, therefore, begin his wandering, his search for the faded image. All this is shown, I think, in the concluding stanza of the poem:

> Though I am old with wandering
> Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
> I will find out where she has gone,
> And kiss her lips and take her hands;
> And walk among long dappled grass,

> And pluck till time and times are done
> The silver apples of the moon
> The golden apples of the sun.

Now this is all very strange. Do gods, even mythical gods, have visions? I really couldn't say, but I think that Yeats's Aengus is not a full-fledged god. I don't think that before his vision he was a god at all. He is, though I don't recall such a designation in the mythical hierarchy, a demi-god, a man become a god. And Aengus's position is somewhat similar to that of Augustus Caesar in Seneca's only satire: there are a lot of things he's got to learn about this business of being a god.

Yeats is using the mythical imagery to describe for us here the coming-to-be of a poetic consciousness, a man's initial discovery of the poetic faculty within himself. For Yeats, such a realization would be sufficient to account for the almost divine transformation of his Aengus. Aengus is Yeats. And, at this point in his development, Yeats, too, wants to wander, to be a mystic. But, right now, he must only wander because he is still only a poet, a man but accidentally exposed to the well-spring of nature; to the root, end, and, therefore, explanation of Nature. And this is Nature with the capital *N*, the all-informing whole.

But also, in this final stanza of the poem, Yeats explains, when he describes the actions that he imagines Aengus will perform upon rediscovering the girl, what exactly he means by mysticism. Aengus, he tells us, will pluck the fruit of the moon and sun. To be a mystic, then, is to contemplate, in Time and with the complete actuation of all individual potential, the totally contemplatable, totally active, eternal root of absolutely everything. For, though he is "old with wandering," Aengus will find the girl in Time. He will contemplate by acting. He will assimilate by plucking, the golden, silver, eternal products of elemental nature, as symbolized by the sun and moon, those two, still *eidola* of eternal change.

I think that, in this poem, Yeats is convinced that, because the revelation of the poetic power is attended by a momentary and mystic insight, mysticism itself can only serve to extend the poetic faculty; more, can serve as the only goal of the poet. This is the early Yeats.

It is only much later, when the poet comes to make his explicit dichotomy of human nature, in "Sailing to Byzantium," that we get the first hint of Yeats's changing attitude toward the problem of mysticism and its relation to poetic achievement. "Byzantium" finds Yeats a more profound poet, a poet piecing together his imagery from his own human likeness. He is no longer using his mythical material as a convenient method for advocating an escape into an unreal and pre-lapsarian world. Myth is now made to live in a real world. Myth always could live in a real world, but it is only with "Byzantium" that Yeats gives evidence

of having realized this fact.

While it is not my intention here to discuss "Sailing to Byzantium," there are two things of importance to be noted in this poem which have a direct bearing on Yeats's ultimate evaluation of the worth of mysticism to the poet.

Cleanth Brooks, in his *Modern Poetry and Tradition,*[1] maintains that "Byzantium" represents the ideal fusion of flesh, mind, and spirit. If such a contention be valid, then we see that Yeats has made what he believes to be an essential division of human nature into these three elements, namely, flesh, mind, and spirit. There are, in other words, three powers which must be actuated in the temporal experience of mysticism, if such an experience is to have the effect of extending the poet's knowledge of human nature.

More important, however, is the fact that this ideal fusion, the complete and proportionate actuation of these three powers, takes place in the poem "Byzantium," only after death; does not, indeed, take place in Time at all. Thus the ideal fusion cannot be mystical since, according to Yeats, the mystical must occur in Time, and not in eternity where such a fusion might be thought the normal activity. Notice: Yeats does not deny to the mystical experience this complete, yet momentary, actuation of man's entire nature; in "Byzantium" he only implies that such a denial is pending.

In "Leda and the Swan," Yeats describes by means of myth the making of a mystic. In the poem, "Zeus, enamored of Leda, visits her in the form of a swan and begets upon her the Helen whose fatal beauty brings about the destruction of Troy"; or, as the poet describes it:

> A shudder in the loins engenders there
> The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
> And Agamemnon dead.

Here, then, is an essential and informing communication, in time, between the human and divine. This is not *a* divine being, however, just one of the gods; this is *the* god, Zeus himself.

And what effect does this communication have upon Leda? Yeats concludes the poem with the same question:

> Being so caught up,
> So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
> Did she put on his knowledge with his power
> Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

And, remembering the burning roof and the dead Greek, we must an-

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[1] *College Survey of English Literature,* Ed. Alex M. Witherspoon, p. 1227.

swer the question with an emphatic, "No!" The result of the union between Zeus and Leda is Helen. The product of Leda's mystical communication is most assuredly not the heightened knowledge of flesh, mind, and spirit; it is only an intense realization of the potential within one of these powers of human nature, in this case the power of the flesh, symbolized by the beauty of heaven.

