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CARROLL QUARTERLY

The Growth of a Poem

C. A. Colombi, Jr.



Londonderry, Ohio

Maureen Sullivan



Wood Song

Steven J. Lautermilch



Modern Fiction and the Liberal Teacher

Louis G. Pecek

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An Editorial Credo

STEVEN J. LAUTERMILCH

Editor-in-Chief

In your hands you hold a small packet of print and paper entitled the *Carroll Quarterly*. Within its covers you find material of varied note and flavor, all of it apparently gleaned without the slightest regard for unity or coherence. However, should you read the small paragraph of type located at the bottom of the title page, you discover that a principle of unification and continuity does supposedly control this torrent of typography: namely, that the *Carroll Quarterly* is the organ of literary expression for student, alumnus, and faculty member alike.

Literary expression — the phrase bears repetition. Indeed, it demands repetition. For what is *literary expression*? Or, to translate it into the universal, what is literature itself?

It would seem clear that any person with eight years of elementary schooling, four years of secondary instruction, and almost their equivalent in college training would possess sufficient prudence not to attempt an answer. On the other hand, it would seem equally clear that only a person with such a background — or lack of it — would ever try to reply. Consequently, the following remarks are offered, much in the manner of J. D. Salinger when he submitted the manuscript of *Franny and Zooey* to his editor:

As nearly as possible in the spirit of Matthew Salinger, age one, urging a luncheon companion to accept a cool lima bean, I urge my editor, mentor, and (heaven help him) closest friend, William Shawn *genius domus* of *The New Yorker*, lover of the long shot, protector of the unprolific, defender of the hopelessly flamboyant, most unreasonably modest of born great artist-editors, to accept this pretty skimpy-looking book.

What is literature? John Burroughs defined it as "an investment of genius which pays dividends to all subsequent times." Edward Bulwer Lytton, author of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, put his description of literature in the form of advice: "In science, read, by preference, the newest works; in literature, the oldest. The classic literature is always modern." Samuel Johnson, on the other hand, combined both wit and wisdom when he let slide the wry comment, "It is amazing how little literature there is in the world."

Here, then, are three descriptions of literature. All are at variance. Or are they? Upon inspection, it can be seen that both Burroughs and Lytton emphasize the perennial quality of good literature, while Johnson illuminates a related characteristic, namely, its rarity.

Both these facts, however, merely attest to the hallmarks of literature; they do not demonstrate its essence. Burroughs alone attempts to

specify the nature of literature; for he alone defines literature in terms of both *genus* and *species*. "An investment of genius" is his description of the precise essence of literature and even this description is sadly metaphorical. Somehow that first chilling plunge from descriptive illusion into definitive reality must be taken; and, surprisingly enough, the definition assumes form readily, once begun, from a miasma of remembered professorial terminology.

Literature is the enduring expression of significant human experience.

The enduring expression of significant human experience: the definition, seemingly untouchable, defies analysis. However, philosophy draws a distinction between matter and form; and with the application of this distinction, all defiance begins to fade.

The matter of good literature would be significant human experience; its form, the enduring expression of that experience. Each statement is pregnant with meaning.

For what is the matter of literature, this significant human experience? Of what does it consist? Or, more definitely, of what does the writer of good literature write?

Had no answer already been given, this line of questioning would indeed appear Herculean in solution. Yet a man has ventured a reply to this question, and his reply has already sent critics searching for superlatives. The man is William Faulkner; the reply, his Nobel Prize Award acceptance address at Stockholm. The quotation begins on a note of dejection.

... the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed — love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and worst of all without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he relearns these things he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure; that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice

which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

The quotation is huge. But the subject is vital, and eloquence can be no more magnificent.

For here, in Faulkner's address, lies the matter of literature. The author has described "significant human experience," and described it well. "Courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice" — here are included both the universality and the importance of subject matter which are the requisite of good literature. Indeed, a re-reading of that series serves only to emphasize the tremendous breadth and scope comprised in the realm of significant human experience.

For man stands trapped on this earth. Of all God's creatures on this planet of trial and test, he is the eternal wanderer, the timeless searcher. He alone has a goal to attain, a destiny to fulfill, that are unattainable, unfulfillable. For only man seeks utopia. For only man, in his quest for happiness, is foredoomed to failure. For only utopia is nowhere.

Man cannot and will not, here on this earth, attain perfect happiness. Nonetheless, seek this golden goal he must. And seek he shall. To this struggle man is drawn inescapably; by that struggle he is possessed irrevocably: The struggle is life itself.

And it is this search that is significant, it is this strife that is human, it is this struggle that is experience. Here is the writer's workshop; here are his tools and his trade. Man among men, of man the writer must write, of man in his search for fulfillment. Greater significance, greater universality and importance, can no theme possess, than man's own quest for humanity.

For man shall succeed in his struggle for happiness only insofar as he succeeds in his struggle for self, only insofar as he succeeds in becoming truly a man. This creature, this *homo sapiens*, does have a destiny to fulfill; and that destiny is life itself — life as a human being.

Only by becoming truly human, in all the glory of the word, can man achieve his final goal. Only by attaining true humanity will he ever acquire true happiness. And only by fighting this fight for life, this fight that is life, this fight that is victory in defeat, can man ever begin to find himself, his humanity, and his happiness.

It is this that Faulkner has described in his Stockholm address. For it is this that is significant human experience, the matter of true literature. For it is this that is "courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice."

Indeed, Faulkner has exemplified here not only the matter of good literature, but also its form. Although time alone can witness the truth of this statement, yet it is this very fact that embodies the distinctive trait of good literary form; namely, its perennial transcendence of both age and culture.

Lytton's quotation, cited at the beginning of this essay, reflected that truth: "In science, read, by preference, the newest works; in literature, the oldest. The classic literature is always modern."

In a word, the form of good literature is that expression which is enduring.

Enduring expression — definitive as the phrase may be, elucidation is nonetheless not out of order. First, therefore, enduring expression must be clear or understandable. A work of literary art stands little chance of becoming *perennius aere*, as Horace put it, should it be cloaked in obscurity. This, indeed, is one of the most telling charges levied against the potential greatness of modern poetry.

In fact, St. Paul, *salva reverentia*, has dealt well with the obscurity-for-the-sake-of-obscurity school in I Corinthians:

Even inanimate instruments, like the flute or the harp, may produce sounds, but if there is no difference in the notes, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? If the trumpet give forth an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you — unless with the tongue you utter intelligible speech — how shall it be known what is said? For you will be speaking to empty air.

This may assume the semblance of a blanket condemnation of all those whom Sandburg has infamously termed the "Abracadabra Boys." It is not. What is emphasized here is the necessity of clarity and intelligibility to the form of literature. The relation is basic. Unless literature be at least understandable, it cannot even hope to be perennial.

The second requirement for literary immortality in form is organization, either logical, chronological or psychological. To express significant human experience in an effective fashion, experience must be expressed in an organized fashion with a recognizable mode of procedure. Obvious though this and the preceding point may seem, modern poetry is ever present to assure its statement here in print.

The third and fourth qualities of timeless literary expression, however, are more subtle and, consequently, more difficult to define. They may be termed, irrespective to order, sublimity and careful emotional control.

The mere mention of sublimity, of course, evokes visions of Longinus and *On the Sublime*; and that effect, indeed, was the intention. Indefinable and intangible as the quality may seem, sublimity must be present in the language of good literature:

when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.

There, in Faulknerean prose, sublimity stands caught.

Poetry captures the ethereal quintessence of the sublime even better. Longfellow can capture the ring and thrill of eternity in silent simplicity itself.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently slip away.

Rising above their essence as individual qualities, rhythm, melody, and imagery have coalesced to form the delicate equilibrium found in the form of all perennial literature: sublimity.

Careful emotional control, however, is yet a fourth factor involved in the timelessness of good literary form. Using the traditional formula that E (emotion) times I (intellectual content) equals P (literary power), it is evident that, although a line like Shelley's "Oh world! Oh life! Oh time!" may supply a thousand megatons of emotional impact, should it be multiplied by the strength of its intellectual might (which seems more negative than merely nought), the net result is a resounding zero.

Nonetheless, restraint is not the only element involved in careful emotional control. Precision is equally important. One of the most detrimental faults of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* arises from lack of precision. For, assuming that pity and fear are intrinsic elements of tragedy, lacking which tragedy cannot exist, *Death of a Salesman* becomes no tragedy at all; for, although Miller succeeds in arousing pity toward Willy Loman, he fails to arouse fear. The reasons for this fact are here irrelevant: the emphasis is upon the importance of emotional precision to a work of literary art.

This, then, concludes the attempt at defining, by matter and form, the constituents of good literature. First presented as the "enduring expression of significant human experience," the definition of good literature was then expanded to include under significant human experience (the matter) a subject both universal and important to all mankind, and under enduring expression (the form) the four qualities of linguistic timelessness: intelligibility, organization, sublimity, and careful emotional control. Supposedly, therefore, the definition of good literature now stands complete.

But does it? Speaking in different terms about this same question, Sinclair Lewis presented both sides of the issue upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature December 12, 1930. Thus reads his Stockholm address, "The American Fear of Literature":

To a true-blue professor of literature in an American University, literature is not something that a plain human being, living today, painfully sits down to produce. No; . . . it is something magically produced by superhuman beings who must, if they are to be regarded as artists at all, have died at least one hundred years before the diabolical invention of the typewriter . . . Our American professors like their literature clear and cold and pure and very dead.

The simple fact, perhaps, is that a kernel of truth exists on each side of the question. To some extent, literature can be produced (or defined). Yet to an equal degree, literature is beyond manufacture (or definition). The great god literature is and must be written in lower case. Nonetheless, it is not a god at which the writer scoffs, but to which he bows.

As Frost has put it, speaking of man's paltry attempts at creation,

But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit
Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation.