Yeats is definitely saying here that the essential mystical experience is a source of power, a power of an almost frightening degree. But this power results, not from an extended knowledge of human nature, but from the very ignorance of that knowledge, from the channeled energy which results from the actuation of only one of the three essential elements of human nature. Yeats tells us, in effect, that, with regard to human nature, the mystic can never become a poet. A poet must realize the equal demands made upon the human being by these essential, and at times conflicting, elements of his nature. But this the mystic can never do.

The symbolic Leda does a good job of controlling the remainder of mankind. She has mastered a single faculty while the rest of mankind races between the flesh, mind, and spirit. Helen, the effect of the subordination of mind and spirit to the requirements of the perfected flesh, does indeed rule kings. But, in controlling mankind, she is less human.

I don't believe that, in this poem, Yeats much cares which of the human powers is ascendant; the rule of the flesh which we find here is only the more malleable, rhetorical tool for the poetic purpose. The significant fact is that, as a result of an essential mystic experience, a single faculty does dominate the mystic.

Thus Yeats's attitudes toward the poetic value of mysticism has indeed shifted. For whatever reason, Yeats now believes that a temporal participation in the image of eternity does not actuate the totality of human nature, or at least does not actuate it in the way that he had earlier supposed.

In Time, however, the poet is still Aengus, still the demi-god. He is the conscious possessor of human nature. This in itself distinguishes the poet from many of his fellows. He does not divide human nature to perfect it; this perfection, this ideal fusion, is not possible before death. Nor does the poet divide human nature to subjugate it, as Yeats believes the mystic to do. But he does divide human nature to understand it; not why it is so much as what it is.

In conclusion, then, Aengus cannot become Leda and remain a poet. Yeats, no matter how much he longs for mysticism as a man, must reject mysticism not only as a poet but as a poet fighting for the very life of his poetic faculty.

Tribute to a Teacher

by Henry F. Birkenhauer, S.J.

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Edward J. Eggl, Associate Professor of History at John Carroll University, died suddenly December 11, 1956. This tribute was originally delivered as his funeral sermon.*]

"For the life of Thy faithful, O Lord, is changed, not taken away; and when the abode of our earthly sojourn is dissolved, an eternal dwelling is prepared in Heaven." These words are taken from the Preface of the Mass for the Dead.

ALL of us have gazed upon the face of an innocent child and marvelled at the miracle that is life. We have seen the perfect development as the tiny eyes and delicate fingernails and sensitive lips have grown in perfect proportion from the child to the youth to the young man or woman to the mature adult. We have thrilled at the power of growth that God has implanted in the human person, the power to grow physically, to increase in strength and ability, to dominate the merely material world about us.

There is another experience that has come to all of us — to see the life of the mind grow in the souls of those we love. Those clutching fingers, that eager eye, show forth the curiosity, the wish to know in every human being. The stream of questions, which overwhelms even the most patient parent, proves that God has implanted in every human heart an instinct to seek the truth. So unbelievably precious is the gift of life that when Christ Himself, the Master Teacher, was seeking for a word which would express His own indwelling within us, He could find no better one than life: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly."

We esteem most highly those professions whose duty it is to preserve, foster, and improve human life. The physician who guards life when it first comes into the world, who, with his skill and research fends harmful diseases from mankind, receives everywhere a just meed of praise.

The priest, whose vocation it is to foster supernatural life and to bring it back through the sacraments when it has lapsed, is honored for his dedicated service. And the teacher, whose task it is to guide and guard the wearisome journey of the mind in its search for truth, has always and ever been blessed for his devotion to a difficult ideal.

St. John Chrysostom, one of the great orators of all time, exclaimed: "What is nobler than to train the human mind? What is greater than to mold the human character? The vision that places line and color on canvas, the skill that shapes form in bronze and marble — incomparably above these is the art that fashions human souls."

We have come this morning to offer the eternal sacrifice of Christ Jesus, the greatest teacher of all times, that we may open — not the gates of a school to admit you to another academic year — not the doors of a hospital to cure the ailments of your body — but the very portals of Heaven to receive within them a soul who has devoted three decades of his life to the art of teaching. A teacher who steeped himself in the knowledge of his field, he sought the answers to questions that you might know the truth. He found and gave you the reasons behind the facts of history. His talents, many of them appreciated by only a few of his closest friends, were used by the administrators of this university to foster a harmonious union of its faculty and to advance the social well-being of its friends. His classroom manner was one of graciousness and precision. But he knew that a teacher, to be truly great, does more than merely transmit the pages of a text. As Claire Boothe Luce said to a group of seminarians not many years ago, "What you are shouts so loudly that people can't hear what you say."

A true teacher inspires by the example of his life far more than by his words in class. Our brother, colleague, professor, preached the perfect blending of the natural life of the mind into the supernatural life of the soul. He was what he sought to form — a supernatural man, guided by the example and precept of Christ, for whom the realities of faith are the only eternal truths.