Continuing in his own prosaic elegance, the New England poet writes:

We may take the view
That its derring-do
Thought of in the large
Is one mighty charge
On our human part
Of the soul's ethereal
Into the material.

All this, therefore, is good literature; all this is literary expression. And this, the small tan pamphlet you hold in your hands, is a literary publication.

Precisely what the implication is, however, remains to be stated. That all material contained within these leaves were good literature, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. However, to continue the allusion, this is the stuff that dreams are made on.

It will be the goal of the *Quarterly* to publish only material of high literary quality. This is ideal. The real you hold. You are yourself your own best judge as to the congruency of the two. And, in a very qualified sense, we of the staff hope you find the two concepts incongruent. We hope you are dissatisfied with the *Quarterly*. For we are. We hope that you will always be dissatisfied with the *Quarterly*. For we will be.

As a literary organ representing John Carroll University, the *Carroll Quarterly* not only deserves but demands the highest literary excellence. Repeatedly the goal of John Carroll University has been equated with the pursuit of excellence, in both conversation and convocation. The aim and ideal of the *Quarterly* is identical.

However, aims and ideals, when translated into works and realities, are often found lacking. Consequently, not empty assent but wholehearted cooperation from student, alumnus, and faculty member alike is required. And the need is urgent. If the *Quarterly* is to improve, if it is to attain any grade of literary worth, if it is to become in the slightest degree a truly literary publication, then your aid is a must. Without your contributions, the *Quarterly* is helpless.

To be blunt, this is a plea. It is a plea to you, as individual and as writer, to improve yourself, your *Quarterly*, and your University. Now, when debate is open and judgment critical, the world has need of men possessing not only subjectively a considered opinion, but also the ability to express that opinion objectively in writing. Small and insignificant though the effort may appear, contribution to the *Quarterly* can be a beginning, a foundation. For, by writing, you can develop that ability to

express your opinion, thereby not only increasing your personal value as an individual, but also improving your *Quarterly* directly and your University indirectly.

As an additional incentive, the *Quarterly* is offering a financial award of fifty dollars for the work of highest literary quality that is published by the *Quarterly* during the coming year. Prizes of twenty-five dollars each will be awarded to the works judged second and third in quality. Members of the *Quarterly* staff will not be eligible for these prizes.

Only one fact need yet be stated. All comment, criticism, and contribution should be placed in the *Quarterly* mail box located in the English Department.

What remains, what results, is in your hands.

Homeward from a Summer's Cruise

PAUL A. RAMPE

*We're seven on a schooner and sailing as we please,
Just vying with the waves and wrestling with the breeze.
We're heading home again—but the sea is ill at ease;
Clouds sparking, weld together just opposite our lees.*

*Waves begin to crash around, spray's rising to our hair,
Miles quickly swarm with white-caps, then thunder fills the air.
"Trim canvas on the mainmast to help this ship prepare,"
Helm's calling, "and full ahead!" Now silently our prayer,
For warnings in our stormlights say hellward we are bound.
While straining to her ". . low'r 'way . ." any other human sound,
The old salts laugh, thus defy: "Let nature hear our sound!"
Then Nature answers strongly with motion all around . . .*

*"Good seamen, face those breakers—towering, blue-green seas,
Scoff hailwinds, wild and wetted! Do, Nature, as you please!"
Men turning search for respite; in surprise they each freeze—
We're atop a forty-footer from Nature as a tease!*

*On lofty tons of water and noise and fierce expanse,
We're yawing toward our doom as this giant seawall slants.
This devil's eyes close raging, dark enveloped air cracks,
All's quiet for a minute, then we're up for more attacks.*

*Time's vanished and the sailcloth. "Get ready for a ride!"
More charging, seething killers, we mount each spitting side,
Tack above each heavy jaw, are buried in each tide.
So pulses this thing mystic, so sovereign and so wide.*

*Out dreamy and deep chasms our double mast do fly,
So eager in their long leap, they're soaring for the sky;
But freeboard, there's n'er any with clutching seas so high,
With racking by a galewind not willing yet to die.*

*We're seven sou'westers who man a willfull wheel,
Whose spirits and cold bodies are taut as sheets of steel,
Yet as we fight the fury, this challenge we each feel:
"Yea, seamen, this our soul's love, no restless sea'll repeal."*

Homo Viator

GIAN DEL PONTE

I

Now he was sitting in Francesca's House of Spaghetti. The great black blades of an old-fashioned ceiling fan were whirling, windmill-like, over his head, pouring down on him streams of hot stale air. He perspired steadily and the yellow seersucker shirt he wore was stuck to his skin. With one finger he played in the little puddles of water and whiskey he had spilled on the table. He seemed to be trying to draw them together, to form the liquid blobs into some kind of cohesive pattern. Across the room and directly opposite him stood a jukebox; the harsh reds, blues, and yellows of its lighted insides hurt his eyes, so that frequently he made a compulsive visoring gesture with a shaky hand.

Someone — his eyes were watering now and he could not tell whether it was a man or a woman — walked over to the jukebox and made a selection. It was a song called "Auf Wiedersehn," and the husky voice of the female vocalist broke over him in waves of the most mawkish sentimentality. He felt like weeping. The voice on the recording reminded him of another voice, of another time; but his brain seemed clouded

somehow his thoughts were coming disconnectedly, and he could not place that other voice, that other time. Then it came to him . . . It was the voice of the woman who had sung at his uncle's wedding, years and years ago (in the 1940's it must have been) when he was just a boy. In his mind's eye he still had a vivid image of that woman; she was a big woman, big-busted and big-hipped, and she wore a dress of chartreuse silk with white polka dots dancing all over it. All night long she stood on the platform set up at one end of the hall, singing and singing in her deep throaty voice into a clumsy old-fashioned microphone. She never stopped singing, it seemed to him; only paused now and then to drink down in one swallow a huge glassful of beer, which she would sweat out during her next song. And he, a boy then, stood under the platform watching her, never taking his eyes off her. Somehow he was fascinated by her and he loved her somehow — her bigness, her man's voice, her polka-dot dress, her vulgarity . . .

When Francesca came up to his table, breaking off his reverie, he wondered how long ago the last jukebox "Auf Wiedersehn" had been sung.

"Why not call it a night, Mel?" she said.

"What? Oh. Yes. I suppose so." Talking seemed strange to him: it took him a while to find his voice. "How long've I been here, any way?"

"Too long, honey. Better get home and get some sleep."

"How much do I owe you?"

"Never mind now. We can take care of that tomorrow."

He started to rise from his chair, and feeling himself unsteady he gripped the edge of the table with his hands. One hand slipped; his body went lax and slumped over the table.

"Say, honey, you ain't too steady," Francesca said. "Want to come down to the kitchen and have a cup of coffee before you go?"

"No, no, I'll be all right once I get outside."

"Sure. Bye, Mel. Sleep tight."

II

Just opposite Francesca's House of Spaghetti, on the other side of the street, the Round Top, highest point in Caithness County and third highest in the whole of western Pennsylvania, began steeply to rise. It rose sheerly, walling in as it were one side of the town. At its summit was a clump of six or seven enormous trees, the top branches of some of them much mangled by lighting storms and the gnarled roots of others hanging out in the air like chicken feet where the soil had been washed away. Below the trees there jutted out a pile of rocks and boulders, and it was probably these rocks and boulders that gave the Round Top its look of a Scottish crag. Indeed, it may have been because of this craggy look that the surrounding country had been named, perhaps two hundred years ago by some enterprising Scot, Caithness.

Mel Trask stood in the front door of Francesca's House of Spaghetti, regarding the Round Top. The neon sign above the doorway threw a garish light on his face, giving it a sickly pallor; his temples shown very white. But he felt a little better now that he was outside and breathing the keen night air. Steadily he fixed his gaze on the Round Top and he thought he could make out a red light flickering at a point below the huge trees and just above the pile of rocks. And he was seized with a desire to climb the Round Top, right then and there; it was as though the little red light, fixed so high up above the town, were beckoning to him.

He didn't hesitate, but crossed the street and began climbing. Almost immediately his breath was coming in short pants and there was a nagging stitch in his side. He felt himself break out in a sweat, and as he climbed higher, ascending the steep slope like an animal on all fours, a giddiness came over him. Soon he was under the rock-pile; he clambered around to the side and up, and there before him, on a little flat space atop the rocks and beneath the over-hanging trees, were two girls sitting near a dying fire. Seeing him, they both let out small stifled screams; then seeing he moved no nearer, they sat silent and motionless, watching him.

He knew them. They were both girls he'd seen about the town. The

one girl was very hunchbacked; and it gave him pain to see her there now, all hunched up beside the fire wearing a ragged green sweater over her rounded shoulders. The other girl was a negro; he had heard much talk about her in town. Her name was Schnooks and she lived with her family in a shack about three miles from the town; she was a good house-worker, they said, and you could get her for practically nothing. Mel was surprised to see them together. Sitting there, near that meagre fire, toasting marshmallows on long whittled sticks, they made rise in him an indefinable sadness. He felt sorry for them; and at the same time they disgusted him. *Likes attract*, he thought.

Without speaking a word to the two girls—the two girls who seemed somehow to be beckoning to him and whose beckoning filled him only with a loathing pity—he turned and started down the Round Top at breakneck speed.

III

Underfoot were five or six of Miss Williamson's cats, and mounting the stairs to his room he had to kick them aside. The cats snarled angrily at the pantlegs disturbing their sleep. Almost at the top of the stairs his giddiness flooded over him again, so that he shoved both arms out against the walls of the narrow stairway, bracing himself. A gritty distemper rubbed off on his fingers.

"Is that you, Mr. Trask?"

The landlady's door had opened across the hall, and her lumpy wrapped form filled the lighted doorway.

"Yes, Miss Williamson. Just coming in."