He knew and taught by his example that the supremely important life is the life of the soul. He developed the life of his mind so that his soul would understand God's love and relish God's revelation. He knew the value of preparation for examinations; he made this life the best possible preparation for the one examination that alone matters. For in that examination, when the life of the body is taken away, the life of the soul is changed into the light of glory — a supernatural power that enables man to know God as God knows Himself and in that knowledge to find complete happiness.

We who remain ask God to console his relatives, to hearten the student body by his example, and to give to the members of the faculty a deeper appreciation of their vocation as teachers.

We who remain, as we stifle the feelings of regret springing up in our hearts, thank God for the inspiration He has given us in one who was so close to Him, one whom we loved so dearly — inspiration to seek

the truth diligently, to explain it honestly, to defend it fearlessly, that we, too, may seek to form the supernatural man in others and in so doing, nourish and foster the supernatural life in our own souls. That way which he took, we, too, are following; that truth which he loved shall make us free; that life, God willing, we, too, shall share. "For the life of Thy faithful, O Lord, is not destroyed but changed, and when the abode of our sojourn here is dissolved, Thou hast prepared an everlasting dwelling for us all in Heaven," where, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we shall share that satisfying vision of truth which is eternal.

Stream

The horde streamed from the East
Across a great river the world to seize;
Over vast table-flat to meet the unknown,
Bronzed faces alive with confidence shone.

In large and white and covered wagons
On desert that burned like breath of dragons,
Always they rode with heads held high,
Never bidding the East a final goodbye.

Westward they surged over wide, dusty plain;
Reaching their dream, they planted their grain.
The desert of scrub became harvest of gold,
To nourish the settlers who bore winter's cold.

The breezes of spring brought them new arrivals,
God-fearing families concerned with survival,
Also from the East the villainous came
To bring to the prairie a new brand of fame.

Sweltering summer came and passed by.
And the blue off the coast matched the blue of the sky;
Revamped prairie was earned by the toil
Of the lonely pioneers who conquered the soil.

The clatter and rumble of the spoked wagon wheel
Announced to the earth the relentless zeal
Of brave men and women whom courage could clasp,
Advancing our frontier to its moribund gasp.

—*John M. Wilson*

The Relationship of Mark Twain and Bret Harte

by Jerome A. Kramer

MARK TWAIN, writing his *Autobiography* in 1906, stated that "Bret Harte was one of the pleasantest men I have ever known. He was also one of the unpleasantest men I have ever known." It was natural for Twain to place "pleasantest" and "unpleasantest" in that order. For between the time of their first meeting in San Francisco and the dissolution of the friendship in 1877, Mark Twain came to detest Harte as he had detested no other. But why? The facts are inconclusive and somewhat mysterious, but those available allow the accusations of Twain to be viewed with some objectivity.

These two artists, as yet unknown for literary accomplishment, met in San Francisco in 1864. Sam Clemens was a reporter, *the* reporter, for the San Francisco *Morning Call,* a newspaper whose equipment was housed in the same building that contained the offices of the U.S. Mint. Bret Harte was private secretary to the Superintedent of the Mint and acting editor of a literary magazine called the *Californian.* A mutual friend introduced the two, and the proximity of their offices allowed them to be together often, a practice which they continued even after Clemens left the *Call.*

There is a humorous sidelight concerning Twain's sudden departure from the field of reporting. According to his colorful account written forty years later (with the addition of many picturesque and questionable details), there was enough work for a reporter-and-a-half on the *Call,* but not enough for two. Dissatisfied with this arrangement, Clemens requested an assistant, and received, with great reluctance on the part of the editor, Smiggy McGlural, a hulking young man from the counting room. "Smiggy," Twain relates, "went at his work with ten times the energy that was left in me. He was not intellectual, but mentality was not required or needed in a *Morning Call* reporter, and so he conducted his office to perfection." Within a month Smiggy was doing all the work — it was obvious he could do all of it. It was equally obvious that Clemens would allow him to do it. The star reporter was soon reduced to the equivalent of an assistant copy-boy. His editor gave him the opportunity of quitting to save him the ignominy of being fired, and the proud Clemens strode off. There are many anecdotes in Twain's *Autobiography* which are obviously fabrications. According to most of Twain's biographers, this is one of them.

Whatever the cause, Clemens was out of a job, though he had been contributing articles to the *Golden Era,* rival of Harte's *Californian.*

Bret Harte had by this time risen to the position of chief editor of the *Californian.* Recognizing Twain's potential ability, he hired him to write an article a week at fifty dollars per month. As friend and editor he aided Clemens in his writing, showed him his faults, and helped him to correct them. Twain himself, in a letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, dated January 28, 1871, said, "He changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesquenesses to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found a certain favor in the eyes of even some of the very decentest people in the land. . . ."

However valuable this refining influence of Harte may have been, the things which Twain wrote for the *Californian* at this time show no great indication of it. His first contribution was "A Notable Conundrum," published in October, 1864. It included the combination of a love letter from a soap boiler's advertisement, described the process of getting drunk at the Cliff House bar, and made great play with the aroma of a stranded whale:

> The whale was not a long one, physically speaking — say thirty-five feet — but he smelt much longer; he smelt as much as a mile and a half longer, I should say, for we traveled about that distance beyond him before we ceased to detect his fragrance in the atmosphere. . . . A whale does not smell like magnolia, nor yet like helitrope or 'Balm of a Thousand Flowers'; I do not know, but I should judge that it smells more like a thousand polecats.

During the following year, he made even greater progress under the direction of Harte by continuing the burlesque fashion notes he had begun as early as 1863. These included such timely topics as "Miss C.L.B. had her fine nose elegantly enameled, and the easy grace with which she blew it from time to time marked her as a cultivated and accomplished woman of the world." Another was an attack on Miss X: ". . . with a brass oyster-knife she skewered through her waterfall . . . smiling her sickly smile through her decayed teeth."

Harte and Twain parted in 1865, each intending to move eastward and contribute to the more renowned periodicals in that section of the country. That the two writers parted on friendly terms is evidenced by their correspondence between the years 1866-70. There are unmistakable signs of mutual admiration, and an amicable tone is prevalent throughout the letters. In a letter to his mother, dated 1866, Twain explained, "Though I am generally placed at the head of my breed of scribblers in this part of the country, the place properly belongs to Bret Harte, I think, though he denies it, along with all the rest." But Mark Twain,

writing with the perspective of forty years, stated in his *Autobiography*: "In the early days I liked Bret Harte, and so did the others, but by and by I got over it; so also did the others. He couldn't keep a friend permanently. He was bad, distinctly bad; he had no feeling and he had no conscience." Trouble with Harte was as inevitable as it was with the arrival of Smiggy McGlural years before.

The year 1870 marked the first break in the friendship of the two men. It seems that Harte, as Clemens told Thomas Aldrich in 1871, broke the friendship without cause or provocation.

By 1871 Clemens and his wife, Livy, had settled down in the East, choosing Hartford, Connecticut as their home. In this year, also, Bret Harte, now an established and popular author, finally left California to come East. He was wined and dined and heralded across the land, creating such a stir that, as Twain quipped, "One might have supposed he was the Viceroy of India on a progress, or Haley's Comet come again after seventy years of lamented absence."

Relations between the two suffered another blow during this same year. They quarreled over reasons as yet unknown, unless professional jealousy had become the personal devil of one of them. Each had had a meteoric rise during the preceding years; and they had taken turns eclipsing one another and occupying the position of literary darling of the United States. This quarrel may account for Harte's slurring remark about Twain at a luncheon of literary Bostonians. When someone mentioned the presence of Twain, a Westerner, at such an erudite gathering, Harte exclaimed, "Why fellows (and the word rank falsely), this is the dream of Mark's life!" Though Harte had been born in New York instead of Missouri, an obvious retort in kind was due. "But Mark Twain was not in the habit of obvious retorts, and the matter dropped."

Harte seemed more than willing, though, to resume friendly relations when, as Clemens put it, "the wolf had him by the hind leg." He dropped in on the Twain family on one occasion to spend the night and was conveniently in debt to approximately half the city of New York. He needed $250 to pay the butcher and the baker, but Twain gave him $500 — an extra $250 so that his family might live after the bills were paid. This generosity was undoubtedly regretted later, for the amount soon grew to such proportions that four figures were required to state the amount. Once, Twain relates, when the debt totaled $3000, "He offered me his note, but I was not keeping a museum and didn't take it." George Stewart, a biographer of Harte, is of the opinion that Harte merely forgot to pay his debts; but to forget $3000 requires quite a loss of memory. The evidence is greatly to the contrary.

In relation to this visit Twain also tells that Harte ". . . employed the rest of his visit in delivering himself of sparkling sarcasms about our house, our furniture, and the rest of our domestic arrangement." Twain did not consider that this was not the same happy, hopeful, and ambitious Bret Harte of San Francisco days. This was a debt-ridden, defeated, and ill Bret Harte who had failed in his attempts at lecturing, drama, and the novel — who was destined for an upward climb the remainder of his life.

Harte's dream of writing a successful play caused the final breach between the two authors in 1876. *Two Men of Sandy Bar,* Harte's first attempt at drama, had been unmercifully criticized for its content, and also because he had earned the enmity of the New York critics by charging that they seldom wrote a favorable review unless paid to do so. The only hopeful note in the play was the acting of C. T. Parsloe in the part of a Chinese laundryman.