"H'm. So I see."

"Sorry about the cats."

"You're white as a ghost, Mr. Trask. Anything wrong?"

"No, nothing. Sorry I disturbed you. Good night."

He turned down the passage towards his room, but her voice coming unexpectedly sharp, caught him up—

"Mr. Trask, what are you doing here?"

"Here?" He wheeled around, facing her now under the dim light-bulb that burned overhead.

"Here, Mr. Trask. In this town."

"Oh. Nothing much, I suppose. I'm a wanderer, Miss Williamson, and a wanderer has to be someplace." He hesitated. "Is there any special reason why you ask?"

"No, no, nothing special. It's just that folks is beginning to wonder what you're doing here, and when they ask me about you, well, you

understand. I mean, they expect a landlady'll know about he boarders—"

"I see," he broke her off. "Excuse me, I'm very tired." And with that he bolted down the passage into his room.

Fully clothed, he fell face-downwards on the bed; biting hard into the pillow, he nevertheless let escape a little anguished cry. For a minute or so he seemed to be carrying on a struggle with himself; till finally, teeth clenched, he turned over on his back and lay staring at the oblong patterns of light cast on the ceiling by traffic in the street below.

Sleep did not come. So he lay there, wide awake and dry-eyed, as though immersed in thought; he began to chain-smoke.

Later he rose, washed up a bit out of the basin on the nightstand, and took out of his suitcase a tall ledger-like book. Using the night-stand as a writing table and sitting on the edge of the brass bed, he began to write.

IV

From the diary of Mel Trask.

Time to move on again.

Why did I ever come to this place? It is so hideously ugly, all of it—the town, the people, the abandoned mine shafts that are like sores on the surrounding countryside. In my three weeks here I believe I have seen some representation of all the kinds of evil that exist in the world.

I must go and I must go far. No good to move on to another of these small coal towns. But where shall I go? Is there any place on this earth where I can be happy, where I can find peace and an end to my wandering at last? No, probably not; and why do I still search for this thing happiness when I long ago came to the conclusion that it does not exist? But it is time to go and I must go: I know it is time to go for the townspeople are beginning to wonder about me and ask questions. That is always the sure sign that one must move on. In the city no one will bother about me; one can live there as though one were in a desert. So then should I go back to the city? Yes, I suppose so. A great mistake to have thought that by coming to a small town I should at last be able to find a home, a place where I belonged. In this place I have been more miserable, more adrift and unbelonging, than ever. How ironical that this town should have "—haven" in its name!

And it was a great mistake I made in the beginning when I thought that by wandering, by traveling the world, I would be able to "find myself," to know the world and in knowing it know myself. If only then I had known what I know now, I should never have left home. Home? Where is home? I have forgotten.

Tonight my soul-sickness (what else can I call it?) reached the point where I thought I should die for the sadness within me. My one consolation was repeating to myself those words from the Mass that have stuck

in my mind since earliest childhood: *Quare tristis es anima mea, et quare conturbas me?* I got drunk and later drove myself to great physical exertion — all to forget, to lose myself somehow. And then I saw those two lonely creatures toasting marshmallows on that hillside, and all the old revulsion for the human condition returned to me, welled up in me again so that I thought something would snap inside me. At that one terrible moment I really thought I was losing my mind. Odd to say, but there are times when I feel I *want* to lose my mind, to embrace madness willingly. While they last these are joyous ecstatic moments, but as soon as they pass I am terrified—terrified at my own thoughts—and I feel ashamed and hate myself.

What hell life is.

Now I don't want to think any more. I want now merely to function as an animal being. I want just to content myself with the logistics of moving on, hoping that perhaps in motion I can find some rest

Am I doomed forever to be a wanderer on the face of the earth?

V

Now he was sitting in a barroom in some great city of the world. He could not say which city. Outside, in the night, there were periodic rumbles, as of a subway; so that he might be in Wellington, New Zealand, which, he knew from having in childhood pored over travel books, was a city of subways and trolleys and tunnels. Or he might be in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., sitting in a bar located near a station of the Rapid Transit. But no, he could not be certain where he was. Nor did it seem to matter much.

Sitting there (wherever he was) he tried to make some simple calculations—such as: through what fractional part of a century had he lived? how many provinces were there in Canada? how did one work out a square root?—feeling, perhaps, that bigger questions would, in the end, elude him anyway, no matter how much thought he should bring to bear on them. But even his simpler propositions were baffling him; he was getting nowhere with them. He couldn't think, not any more.

He let his mind drift. Someone had blown a curl of smoke in front of his eyes, and that curl of smoke was, for the moment, like his mind—outside of him and drifting away. And in drifting, his mind, like the tobacco smoke, seemed actually to become part of that place—of the atmosphere, of the windmill fan overhead, of the sawdust floor, of the subway rumblings outside in the night. It was, indeed, as though his spirit—Mel Trask the wayfarer's—were, at last, reaching home.

The Growth of a Poem

C. A. COLOMBI, JR.

This article, dear reader, is an invitation to you. You are herewith cordially petitioned to enter the world of my vision, my hearing, my fingertips, my imagination, my emotion — yea, verily, the deepest labyrinthine recesses of my not-to-handsome cranium, for I am a poet, and I would like you to come along with me as I construct a poem.

Have you ever seen the sky of dawn just before the sun pops up to the horizon? For just a moment, while there is yet no tawdry orange cast on the clouds, and the angry red has softened, the sky will take on a coral hue which often “comes alive” for me, and one day caused me to set down its image in my imagination, and, in stanza form, on a piece of paper:

*coraloveilyawned lips,
miss me yet awhile —
for I must blink
the sand away, too.*

Incomprehensible my image? Magnificent my image . . . with all due respect to Cyrano, and here's why. A device common to modern poets fits my needs well in bringing to life this moment in the dawn. Setting its image, within the confines of femininity for obvious reasons, came easiest to me by combining words of description by their letters, yielding *coraloveilyawned*, and saying color, temperature, meaning, tactility, and awakening, all in one combination word. Basically, this is the feminine personification of dawn, coupled with my emotions toward “her.” To establish her image further, and more definitely as what I term a “soft” image, I continue the stanza in a tone which expresses my unhurried, “soft” reaction to her, as if I were awakening, too.

I respect the poet Horace, and must, of force, quote him and his fellow classicists if I am to be their worthy opponent in the next stanza:

*“carpe” cry the Ancients
doddering-old-quiver-stumble
whatthefhell do they know, musty-somed,
of my passion?*

Adopting the position of defiant youth, I take it upon myself to defend my mollified view of dawn, as opposed to the cry “sieve the day” — a shrill, quavering voice can be still found crying it, I am sure, if you can coax the librarian to climb all the way up there for you and yank its toga. Notice also the use of the poetic device of running words together in an expletive, giving them a speech quality, and jostling ol' Alexander Pope in his coffin. I object to their methods, and, as it turns out, would rather do it *my* way, softly kissing the awakened dawn.

The first line was changed, in the next stanza, at the suggestion of

a friend, from "inane inaction" to "empty imperative." This offers better consonance of the letter *p*, as well as a link to the previous stanza's "*carpe*," making relationships within the poem immediately more obvious — to myself, and to my readers:

*empty imperative,
petrified in pages,
arouses, angers me
to poetry!*

And my poem is finished, for the moment. A later attempt at revision found me casting around for a new image, expressing the same idea about dawn in different terms. I was unable to match my earlier first stanza in different terms without losing the soft tone established there. I decided, finally, that I would keep the first stanza intact, and develop the poem in images relating to the first one, no longer choosing to quarrel with the Ancients.

Still speaking to dawn, and to denote my awakening and response to her, I say:

*Now . . .
kiss me softly,
and with moistened-sweet,
hammered-gold-warm . . .*

for dawn is no longer the soft coral — I have yawned, too, and she is glowing now, though not yet orange. In the next, and final stanza, I make myself and my vision of her static in the golden moment:

*nescience rises,
with my mist, from the earth —
pulled by fingers, tender,
freeing me from night.*

and the soft, tender hand which pulls me from the murky night, from the unconsciousness of sleep, and into the air, where we caress, is, of course the saving dawn. Going back to the original, and tacking on the two new stanzas, with the lines "arouses, angers me/to poetry" taken literally for their implied transition (which was originally intended to direct one back to the image in the first stanza), we have the finished poem. It is entitled "Dawn," and I offer it for the reader's scrutiny, and, hopefully, also for his enjoyment.

DAWN

*coralovelyawned lips,
miss me yet awhile —
for I must blink
the sand away, too.
"carpe" cry the Ancients
doddering-old-quiver-stumble*

*whatthehell do they know, musty-tomed,
of my passion?
empty imperative,
petrified in pages,
arouses, angers me,
to poetry!*

*Now . . .
kiss me softly,
and with moistened-sweet,
hammered-gold-warm . . .*

*nescience rises
with my mist, from the earth —
pulled by fingers tender,
freeing me from night.*

Londonderry, Ohio

MAUREEN SULLIVAN

*I wish that I had dwelt in Londonderry.
I trow would be nice to abide in a town
Named so it sings of England and Robin Hood,
That smacks with the promise
Of prithee words and green sleeved gown,
Of hooded falcons on the wing,
And a glimpse of the once and future king.*

Miss Sullivan is a Teaching Associate in the Department of English.

A Man for All Seasons:

A Review

JAMES W. KING

More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning; I know not his fellow. But where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness, and affability? And as time requireth a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes; and sometimes of as sad gravity: a man for all seasons.

In choosing this particular epithet—Robert Whittinton wrote it for English school children to translate into Latin—Mr. Bolt summarizes many aspects of his imaginative and talented portrayal of Thomas More. Admittedly, the playwright is neither Catholic nor Christian, but he is a modern man. And in King Harry's subject, all the sensibilities he possessed as playwright and modern man found fellowship.

The demands and strifes of the play are united in a single question: Is the duty of the individual to his conscience more manifestly important than his loyalty to a corporate destiny conflicting with it? In More's case, the question takes the guise of allegiance to Rome or allegiance to Henry. History testifies to More's decision. To Bolt, the religious aspect of his hero's resolve is present, but is never made a significant part of the drama. More will simply not sacrifice his conscience to something which he knows is evil. He is a true Renaissance man in love with himself. But this love is orientated in the best manner any individual can love himself: he wills to do everything in his power to preserve his final destiny with God. He explains himself to the brash Norfolk:

Affection goes as deep in me as you I think, but only God is love
right through, Howard; and that's my self.

The play's opening scenes present a doubtful More: he refuses to aid the king's other ministers in obtaining a divorce for Henry from Catherine of Aragon. The scene with Henry shows him in a new aspect. More's words are persuasive, but the man seems fazed. He is in the throngs of a dilemma. He cannot quite convince us at this juncture that he is at the point of no return. Henry is a convincing speaker and a likeable personality. The mutual respect each shares for the other is apparent, but the king is determined to have his way, and More cannot acquiesce. It is apparent that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to convince the king of his loyalty. Henry tells him to think the matter over. Conflict increases with time. The Oath of Supremacy is demanded; Thomas refuses to sign it. More will not divulge his reasons to anyone—not even his wife. He is thought a fool. He tells them that a refusal to sign *per se* does not constitute a denial of the act itself—the logician More comes

James King, a former Carroll student, author of last year's prize winning essay, now attends the University of Toronto.

clearly to the front. Now the lines are issued with authority. No one could conceive of this man doing the right thing for the wrong reason! The passing of time brings the impossible to reality. More is imprisoned and eventually convicted of treason—the penalty, death. Finally he explains his reasons for refusal.

The play is the story of More, but on the universal scale it is a portrait of all the men who face conflict in this life. There is the Common Man who respects and admires this course of action, but who does not possess the integrity to fulfill it. The audience winces as More responds to his jailor who tells him that he is just a simple man: "O Sweet Jesus, these poor simple men!" Master Rich, who betrays him for an office in Wales, is the rising young man who will cut anyone's throat whether in the costume of Reformation England or today's grey flannel. More admonishes him: "Why Richard, it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world . . . But for Wales . . . ?" William Roper is the radical who champions the underdog at any given opportunity—the unthinking intellectual. Norfolk allows sentiment for a false ideal to cloud his reason. More's patience with him is exhausted:

MORE. Because as you stand, you'll go before your Maker in a very ill condition.

NORFOLK. Now steady Thomas.

MORE. And He'll have to think that somewhere back along in your pedigree — a bitch got over the wall.

Other individuals we have met are here: Wolsey, the pawn of a demanding master; Cromwell, the cutthroat; Senor Chapuys, the pedant of sanctity. Even Meg, his darling daughter, tells him to hold his convictions inwardly while betraying them to the world.

Thomas More's triumph consists in his realization that an external betrayal of beliefs is a total disavowal of them. He is a man—a creature, and his salvation consists in the living out of his servitude under God's dominion. He is not the angel's and the outward actions are the best clue to the inward ego. The response of Henry's chancellor at once testifies to his creaturehood and sainthood.

In a recent volume of criticism, Glenway Wescott proposed that the creative imagination is the best source for the true meaning to the human condition. Bolt's play is an indication of the validity of such a claim. The Common Man reminds us of the great gulf between himself and More, and then tells us he hopes that he—and every member of the audience—will die at a ripe old age in a comfortable bed. But then again . . .

The Anguished Searcher

JOSE-JAVIER ORTOLL

*Searching, painfully striving
Looking for a golden Eden.
A mile away?
A breath or an infinity of lives?
Where is Shangri-La?*

*Atop a mountain
Where the heavens meet the earth
And the wind blows unforgettable signs,
Perhaps there I'll find
My beauty Cynara.*

*Besides a brink of open sea
The murmuring palms
Tell secrets engraved in the hearts of men.
Perchance that white-clad gull
Could tell me where Atlantis lies?*

*That milkmaid gently whistling,
If but for a moment she pauses,
Could turn and comfort me.
That braying cow,
Can it lead me to the Milky Way?*

*Where is that eternal pasture
That garden where honey flows?
Where is comfort, peace and quiet
Where is Paradise?
Tell me, sage, for I am lost.*

*Must I go drifting,
Eternally floating,
On the current of life—
Without ever knowing
Where my true port lies?*

*Search the high seas,
Comb the pastures,
Climb the hills and mountains,
Dare the devil,
But where is love?*

*Echoes drift
Amid my reveries,
Dead longings
Stir once more,
Am I too late?*

*Did I hear the last whistle blow?
Is the ship moving from the dock?
Stop! — stop, I say
Let me in! I must go in,
Lest I perish standing still!*

*Ah, misery of miseries,
It never moved.
It has always waited
The ramp is but a breath away!
But dare I meet the first plank?*

Modern Fiction and the Liberal Teacher

LOUIS G. PECEK

An essay with the word "liberal" in its title had better begin with at least descriptive definitions. First of all, then, let no one attach any political connotations to the words "liberal" and "conservative." By the word "conservative" as used here should be understood a certain instructional stodginess that can be labelled "preventative teaching." Such teaching may be compared briefly to the attitude of a mother who keeps her child indoors to prevent his taking cold and thus deprives him of needed exercise and fresh air and in fact encourages in him a physical lassitude. The preventative teacher of literature says to his students you may read these few books, but not these many books. Eventually the preventative teacher of literature works himself into an odd intellectual position, namely, that a student learns by not being free to read. This position also involves the wicked irony that if the student cannot read freely within the directed instructional atmosphere of his school or college, he can freely purchase at most paper-back book racks works by writers I shall mention as well as philosophical and literary trash by writers, for example, like Bertrand Russell and Mickey Spillane, for the grand sum of fifty cents.

In direct contrast to the conservative position stands the liberal teacher. The term "liberal teaching" means very specially, simply, and succinctly not teaching which takes books out of the student's reach, but teaching which offers the student the wide field of literary endeavor, which teaches him how to read these books, which teaches him how to learn from whatever he reads, and which is imbued in tone with level-headed Christian discernment and judgment.

Here are some specimens of thought which might identify the positions described as "conservative" and "liberal." The conservative might say to his students: don't read Hemingway, that lapsed Catholic who doesn't understand life. The liberal teacher, on the other hand, says to his student: *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and the short stories — these are Hemingway's best works; see for yourself a fictional embodiment of the failure of fatalism and the romantic dream. The conservative says: don't read Faulkner, a radical incomprehensible rhetorician who specializes in sensational sex. The liberal says: these certain novels and stories are the crucial nub of the saga Faulkner evolved about Yoknapatawpha County; read them and see how Faulkner attempts to make words do what they have seldom done before as he mourns the death of a Christian Southern tradition. The conservative would say: do not read James Gould Cozzens' *By Love Possessed*; its treatment of rape is much oversensationalized. The liberal would say: *By Love Possessed* is an inferior

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novel artistically speaking, but the reader of it will hear the materialistic whimpers of a dying New England Congregationalism. Other examples of the conservative position, prompted by various reasons, are the principal of the local high school who objected to students' reading *The Scarlet Letter*, that "novel about adultery," and the decisions made in various cities to remove from the classroom and from the library shelves the so-called racially offensive *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

Even the most brief reflection on these few examples shows that a conservative attempt is being made to ignore not only two of the three most important novels ever written in America, but also several major writers that one simply cannot ignore and still maintain his intellectual integrity.

Several principles very clearly divide the conservative and the liberal teacher. Evidently the conservative expects everything from literature — philosophy, theology, classical tragedy, traditional ethics, evidence of faith or at least of resolved skepticism, respect for religious dogma, and an unwavering belief in God. And if he does not find at least most of these things in a given piece of literature, he is dissatisfied and angry that the literary endeavor is not as exacting a speculative science as philosophy. What he forgets unfortunately, is that Utopia does not yet exist in our world, that not all men believe in God, dogma, or ethics.

The liberal teacher of literature, on the other hand, recognizes most readily and completely that Original Sin has quite adequately taken care of the possibilities of all the conservative's expectations being fulfilled, and furthermore that not all men accept the grace that helps them live salutary lives in what is aptly known as the human condition — man's special peculiarity among creatures that permits him to suffer, to yearn, to smile, to weep, to reason, to will, and above all, to sin. The liberal teacher, to put it more briefly, accepts literature for what it is: an articulate product of the most sensitive human imagination intended primarily for the thoughtful, but not instructive, entertainment of its readers. Unlike the conservative, the liberal teacher does not demand of literature philosophy, theology, classical tragedy, traditional ethics, evidence of faith or at least resolved skepticism, respect for religious dogma, and an unwavering belief in God. And in return literature gives him not philosophy for which it will never be a substitute, not theology for which it will never be a substitute, not resolved doubt which no piece of fiction can fully provide a suffering mind; it gives him instead all of these things — philosophy and theology and all the rest — in practice and at work particularized in the creations of the artist. And what the liberal teacher receives from literature teaches him in turn that not only the traditional and orthodox can provide these things.

Still a major figure today in talk of modern American literature is Ernest Hemingway. It does little good intellectually to say that of course one cannot accept pagan romantic stoicism and that therefore one cannot accept Hemingway. The fact is that a fatalistic stoicism is today (and actually it is not peculiar to this century) one of the substitutes for faith, grace, and redemption. Since this is one of the facts of the present social situation, nothing intellectually corrective is gained by ignoring a literary

particularization of the fact.