Meanwhile Twain's popularity quotient was rising as fast as Harte's was falling. *Innocents Abroad,* the *Jumping Frog* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* had made Twain famous in the United States and on the Continent. Harte decided to take advantage of this popularity and suggested that they collaborate on a play in which Parsloe was to be the central character. He reasoned that the critics would be more lenient if he were protected by the name of Mark Twain. The bond between them was weak, but visions of money and success were strong. Twain welcomed the opportunity, and invited Harte to stay at Hartford while they wrote.

During his first night in the Twain residence, Harte, by laboring all night (sustained by two bottles of whiskey), completed a "pot-boiler" which was due to be presented to the publisher on the next day.

Great progress was made on the drama, *Ah Sin,* in the ensuing two weeks; but domestic tranquility was wavering with the pressure that resulted, for Harte again ". . . made himself liberally entertaining at breakfast, at luncheon, at dinner, and in the billiard room — which was our workshop — with smart and bright sarcasms leveled at everything on the place." This criticism was endured for Livy's sake until Livy herself became the target for one of Harte's veiled and satirical remarks. Harte denied that she was meant, but Clemens was in no mood to accept a denial and exploded in Harte's face with all the venom he could muster:

> Harte, your wife is all that is fine and lovable and lovely, and I exhaust praise when I say she is Mrs. Clemens' peer — but in all ways you are a shabby husband to her, and you often speak sarcastically to her, not to say sneeringly, of her, just as you are constantly doing in the case of other women; but your privilege ends there; you must

> spare Mrs. Clemens. It does not become you to sneer at all. You are not charged anything for the bed you sleep in, yet you have been smartly and wittily satirical about it, whereas you ought to have been more reserved in that matter, remembering that you have not owned a bed of your own for ten years; you have made sarcastic remarks about the table ware and about the servants and about the sleigh and the coachman's livery — in fact about every detail of the house and half of its occupants; you have spoken of all those matters contemptuously in your unwholesome desire to be witty, but this does not become you; you are barred from these criticisms by your situation and circumstances; you have a talent and a reputation which would enable you to support your family more respectfully and independently if you were not a born bummer and tramp; you are a loafer and an idler, and you go clothed in rags, with not a whole shred on you except your inflamed red tie, and *it* isn't paid for; nine-tenths of your income is borrowed money — money which, in fact, is stolen since you never intended to repay any of it; . . . lately you have not ventured to show your face in your neighborhood because of the creditors who are on watch for you. Where have you lived? Nobody knows. Your own people do not know. But I know. You have lived in the Jersey woods and marshes, and you have supported yourself as do the other tramps; you have confessed it without a blush; you sneer at everything in this house, but you ought to be more tender, remembering that everything in it was honestly come by and has been paid for.

No one is certain that Twain delivered this lengthy diatribe directly to Harte — at least not all of it. It seems unlikely that a man of Harte's temperament would remain speechless under such a hail of abuse, deserved or not. Also, these charges were written by Twain in his *Autobiography* which was not begun until years after the incident had taken place. Whatever Clemens said, however, must have been sufficient — Bret Harte had spent his last night with the Twains. The play itself turned out to be as dismal a failure as the friendship of its co-authors.

The break was now complete, so Twain and Harte satisfied their smouldering anger by mutual criticism and accusations of one another lodged with their friends. In 1877 Harte wrote to his publisher, Bliss, charging that he, in collusion with Mark Twain, had falsified the royalty accounts of *Gabriel Conroy,* Harte's novel. Twain repaid the favor by writing two letters to William Dean Howells in 1878 requesting that Howells use his influence with President Hayes to destroy Harte's chances of being awarded a consularship in Crefeld, Germany. Harte received it nevertheless.

There is extant an unpublished letter written by Harte which may present his side of the argument. Without an answer from Harte the story behind Twain's remark is unfortunately one-sided, but it does seem to justify the assertion.

The Literature of the Atomic Age

by John T. Dockery

THIS is the atomic age. We mass produce our literature just as we mass produce our automobiles and our appliances. Our lines of clothing and furniture have almost no limit to their variety, nor does our literature. Utter complexity and diversification stamp the literary field. No man can point and say this is the age of This or That. Who will dare to pick the one type of writing which has so captured the public fancy as to eclipse all else? Who will dare to point out one of several authors and say, "this man is typical"? At best they can spot a few established giants brooding over a host of anonymous writers. Even among the giants we can spot little in common, unless it is a faint strain of excessive realism. Above all, there is the notion that the best is the most popular; or when the principle is more properly stated: popularity is an accepted index of quality.

Today's fields of writing extend so far in every direction that a brief scanning of their broad outlines is all that is possible. We shall group them in three major categories. The first of these is the traditional fields of novels, biographies, humor, *etc.* Pulp writing forms a rather questionable, if prolific, subdivision of this category. Secondly come the latest phenomena, the how-to-do-it books of instruction, explanation, and commentary. The final listing takes account of the usurpers of the stage, namely radio, television, and motion pictures. Mass production in all three of these lines has lowered literature to a common denominator and brought into sharp relief — by a dearth of quality — what the concept of good writing implies.