In the epigraph to his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway uses the words "lost generation." Since then more than any other writer those words have been associated with him. And for the past thirty years or more criticism has described and defined this so-called lost generation; but what criticism often forgets is that those words label a period and its people—no more than that. That age has not ended, but today the term is immobile, because having been applied to one age and group of writers it cannot very well be used to designate anything or anyone else. Nevertheless, this idea of "lostness" designates a shattering or at least a weakening of faith in America, in peace, in the goodness of man, and in God and His Providence. It describes, in short, a complex of the most bitter disenchantments man can suffer.

The serious reader who reads Hemingway as a serious writer soon understands that the basic human weakness of most Hemingway characters, and all of the important ones, is their inability to understand the life of the spirit. Isn't this, after all, the seat of the inner conflicts in important literature? Should Hemingway's characters not share this weakness, they could not undergo the conflicts that emerge in his fiction. Each of his characters lacks a focus that would make life bearable for him.

Two very good examples are the major figures in *The Sun Also Rises*, which many critics also consider Hemingway's major novel. Brett Ashley, on a furlough between husbands, with no concept of the life of the mind or of spirit, lacks a spiritual focus. Her refuge is drink, which helps make her as pleasantly numb as possible to the world around her, and promiscuity, which provides not only a modicum of physical compensations but also just some activity to fill the loneliness of her existence. Jake Barnes understands that there is a life of spirit, but does not understand what it is or how to achieve it. In addition, having been rendered impotent by a war wound, he lacks a basic physical focus on life, and on a very fundamental human level he lives, because of his sexual defect, a life of isolation. Hemingway uses these two characters to create what is in these terms an impossible human situation; for though these two people love each other, no possibility exists for the fulfillment of their love, and in fact the course of their relationship leads from one frustration to another. The situation is quite similar in *A Farewell To Arms*, another major novel.

This work has a wartime setting, and in a wartime setting, whether in actual life or in fiction, life does not go on normally, society does not operate on its usual peacetime rules. War brings with it not only suffering and death but also the limitation or frustration of most normal aspirations. Thus it is with Catherine Barkley and Lt. Henry, the major figure in this novel. Their love affair begins on shaky ground: for Henry the affair is a convenient interlude; for Catherine her new lover is a compensation for her fiance who had been killed in the war. For purposes of fictional conflict, it is inevitable that the affair which began for one as a lark and for the other as a need should develop into a lasting relationship. But here again the war imposes another obstacle. Catherine is a nurse, and only unmarried nurses are permitted at the front line

hospitals. The two find themselves, therefore, in a social paradox. They should marry, for the sake of the child Catherine is to bear; yet if they do marry, they will be forced to separate, and this they refuse to do. Matters are brought to a crisis when the Italian army with which Lt. Henry is serving is forced to make a major retreat. All sense of logic is lost for good when Italian partisans set up guard posts along the lines of the retreat and indiscriminately execute all Italian officers they capture, blaming them and their leadership for the retreat. At this point Lt. Henry makes his farewell to arms, his own separate peace. He deserts, and with Catherine makes his way to Switzerland, where they isolate themselves from a world whose norms, already wrenched unnaturally out of line, have now completely disintegrated. Finally, Lt. Henry must suffer the last blow of a cruel life when both Catherine and her child die in childbirth, and he is left alone.

These two examples may suffice to show that a basic tenet of the Hemingway fictional world is that society is not to be trusted, indeed that it cannot be. Not only is society suspect, but man finds it impossible to live securely and happily in a social situation. In *The Sun Also Rises* community is altogether impossible. Given his unnatural sexual defect, Jake must sublimate any passion that is even remotely sexual, and this not willingly but because a war not of his choosing has imposed it on him. Lt. Henry's situation is similar to Jake's. A normal life is not possible for him, although he and Catherine do achieve something — a community of two, all the more frustrating because it is transient. To Catherine her own death is the final dirty trick of life. The idea of the transiency of happiness Hemingway expresses very well in the short story "In Another Country," in which a character whose wife has died recently holds that a man must not marry: "He cannot marry," says the major. "If he is to lose everything, he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose."

Now, if one cannot trust society and must seek for what he cannot lose, what is it eventually that he finds? Remember, however, that he has no understanding of the life of spirit. To Lt. Henry, for example, God is what one fears in the night. So there are certain things that he cannot find, given his consciousness and experience. First of all, then, he isolates himself. All Hemingway characters are isolated. Jake Barnes, Lt. Henry, and in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan, are Americans fighting in foreign armies. Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea* is alone in his boat and in his community. They must and do act alone. The only happiness Jake finds is in fishing in solitary contentment. And eventually Lt. Henry is left alone with his shattered life. And what is permanent? Only the earth. This is immutable; people change, vacillate, and destroy. Human life betrays man; only the earth does not.

And how does the Hemingway character adjust to the needs brought about by the lack of focus in his existence? Psychologically the answer is quite elementary. He creates a new focus. For the Hemingway character this new focus is toughness, a masculine, classically orientated toughness, teaching him that the world cannot be seen with hope, and dic-

tating that he must suffer quietly without whimpering and that death, though a dirty trick, is at least the end.

Ironically, the Hemingway code of toughness and its causes are usually what the conservative teacher of literature objects to. But the liberal teacher lets the code of toughness go for what it is, namely, a natural and logical result of the given circumstances Hemingway imposes upon his fictional world. The liberal criticizes, rather, the romanticism that results from the code. For at the very time that the Hemingway character becomes a figure of isolated toughness, the image that he presents of masculinity becomes a figure of the little boy's world of thoughtless action. And the feminine characters, creations inspired by this he-man world, are not full blooded, fully characterized women, but romanticized figments of a romantic masculine mind, submissive, self-effacing, what one critic has called divine lollipops.

Yet to the liberal teacher, this criticism of Hemingway's artistic accomplishment is not in itself enough to invalidate the worth of Hemingway's work. For the work is a concrete picture of a world wherein, for all of man's yearnings toward the life of spirit, man, because of his lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding, cannot rise above a fatalistically materialistic outlook upon life. As such then the liberal teacher accepts Hemingway as a valid artist who quite honestly puts his finger on one of the tragic facts of his and our age.

But at least the conservative permits some Hemingway to pass inspection. A few short stories are accepted because they are good stories about hunting, or fishing, or bullfighting — entirely the wrong reasons. It is a pity when one sees in Hemingway no more than hunting, fishing or bullfighting. But the American assiduously avoided by conservatives is William Faulkner, who is even more significant than Hemingway.

Unfortunately there are people who know only that in Faulkner's works are numerous examples of sexual violence, brutality, incest, rape, and other assorted evils. And if they know nothing else about him they immediately and unthinkingly categorize him with writers of filth and ignore what cannot be lightly ignored: that artistically he was worthy of a Nobel Prize and that many critics who are not feeble minded consider Faulkner the major American fictionist of the twentieth century.

The question of violence could be settled at once by reference to Faulkner's own statements, but his opinion would not be accepted by those who disapprove of him. Perhaps, however, they would respect the opinions of Miss Flannery O'Connor, a comparatively young, southern, Catholic writer who, by way of two novels and some twenty short stories, has established her reputation during the past ten years. Her fiction is replete with grotesque characters, macabre situations, violence, and appalling sexual situations. Miss O'Connor feels that the most serious duty of the serious writer is to expose human evil. So far so good; even the conservative would agree with that. But Miss O'Connor reaches a very important conclusion about the use of violence, brutality, and grotesqueness in her works. One of the greatest tragedies of our age, according to her idea, is that evil — solid concrete evil — has lost its meaning, that in our time evil has become quite acceptable, that often it has been glamorized or at least neutralized into common everyday action, that many

outrages have simply become ordinary. Miss O'Conner feels that the serious modern writer fulfills this part of his duty by showing evil as it really is for what it really is, by making it so recognizable in all its horror that it can never appear even slightly attractive. Now this is nothing new in the creative arts. It is a fundamental principle of Christian aesthetics. Dante worked under this theory in *The Divine Comedy*, the sentimental novelist used this theory as he created his black-hearted villains, and any Catholic who has made a retreat will remember the theory at work in the descriptive evocation of the meaning of hell.

Of course, for the conservative this explanation for Faulkner's use of sensationalism and violence is insufficient justification unless it can be shown that Faulkner is a moralist. It is very difficult to talk of Faulkner as a moralist without taking into account the entire scope of the Yoknapatawpha saga. Briefly, the temporal scope of the saga spans the years from the time when Indians held the land to the very present. And the spatial scope of the saga is conversely confined to a small unit of earth, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, William Faulkner, sole owner and proprietor — to use his own words. By its expanded scope in time and limited scope in space, this saga is part of the artistic tradition of the microcosm, wherein the artist's limited world is an image of the multifaceted human actual world, just as the *Pequod* was for Melville's *Moby Dick*, just as the Mississippi River region was for Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Faulkner populates his microcosm with the full range — good and bad — of human particularizations: Indians, Negroes, and of course, white men. The families that recur most often throughout the stories and novels are so significant that they can be used as examples.

The Sartoris clan: subject of one novel and participants in several short stories. The old family epitomizes the glory of the ante-bellum south, wealthy, landed, politically influential. But after the Civil War and with the eventual dissection of the plantations, the Sartorises begin to die out. Their power as aristocrats wanes; and the family tree itself dies abruptly as Bayard, the last of the clan, with no sense of the past, of his family, and of the responsibility it had always carried, goes out in a flash of flame when by his own recklessness he dies in a plane crash.

The Compsons: a middle class family with an honorable southern military history and hence an absorption in a past that is now lost. The young Quentin Compson is the crucial member of this family, and the development of his point of view makes *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* major novels. For Quentin, young and impressionable, is absorbed in his past without understanding it; his moral confusion is so involved and further complicated by his family problems that one fine spring day in his freshman year at Harvard he drowns himself in the Cambridge River. Whereas the Sartoris clan is a figure of the decay of moral might, the Compsons are figures of moral unawareness.