Viewing the mass of printed matter adorning a newsstand, one is struck by a brutal contrast. Today's literature is at once a storehouse of man's cumulative knowledge and a sewer of thought propounding a return to animalism. As a sewer of filth, modern literature takes its cue from the ad men, "Sex sells." From this belief has developed the most deplorable trend in writing yet conceived. By way of introduction consider this. How do you like your sex — dank, steaming, raw — or gilded with an aura of suburban respectability, or better yet would you like to cluck disapprovingly at the infidelity of a rakish monarch? Take your pick; the stock is endless. Sex is the largest single theme in America today. We have it for every age group, every pocketbook, every degree of refinement. This is the fastest moving and best line — best since it is the most popular.

As a class the historical romances and the works dealing with the extremes in contemporary society are probably the largest single dealers in sex. The historical book may deal with any period as witnessed by the equal reception afforded *The Vixen, Desiree,* and the *Egyptian.* The only requisite for a plot I could find was collection of local dilettantes with nothing better to do than scorn the peasants and corrupt the morals of the middle class. Of course this scorn may or may not prevent a charming liaison between the barge-tender's daughter and the duke. The modern cult of realism does much the same with novels about crime, or Oakies, or Long Island society. Here old moral standards are updated.

This brings us to the new, explosive concept of sex. Now classic literature deals with infidelity and immorality, and rightly so, for this is part of the whole picture of man. Classic writers condemned immorality. But never has one group so seriously tried to justify and lionize the animal behavior of man as the modern novelist. His ideas have tended to deride the vestiges of moral conduct either by pointing out the commonness of immorality or better yet by snob appeal, wherein wealth and fashion are used as excellent cover. Attempts are even made to weave the notion of infidelity into the American scene, and eventually to link American development with loose conduct. A leading example is the very popular *Child of the Century*. What started as an incline toward realism, toward painting man as he really is, has ended in debasing him to the level of an animal. Were this the only theme alive today, I would write modern literature off as complete failure, but as I have already mentioned, no one type dominates.

Mass production has of course brought inexpensive reading within easy reach of everyone, and because of it or in spite of it, people are reading in volume. Regarding the interests of the reading public along traditional lines, an examination shows that along with sensationalism, adventure stories like *Kon-Tiki* or *Annapurna* seem to hold the public fancy best. The idea of vicarious conquest never seems to lose its appeal. Following these, biographies both true and fictionalized find wide acceptance. In a more serious vein such works as Churchill's histories, *A Night to Remember,* and a *Stillness at Appomatox,* each detailing and documenting events or periods, number their readers in the millions. Of late the stultifying effect of excessive realism has brought a reaction in the reading public in the form of acceptance of popular novels dealing with Christian legends, as the *Chalice* and the *Robe,* along with the homey philosophy of Norman Vincent Peale. We complete our list with the finer examples of modern news reporting.

Prescinding from the innocuous tales of small town life and tribu-

lation and the pseudo-religious theme, we find three concepts most readily expressed in modern literature. The first is existentialistic, spouting free love and cynicism. These stories say: "Live today and let the devil take tomorrow." The second group features escape to anywhere — past, present or future — away from the impending horror of the atom. The third and perhaps the most readily readable is the minute dissection of the world around us accompanied by a torturous, inward scrutiny of everything we do or believe. There are infinitely more themes than these, but sooner or later most strike one or several of the above categories.

The striking advent of an audio-visual literature and the phenomenon of how-to-do-it books are the private development of this era. Though we still have great contemporary dramatists, their field has been usurped, and the rising young writer turns to television. Here he may present himself directly to his audience. He may impress them with his cleverness in translating the written word into action and sound. In doing so he has lost something of the imagination, but he has added a new and healthy dimension. The startling upsurge of instructive material for the average layman, explaining how this or that works, provides the most fitting conclusion to any consideration of modern literature and its bewildering variety. Like the how-to-do-it books, which cover any field from brain surgery to African violets, modern literature spans many abysses of ignorance and looks, for the first time in a long while, ahead and not backward to ancient glory. Modern literature seeks to inform and entertain and to give information for the sake of information alone. Though no man can point and say this is the age of This or That, much would be explained if he mentioned atomic age in the same breath with his subject.

The Doll

by Charles A. Novak

THE calloused, muscular hands of Mike Delaney were stained with grime and moistened with the sweat of a long day's labor. He kicked the foot lever on the punchpress, watching the massive steel die crash down to tear out the last, smooth metal strip for the week.

Tomorrow was Saturday, and on Saturday, Mike Delaney could spend his time as he wished. But this Saturday was especially important to Mike, because of the doll.

The doll had been displayed in the department store window for the past three weeks. Clothed in a shimmering blue cocktail dress and small, suede shoes, with golden hair that cascaded over painted shoulders, the fragile toy would bring the sparkle back to Kathy's eyes.

For five long years that sparkle had not been present. For five long years Mike Delaney had trudged home from the machine shop, expecting to see some change in the thin, pale face that lay against the pillow. But for five long years the thin, pale face had simply stared up at him from her prison of a bed.

"The doll will change all this," Mike Delaney mused, tidying up the workbench. And tomorrow, Saturday, Mike would visit the store and buy the doll. A happy tune flowed from his lips as he punched the time clock and started home.

The clatter of the wheels of the battered old trolley had a hypnotic effect on Mike. As he leaned back in the stained leather seat, he slowly drifted off to that far-away hell hole in the South Pacific . . .

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The calloused, muscular hands of Sergeant Mike Delaney were stained with the soil of the little island in the middle of nowhere, and moistened with the sweat of the steaming jungle. As he eased the cumbersome M-1 from his weary shoulder, Mike reached into the pocket of his fatigues, pulled out a crushed pack of crushed cigarettes, and lit one with trembling fingers.

His squad had just returned from a daylight patrol. Crawling, scrambling, hugging the ground for cover, nine men had ventured out from the safety of the bivouac area to feel out the enemy. Eight men made the trip back, leaving behind the death-still body of Private Ralph Johnson. Mike stubbed out the half-smoked cigarette, swung the M-1

up to his shoulder, and strode over to the lieutenant's tent to report.

The young officer was seated at a bare table, poring over some contour maps, as Sgt. Delaney burst in. Forgetting the all-important salute, Mike blurted out in a husky, unusually off-key voice, "Those dirty Japs picked off Ralph."

The young officer glanced up, his combat-weary face lined with the anxieties of war. Overlooking the obvious discourtesy, he softly requested, "Tell me about it, Mike."

"Well," Sgt. Delaney began, "we crawled through the mud till we reached this open spot. I signalled the squad to cross it damn quick on the run. Ralph was the first man to start across, but he slipped and fell in the mud. That's when that dirty Jap got him in the back, right under the shoulder blade. I picked off the sniper, but his yellow friends started opening up, so we had to leave Ralph out there. He's still there. He was the best man in the squad, sir."

The young officer could offer no expression that would lessen the sorrow that Sgt. Delaney felt. He knew that Ralph Johnson had been a good soldier, and that Delaney had struck up quite a friendship with the young man.

After the initial outburst, Mike calmed down somewhat. He related the other details about the reconnaissance, mentioned the enemy vehicles and troops, and reported the number of weapon emplacements they had located. Finished, he saluted smartly, and turned to leave.

The lieutenant called him back and handed him a wrinkled white envelope. "Mike," he said, "Maybe this will cheer you up. I think it's a letter from your wife."

Mike left the tent.

Tearing open the tattered white envelope that still bore a faint scent of perfume, Sgt. Delaney eased his tired body to the ground and leaned against a stubby tree. He started to read . . .

My dearest Michael:

I realize that you're busy fighting a war, so I didn't write you about this sooner. I didn't want to worry or scare you, but now I feel that you should know the whole story.

About three weeks ago, Kathy complained that she wasn't feeling well. She ran a high temperature, so I put her to bed and called Doc Brown. Doc took some tests and came up with a diagnosis of polio.

Doc says our daughter may never walk again, for paralysis has set in from the waist down. Your darling Kathy is taking it quite well, and the neighbors have been wonderful in caring for her when I'm away.

Dearest, Kathy and I miss you very much, and wish you were here

with us. Please do your best to finish the war and hurry home to us.

I've got to stop now, for the tears are starting to form. Hurry home.

With lasting love,
Annie X X X

A seething, uncontrollable rage seized Mike Delaney, combat sergeant. He crumpled the letter into a misshapen ball and tossed it into the mud. Grabbing his M-1, he headed into the underbrush.

As he walked along, Mike Delaney's thoughts rambled on. "Why did those damn Japs have to start this war? Why am I here, fighting those yellow dogs? If I'd been home I could have helped Kathy — and Annie too! They need me there. Kathy would never have gotten sick if I'd been home!"

Glimpsing something moving through the marsh-grass to his left, Delaney instinctively raised his weapon and fired. The roar of the M-1 was punctuated by a muffled groan as a ragged yellow figure slumped forward.

As Mike examined the body of the dead Japanese soldier, a strange feeling possessed him. This was the way he would make up for Kathy's paralysis. This was the way he could avenge Ralph Johnson's death. He'd kill every Jap he came across. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This would be his code from then on.

* * *

The conductor was shaking the shoulder of Mike Delaney, punch-press operator.

"Time to get up, buddy! This is the end of the line — your stop!"

As Mike swung off the trolley's step, he thought about the conclusion to that dream which had been a nightmare as he had lived it. Combat Sgt. Mike Delaney had built quite a record for himself. The score had mounted to thirty-two Jap snipers in two months. But then the war was over, and he had returned to Kathy and Annie, he had been hired to operate the punchpress, and he had come home every night to see the thin, pale face staring up at him from the pillow. Tomorrow though, Kathy would have a radiant smile on her face, because of the doll.