Next in time are the Snopeses, the totally amoral clan whose only awareness is materialistic and completely unscrupulous. For a time the clan usurps the major portion of Yoknapatawpha and makes for the utter moral desolation of the community. The Snopeses are the major figures of Faulkner's trilogy consisting of *The Hamlet*, *The Town*, and

The Mansion, which together with *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* are the crucial novels of the saga.

And lastly, Gavin Stevens, not a family but an individual, and a rather unusual one at that. For Faulkner, Stevens is the one figure in the saga who has not only a sense of the past, a moral awareness, and a sense of responsibility, but also the experience and the ability and the power to do something with his awareness. He is unusual among residents of Yoknapatawpha; for unlike others, he left the South to go to Harvard, and after getting his Phi Beta Kappa Key, to Heidelberg University. But despite his brilliant background, he decides to return to his people. In terms of the saga Stevens is a man of the present, being in his time what old Colonel Sartoris was in the time he had outlived.

Equally important — and some would say more important — is the artistic vision Faulkner brings to his fiction. The intent of his style has been called psychological reality. This is to say, his writing is below the surface of external reality but above the level of the unconscious, or in other words the viewpoint expressed in a given work is usually a very conscious viewpoint that can be approximated accurately in artistic terms only when the artist takes into account what goes to make up consciousness: experience, awareness, and the past. Faulkner is not a professional psychologist, but as a novelist he has the idea. For according to this vision there is no *past*, as such. It's gone; that is part of the definition of the word. Individuals understand the past and it has importance for them only as it relates to their present. For the Southerner then, in this context, the Civil War is not so much an historical fact as is a part of an individual's conscious experience participating actively in his present.

For an artist to make use of the past is not new; to make use of it as Faulkner does in terms of consciousness is, however, something new in this century. To reject it for goriness or difficulty is intellectual weakness and a failure not to sympathize with but to understand an attempt by an artist to make literature more deeply mimetic.

One of the conservative's basic reasons for calling a writer unworthy is that the writer substitutes literature for religion. The opening remarks of this essay should be clear enough to show this writer's approval of the objection, though as a reason it nevertheless exposes the supposition that the conservative sometimes expects more of literature that it can give. To look at it another way, the liberal teacher has a right to ask one thing of the conservative: namely, that the conservative not substitute religion for literature. To say that so-and-so should be on the Index, as it often said of Graham Greene for example, is to attempt an escape from the responsibility of teaching. To say that this or that writer is bad because he has no knowledge of God or because he does not recognize God or because he does not have faith in God is not only to attempt an escape from some basic facts of modern life, but also to ignore some new developments: that perhaps it is not theologically certain that no man can be invincibly ignorant of God, that possibly not a dogmatic faith in God, but just a broad faith is sufficient for salvation, that perhaps the salvific will of God is much more comprehensive than hitherto has been thought, that grace must perhaps be understood not just in essence but in very specific individual terms. The fact is that in his own right, not as a the-

ologian but as an imaginative and serious thinker, the writer has been dealing with these questions for centuries.

What the liberal teacher asks for, finally, is fairness, objectivity, and that literature be looked at for what it is: first of all, as an art form, not a text book; secondly, as a speculative and particularizing art discipline; thirdly, as a product of sensitive human minds of all kinds; fourthly, as an art from which one can learn if at all, then negatively as well as positively; lastly, as an art form through which one can grasp at the stars and do with pleasure what in his individual life man does best — suffer and love with growing awareness for the sake of his own salvation.

The Anguished Sea

JOSE-JAVIER ORTOLL

*An immense span of blueness
Stretches out ahead of me
Quiet and peacefully asleep.
The shrieks of playful seagulls
Float pleasantly to my ears.
The slow rumble of the wind,
Embracing the swaying palms,
Uplifts my soul, and I drink
From nature's eternal breast.*

*Lazily the waves roll,
Crawling up the glistening sands.
Slowly the crests rise, and for a moment
Stay still ————
Only to surrender
To the beckoning whisper of the underflow.*

*But hark — listen! —
The wind, once calm, now gathers,
To recoil and slice the atmosphere.
The ever-obedient palm trees
Bow deeper, as moments float away.
The rumble now resembles a roar,
The gay shouts of the gulls
No longer are distinct.
The crests dare defy the heights
Even more ————
Crushing hopelessly down.*

*The heavens are filled with black rage.
The fury of its ire rises to a crescendo
And bursts, with ever-repeating cannonades,
While crooked fingers rake the clouds.
A heavy torrent of maddened tears
Mix with the sweet sands,
Corrupted with a mere touch.*

*The patience of a stout trunk,
Reaches the limits and falls dead.*

*Slowly I turn and give my back
To the hellish desecration,
My heart throbbing in rhythm
With the rise and fall of the waves.
Painfully I trudge to the portal door.*

*Thunder and flashing lightning
Massacre the environment
While my soul turns over
And over, and over, and*

*A streak of golden rays
Warmly caresses the carpeted floor.
The laughter of the birds
Once more greets my ears.
The trees no longer degrade themselves,
But stand, firm and lusty.*

*I rush to the beach
And find all my friends—
The crabs, the shells, the stones,
The sea-weeds and the rocks
Smiling in warm welcome.
Once more I stand
At the brink of paradise.
I open my arms, caressing my love,
The Sea and I are one.*

(a satori)

JOEL M. DEUTSCH

*the rain reminds me that
Love is a secret
(Not to be kept)
and afterwards the crickets sing
of the wet earth
(which is theirs
because they have sung the rain
which is mine
for I have listened
while it splashes gently
on my soul's doorstep
reminding me that
Love is a secret
which kept
—unsung—
belongs to no one
and may be forgotten*

Joel Deutsch attended the 1963 summer session at Carroll.

Wood Song

STEVEN J. LAUTERMILCH

Eben raced along the marsh. Damp brown leaves and spongy ground cushioned his pounding feet. Bushes and reeds flashed by: all was a blur of muted greens and browns.

Suddenly the trail veered right. A stream shot up. Almost sprawling headlong into the water, Eben lurched sideways, slipped on the wet reeds and swamp grass, caught his balance on a branch, and lunged onto the rickety old footbridge.

Eben collapsed his panting frame on the gnarled wooden rail. Against his sagging arms and heaving chest, the rail felt cold and assuring. Greedily he gulped in huge mouthfuls of air, soothing his fiery throat and aching lungs. Unusual for a damp and sultry climate, the air was fresh and clean that afternoon.

Above, the willows formed a sheltering canopy over the bridge, and Eben could taste their sweetness on his breath. A breeze was playing through their long graceful limbs; and as the branches swayed in the wind, strands of flowing moss trailed back and forth in the brook, rippling the lazy water.

Eben stared into the stream. The image of a young lad of eight with shocks of sandy hair shimmered on the languid grey-green brook. Eben's heart had slowly ceased thudding, and a feeling of complete serenity and peace was spreading a glow of easy warmth through his veins.

Then scarcely audible above the murmuring brook, strains of banjo music drifted to his ears.

Eben did not move. He could just make out the tune, and he wanted to listen. The second that Eben reached the shack, Uncle Joel would stop playing.

"I'm coming. I'm coming. For my head is bending low."

The music ebbed soft and low like fog, a haunting mournful sound that embodied the old Negro who played it.

Eben could see Uncle Joel bent over his banjo. Shoulders and back hunched forward, his head hung low over his chest, hiding his ebony face and revealing only kinky white hair. Every fiber in his big body strained forward and down, emphasizing only the banjo, the glistening blue banjo cradled in his arms and lap.

So engrossed, so absorbed was the old Negro that, save for the banjo, nothing else existed, nothing else was real. The banjo alone possessed existence; all else was backdrop, illusion. Glistening a bright blue, the instrument hovered there, a living being outside both space and time.

From somewhere far away came the words of a song; from somewhere far away came the voice of a human singing. But that voice, those words, were unreal: only the shiny blue banjo was reality. Even the old man who held it had ceased to exist: even he was a mirage. The banjo, the glistening blue banjo, had absorbed all being into itself.

Eben's head snapped erect. The music stopped. Without thinking, Eben rushed to the singer's shack. There, rising from his knees, was Uncle Joel, holding something he had just found on the ground. Eben ran to his side.

"What you got?" he asked.

Uncle Joel did not reply. He merely held out his hands. There, cupped tenderly in his long black fingers, was a baby mockingbird. Eben's hands darted forward.

"Easy, Eben," Uncle Joel said. "It's tiny."

Eben took the bird in his hands. The little creature shivered with fright. Eben stroked its head. Its feathers were downy.

"Can I keep it?" he asked.

Uncle Joel's head moved sideways. "It'd die," he said.

"I'd take care of it," Eben said. "I'd feed it, and —"

Uncle Joel knew better. "Mockingbirds ain't made fer pens," he said. "They're to sing. It'd die in a cage."

Eben grimace and fell silent. His foot kicked at a twig. Then his face lit up. "Can I show my mom and dad?"

Uncle Joel paused, as if pondering an issue far more weighty and universal than the question before him.

"Promise you let him go?" he asked. "On your word?" The question was grave.

"Sure, Uncle Joel," Eben said.

Uncle Joel nodded consent. "Now scat!" he said. Nowadays people don't want no whites back here."

Eben's eyes clouded. He glanced downward. With shoulders stooped, he turned around and faltered off, hurt and silent.

"What'd you say that fer? The voice was Aunt Sally's, Joel's wife. She had been listening from the hut, and now stood motionless in the clearing.

"Don't know," Uncle Joel said.

For a moment, silence cut them apart. Both strained. Then Aunt Sally spoke. "Think Eben be back?" she asked.

"Tomorrow," Uncle Joel said.

Tomorrow dawned early; and come noon, Eben was stopping by the bridge. This time he heard no music. Uncle Joel was not playing. With dragging, hesitant steps Eben started for the hut. The back door was open. Eben went in.