Mike Delaney had reached his doorstep.

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"That'll be $14.98," the clerk said, as she wrapped up the doll with the shimmering blue dress in a large cardboard box, attaching a huge yellow bow to its cover.

"I imagine your little girl will be really pleased with this big doll," the sales clerk said, beaming, as she handed Mike his change.

"You'll never know," Mike replied, as he grasped the large package and headed into the throng of Saturday shoppers.

As he was leaving the store, it happened. Rounding a corner, the little man bumped into Mike, knocking the package out of his arms. It fell to the ground, its yellow bow soiled, its cover half awry.

"So sorry, honorable sir, this unworthy person was in great haste," the little man humbly offered, stooping to retrieve the large white box.

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Mike muttered. The calloused, muscular fist of Mike Delaney blasted the little man. The Oriental face evolved into a grotesque expression, the mouth bled slightly, the gold-rimmed spectacles hung at an absurd angle, the small yellow figure slumped against the building.

Nearby, a woman screamed. Mike hurriedly glanced into the box, checking that the doll was still intact. Then he melted into the crowd and started home.

* * *

That evening, after the dishes were done, Annie and Mike, who proudly carried the huge white box, went up to Kathy's bedroom.

Kathy's eyes grew wider and wider as she unwrapped the gift. Tearing the cover off the box, she clutched the doll close to her thin, pale body, and gave Mike the reward he had been praying for those many years — a wide, radiant smile.

The doll was still tightly grasped in her childish arms, as Mike and Annie left the room, and Kathy, in her sleep, still wore that smile.

As an after-thought, Mike tenderly took the doll without waking her, and placed it in a chair on the far side of the room, so that Kathy might see it as soon as she woke up the next morning.

"Did you notice the sparkle in her eyes, Mike?" Annie asked. "That was the best present you could have brought her." Annie kissed her husband tenderly.

About 2 a.m., Mike was suddenly jolted out of his slumber by a strange noise, as if something had toppled over in Kathy's room.

Racing to the bedroom, Mike stopped short at the open door. The doll was no longer on the chair, but in Kathy's arms. And Kathy was at the foot of the chair, her path faintly sketched by the depression of tiny footprints in the soft tufts of the bedroom carpet.

KATHY HAD WALKED OVER TO THE DOLL!

Mike stepped over to his daughter's side. With tears of gratitude streaming from his eyes, he took the doll from his little girl's arms. As he did so, a strange slip of paper fluttered down from the painted leg of the doll, a slip of paper which he had overlooked before. It bore three simple words: *Made in Japan.*

Contributors

ANN C. MURPHY, a graduate fellow in English, makes her first Quarterly appearance with a discussion of Emily Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death."

TOM W. GROUTT, junior English major from Butler, Pennsylvania, presents his second Quarterly contribution, "How to Write a Poem." His previous work was a poem, "Analysis," written for the Autumn issue.

JOHN A. CONLEY, PH.D., Associate Professor of English, presents the short verse, "Unless the Dead Forgive."

JOHN P. McLOUGHLIN, a recent addition to the Quarterly staff, appears for the first time with "Uncertainty." A junior from Saginaw, Michigan, he is majoring in social science.

FRANCIS M. SHEEHAN, senior evening division English major from Cleveland, Ohio, reviews "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," by James Joyce.

DAVID M. KARNAK is a junior social science major from Cleveland, Ohio, whose "The Glory of Summer" is a Quarterly "first."

ROBERT E. HALL, another graduate fellow in English, pursues the study of "Aengus and Leda" as his second Quarterly work. His "Catholic Canons in Television Drama" appeared in the Autumn issue.

REV. HENRY F. BIRKENHAUER, S.J., Dean of the Graduate School, has offered for publication his "Tribute to a Teacher," the funeral sermon for the late Edward J. Eggl, late Assistant Professor of History at Carroll.

JOHN M. WILSON, sophomore pre-medical student from University Heights, Ohio, whose "Tornado" appeared in the 1955-56 Winter Quarterly, returns with another poem, "Stream."

JEROME A. KRAMER is a junior English major from Barberton, Ohio. "The Relationship of Mark Twain and Bret Harte" marks his debut on the pages of the Quarterly.

JOHN T. DOCKERY, junior natural science major from Cleveland, Ohio, considers "The Literature of the Atomic Age." This is his first Quarterly contribution.

CHARLES A. NOVAK, senior marketing major from Cleveland, Ohio, and editor of the Quarterly, concludes this issue with his short work of fiction, "The Doll." His previous literary presentations include "The Memorable Mouse," in the Autumn, 1956, issue, and "Ode to Civil Defense," in the Autumn, 1955, issue.