"Hi, Aunt Sally," he said. Uncle Joel was nowhere in sight.

"Hi, Eben," Aunt Sally said.

There was a thick hush. Eben glanced around the room. The banjo was also gone.

"Where's Uncle Joel?" Eben said.

"Don't know" Aunt Sally said.

Again a pause. Eben's shoulder twitched.

"Can I ask you something, Aunt Sally?" Eben said.

"Sure, Eben," Aunt Sally said.

"Why don't I get to hear Uncle Joel play anymore, Aunt Sally?" Eben asked.

Aunt Sally put away the plate she was drying. "It's hard to say, Eben," she said. "It's kinda like Uncle Joel and dat banjo become real close friends. It's like dey don't want nobody else around."

"But he used to let me listen, Aunt Sally," Eben said. "And you do."

"No more, Eben," Aunt Sally said. "No more." She paused, struggled for words. "It's almost like dat blue banjo's its own special world for Uncle Joel, and he don't want nobody else to mess with it." Once more she had to stop. "And lately, chile, it seems like Uncle Joel hisself don't want to play it. It seems almost like he can't play it, like something's —"

Suddenly Aunt Sally's head jerked up. She stopped talking. Somewhere nearby, a song was dying among the trees.

"For my head is bending low. I hear der gentle voices calling, old black Joe."

For a moment all was sacred, silent. Neither of them spoke or moved. Then came the rustling noise that leaves made, and the sound of feet trudging toward the shack. Banjo nestled in his arms, Uncle Joel paused in the clearing outside the shack. In the waterfall of light that poured through the opening in the trees above the hut, Uncle Joel's blue banjo glistened almost mystically.

"Hi, Uncle Joel," Eben said. He did not look in Uncle Joel's eyes.

"Hi, Eben," Uncle Joel said.

Suddenly Uncle Joel's eyes struck Eben's. Eben winced. "I — I let the mockingbird go," Eben stammered. "I — I did. I wanted to tell you."

Uncle Joel did not speak. His glance fell to the ground. Then he looked up. His eyes were sad, and his mouth had a line of defeat to it.

"You better go, Eben," he said.

Eben did not try to reply. In jerky struggling motions he turned himself around and started off. Then suddenly he broke into a run and vanished.

"Dat weren't right, Joel," Aunt Sally said.

Uncle Joel did not answer, but plodded inside the hut. He sank down on the side of his threadbare cot and brought the banjo to rest on his knees. For a moment he just sat there. Then slowly, his fingers dragged across the strings, he began to strum his banjo.

"I'm coming."

He stopped.

"A mockingbird can't sing in a cage," he said. "It's gotta be free to sing. And if it can't sing —"

Uncle Joel's head sagged to his chest. Aunt Sally went to his side. "You're tired, Joel," she said. "All week you been awful tired. Why not sleep?"

Uncle Joel fell back on the bed. The blue banjo clunked to the floor, and the hollow twang of its strings hung long in the air. Then nothing broke the silence.

Reverently Aunt Sally picked up the blue banjo and laid it to rest in the corner of the room. "First I ever touched it," she said.

The next day, Eben did not stop at the bridge. He ran all the way. In his hand he clutched a baby mockingbird. It was dead.

When he reached the hut, he found Aunt Sally slumped on the corner of Uncle Joel's bed. Silently and immobile, she was staring at the rough wooden planks of the floor by Uncle Joel's head. Eben started to speak.

"Don't," Aunt Sally said. "He's dead."

A Question

DAVID J. SWANN

*down there
see
where the water is
there's a boy fishing
so quiet
so peaceful
do you think he knows?*

*see that little girl
in smock
playing house
with home-made dolls
so sweet
so cute
does she know?*

*and that baby
against the breast
suckling life
from familiar warmth
so fair
so cherubic
do you suppose he knows?*

*in the world
of little people
enriched tranquility
do you suppose
they feel
the yoke of world war III?*

David J. Swann, a senior from Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania, is a member of the CARROLL NEWS staff.

Robert Penn Warren's Vision of the Negro

RICHARD CERMAK

That Robert Penn Warren has been ignored by literary historians is often regarded as an accident. Those who admire him point out that to critics like Joseph Warren Beach and Alfred Kazin, writing at the end of the thirties, he was still an apprentice. For John W. Aldridge's *After the Lost Generation* (1951) he was too old to be a newcomer.

Perhaps the true reason for this exclusion, however, lies in the conflict between his birthplace and his philosophy or "personal vision." Born in a border state which stayed loyal during the Civil War, he was the grandson of a Confederate officer. Although he lived the greater part of his life in the North he spoke with a pronounced Tennessee accent. Under such conditions and considering the century of conflict between the regions, a man might feel he is an outcast from society, a nonentity without a decided philosophy of his own.

Warren was not of this mold. In the most outright declaration of his position, Warren said of man:

In the pain of isolation he may achieve the courage and clarity of mind to envisage the tragic pathos of life, and once he realizes that the tragic experience is universal and a corollary of man's place in nature . . . Man eats of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and falls. But if he takes another bite, he may at least get a sort of redemption.

Warren's vision, therefore, was what Leonard Casper termed "the dialectic course of man's compulsion to be known." In more simple terms, he believed that man is obliged to discover himself in the world.

The implications of this philosophy or "vision" are certainly more clearly realized when applied to the Negro and race relations in general. The self-consciousness, complexity, and ferment of the South on this problem provided Warren with handy symbols for the fate of the modern self. Segregation, which has helped the Negro race flourish by the way it has tested it, offers the South a chance to achieve its own moral identity by recognizing that of its Negroes. It was this that Warren was referring to when, in his poem "Modification of Landscape," he stated that:

There will, indeed, be modification of landscape,
And in margin of natural disaster, substantial reduction.
There will be refinement of principle, and purified action,
And expansion, we trust, of the human heart-hope, and hand-scope.

This would occur only "In learning to face Truth's glare-glory, from which our eyes are long hid."

Richard Cermak is a junior history major from Erie, Pennsylvania.

In *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South*, Warren recorded a multitude of diverse individual opinions on this burning issue. He was actually testing people to see if they were "discovering themselves." It is in *The Legacy of the Civil War*, his meditations on the Centennial, that we find many of his own observations on the Negro.

Warren saw slavery as a necessary cause for the Civil War since it provided the background for secession, the mounting Southern debt to the North, economic rivalry, Southern fear of encirclement, Northern ambitions, and cultural collision. The War brought on by slavery created the Great Alibi for the South. A simple reference to the War could explain anything.

According to the Great Alibi, states Warren, "The race problem is the doom defined by history—by New England slavers, New England and Middlewestern Abolitionists, cotton, climate, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Wall Street, the Jews. Everything fits into the picture."

Feeling that the situation is determined by history, the Southerner feels he has no guilt and is really "an innocent victim of a cosmic conspiracy." His attitude toward the situation of segregation is thus frozen. He states that he wants to act differently, but cannot.

This is what Robert Penn Warren could not accept. In his terms these men were not discovering themselves or the reasons for their actions. They acted in a way that was as false as that of the Northerners who excused their thoughts because of the Treasury of Virtue bequeathed to them by the War.

Both his views and his birth, therefore, brought upon his head a score of epithets. He was called disillusioned or morbid, primitivistic, provincial, Gothic, apologetic, a determinist with naturalistic tendencies, and a Christian nihilist. That it is extremely difficult to simplify or interpret the feeling of Robert Penn Warren as has been intimated in the preceding is well illustrated by Casper's admission that his perspectives occasionally "tend to contradict or stifle one another in the struggle for emergence of one vision indivisible."

Despite the difficulty in determining his perspective at times, those who study works of his, such as *All the King's Men*, may perhaps be guided by his opening in "Lullaby — Smile in Sleep."

Sleep, my son, and smile in sleep.
You will dream the world anew.
Watching you now sleep,
I feel the world's depleted force renew . . .
For now you dream Reality . . .
Dream the power coming on.

A Rush to Rendezvous

JEROME L. WYANT

*Why should I deny it?
I love her; it's as simple as that.
If I didn't, then please tell me why
I walked the lonely rain-rutted roads
On that cold November night when the
Sky seemed exploded with stars
From a holocaust in the heavens,
Shining fragments that fired
My path with a guiding pallor
Through the darker night of
The tall trembling trees,
Whose wry branches swung overhead,
Waving ominous warning and
Making me half afraid
That I would lose her
Before seeing her again.*

Mr. Wyant is a Teaching Associate in the Department of English.

A Taste of Honey:

A Review

EDWARD G. KELLY

In June of 1959 a play called *A Taste of Honey* hit the London stage with such impact that even the usually calloused London reviewers were divided. Some said it was social commentary, and others held it to be a moving drama with overtones of warning to all mankind. The author, Miss Shelagh Delaney, was only nineteen at the time of first production. Her plot was, to say the least, unusual. The story concerns a working-class adolescent girl, Jo, and her personal relationships with the other characters of the play: the Negro sailor who makes her pregnant; the homosexual art student, Geoffrey, who moves into her apartment to help her through her pregnancy; her saloon-frequenting, prostitute mother, Helen; and Peter, Helen's newly acquired husband. In this circle of people Jo moves and tries to establish herself as a person.

The play is done in episode form, bringing different combinations of characters together, blacking out the stage and introducing a new combination, and thus developing plot. The sequences run as follows: Jo and Helen moving into their decrepit new apartment; Peter discovering their new residence; Jo meeting her lover; Peter and Helen leaving on a "honeymoon"; Jo and her lover alone in the apartment; the homosexual art student helping Jo through her pregnancy; Helen, thrown out by Peter, returning and forcing Geoffrey to leave; and Helen deserting Jo when she learns Jo's baby may be black.

Before we examine the play more closely, we should mention a widespread belief concerning Miss Delaney which is not well grounded in fact. There is a tendency now to regard *A Taste of Honey* as a biographical play. This is easily explained because there are some similarities between Jo and Miss Delaney. For example, the setting of the play, Salford, near Manchester, is also the birthplace of Miss Delaney. Both Jo and Miss Delaney are Irish, and both quit school at sixteen. However, the biographical similarity ends here, and basing it on such scant evidence would be rash. In addition, Miss Delaney lived in middle-class, government subsidized homes and was not, as Jo, a product of the slums.

We shall be concerned only with Jo and Helen, since by examining them, the meaning of the play can come to us without complication.

From the dingy apartment in Salford, Jo cries, "I hate love"; but the character and the entire play are full of love. Harold Clurman, the noted critic, has dubbed this play and others with it "the theatre of the negation," meaning that their message is essentially one of despair. No doubt this is partially true, yet the secret of this play was perhaps best expressed by the English art critic John Berger when he said, "The despair of the artist is often misunderstood. It is never total. It excepts his own work

... there is always hope of reprieve." This despair theme, seen in other modern authors, O'Neill and Pirandello, is a protest against the slow disintegration of man's own nature, his loss of true values, and his inability to cope with reality as it is.

In *A Taste of Honey* this theme is the recurring principle and the motivating force behind all action. Helen and Jo, in the intimate relationship of mother and daughter who so desperately need each other, seem at the same time bent on destroying one another. Their deliberate mutual cruelty is ironic because they have such great need of one another.

Jo: What day was I born on?

Helen: I don't know.

Jo: You should remember such an important event.

Helen: I've always done my best to forget that.

Jo: How old was I when your husband threw you out?

Helen: Change the subject. When I think of her father and my husband it makes me wonder why I ever bothered, it does really.

Jo: He was rich wasn't he?

Helen: He was a rat!

Jo: He was your husband. Why did you marry him?

Helen: I had nothing better to do. Then he divorced me; that was your fault.

Jo: I agree with him. If I was a man and my wife had a baby that wasn't mine I'd sling her out.

Even in this singular conversation, which is deliberately brutal and expresses the very depths of their souls, there is a glib indifference in all they say.

(Helen has just learned of Jo's pregnancy.)

Jo: I'll get out of it without your help.

Helen: You had to throw yourself at the first man you met, didn't you?

Jo: Yes, I did, that's right.

Helen: You're man mad.

Jo: I'm like you.

Helen: You know what they're calling you round here? a silly little whore.

Jo: Well, they know where I get it from too.

Jo and Helen are completely aware of their misfortunes; yet they do not understand their problems, and so they have no solutions for them. Perhaps they blame the world for what they are, or perhaps they don't even go so far as to associate their tragedy with cause. To them the cause makes little difference. Why do Jo and Helen allow themselves to remain in this condition? Why don't they do something to change their lot? This is the question upon which the entire play turns.

They do nothing because they are incapable of action. To act, one must have belief and purpose. Reality, for them, has ceased to be real; they have no convictions and hence no purpose, and where there is only doubt and disbelief there can be no action. While the characters are real enough, the atmosphere is one of emptiness, a void in which they scream for help. Yet there can be no help; for they themselves do not know what help they need. They are aware of needing something, some resolution,

and this is the reason that they cling so desperately to one another. But it is something much more than each other they need. Jo runs in all directions at once seeking something to which she can fasten herself, something to steady herself. When the negro boy appeared as a potential lover, as a sign of strength and stability, in her desperation she seized the opportunity of sharing the strength she supposed he had.

Boy: You think I'm only after one thing don't you?

Jo: I know you're only after one thing.

Boy: You're so right. But I will come back. I love you.

Jo: How can you say that?

Boy: Why or how I say these things I don't know, but whatever it means it's true.

Maybe Jo really believed this; for perhaps she thought he could be her strength FOR her, and that this would be THE something to cling to, THE something to make the world real again: her taste of honey. But this was not realistic. The boy went off to the navy, and she was left emptier than before. Her mother and secondly her lover, both of whom Jo would naturally look to for strength, were as weak as she. They too were lost and seeking strength for themselves, and so they were bound to fail her. All of them, Jo, Helen, and the homosexual, were reaching for that unidentified something, that taste of honey, in a world which had become for them unreal, a vastly emptiness with no horizon. And upon this teaching, the final curtain falls.

So what does all this mean? Does the curtain in Act II end this play? I don't think so. *A Taste of Honey* is not written trivia solely to entertain the public. It is the cry of one person to humanity. Whether you blame it on man's disregard for religion or his need to compete with his fellows to the point where he looks on himself as a commodity rather than a human being, man needs something more than he has. You may call 'a taste of honey' whatever you like; the psychologists may call it a god. But no matter what specific label you put on it, it may certainly be called A TASTE OF HONEY, that for which Jo, Helen, the homosexual, and all of us seek.

Perhaps the final moments of *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett express the thought a bit more precisely.

Vladimir: Let us do something while we have a chance! . . . To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us! . . . It is true that when with folded arms we weigh the pros and cons we are no less a credit to our species . . . What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot . . .

Sonnet for Wild Geese

PATRICIA HOLLY

*The geese are going over. I would know
It even if I could not see them flying.
I hear their distant honking as they go,
The faint spring music of the wild geese crying.
I've heard the sound a hundred times before:
"Wild geese," my father told us, "Come and see . . ."
And leaning on the weathered kitchen door
He'd follow with his eyes their wavering vee,
Their passing made him restless every year;
He wanted to go north with them, I think,
And follow those wild birds and leave us here.
My mother, wiping dishes at the sink,
Would only smile, she knew he'd never do it.
As far as that goes, I guess we all knew it.*

Miss Holly is a Teaching Associate in the Department of English.

To Evtushenko -- With Gratitude

RICHARD F. NOWICKI

*You would that I but sing of the stars
and whip the wind
and sail the sea.*

*But have I the right
to while the time
to speak of the gods divine.*

*Can I claim God's creatures
put them on paper
put them in words*

*Wisdom and free will, God gladly gave
now man may create
now I may write—with hate . . .*

Richard F. Nowicki is a senior social science major from Cleveland.

Saturday Gladiator

C. A. COLOMBI, JR.

*Punch-crunch
of cleat to leaf,*

*Dank wetness
flapping on the tight belly,*

*Smooth sweat-oiled-shoulder
massaging pad with muscle,*

*And pungent burnt-autumn
mingle wintergreen in yesterday's uremic effort.*

*Fall —
the ball
the chalk
the receiving cool green —*

The Heroic Beethoven

CARL GILLOMBARDO, JR.

"O! you who think or declare me to be the hostile, morose, and misanthropical, how unjust you are, and how little you know the secret cause of what appears thus to you! My heart and mind were ever from childhood prone to the most tender feelings of affection, and I was always disposed to accomplish something great. But you must remember that six years ago I was attacked by an incurable malady, treated by unskilful physicians, deluded from year to year by the hope of relief, and at length forced to the conviction of a *lasting affliction* . . .

"Born with a passionate and excitable temperament, keenly susceptible to the pleasures of society. I was yet obliged early in life to isolate myself and to pass my existence in solitude. If I at any time resolved to surmount all this, oh! . . . how cruelly was I again repelled by this experience, sadder than ever, of my defective hearing! —and yet I found it impossible to say to others: speak louder; shout! for I am deaf! Alas! how could I proclaim the deficiency of a sense which ought to have been more perfect with me than with other men, —a sense which I once possessed in the highest perfection; to an extent, indeed, that few of my profession ever enjoyed! Alas, I cannot do this! Forgive me therefore when you see me withdraw from you with whom I would so gladly mingle. My misfortune is doubly severe from causing me to be misunderstood. . . . Such things brought me to the verge of desperation, and well-nigh caused me to put an end to my life, *Art!* *art* alone deterred me. Ah! how could I possibly quit the world before bringing forth all that I felt it was my vocation to produce? And thus I spared this miserable life—so utterly miserable that any sudden change may reduce me at any moment from my best condition into the worst. It is decreed that I must now choose *Patience* for my guide! This I have done. I hope the resolve will not fail me steadfastly to preserve till it may please the inexorable Fates to cut the thread of my life. . . . I joyfully hasten to meet Death. If he comes before I have had the opportunity of delivering all my artistic powers, then, notwithstanding my cruel fate, he will come too early for me, and I should wish for him at a more distant period; but even then I shall be content, for his advent will release me from a state of endless suffering. Come when he may I shall meet him with courage. Farewell! . . ." This passionate letter, penned by Ludvig van Beethoven in 1802, reveals the monumental anguish which was to pommel his soul for another twenty-five years. Being an intense, withdrawing man, Beethoven seldom—if ever again—allowed his inner feelings to manifest themselves; that is why the letter which I just quoted (written at the age of thirty-two) is such a remarkable testament to his real personality.

The letter was addressed to Beethoven's brothers Carl and Johann, and one would think that such a heart-rending cry of pain would evoke sympathy and kindness from the brothers. But the truth is that the brothers remained incredibly calloused towards Beethoven's plight. Daniel Mason tells us that when the master was prosperous they borrowed

money from him, and even stole jewelry; when he was poor and neglected they refused him the slightest favors. Carl left to him the cares of his worthless son, who proved the greatest trial of the composer's life. Johann, by withholding his closed carriage from Beethoven on a blustery winter journey, directly contributed to the illness which finally killed Beethoven. Is it any wonder that the composer's sensitive nature, tormented by his rapacious family and tortured by early deafness — an affliction of almost cosmic proportions for a musician — is it any wonder that he should become moody and embittered?

The Shakespeare of music began his strange life, one that proved a burden to him and a priceless gift to humanity, during the gloomy German winter of 1770 in the tiny university town of Bonn, on the Rhine. He was born in a dismal, crowded room to a poor father, Johann Beethoven, who was a second-rate musician in a court band. Beethoven's sleazy father had heard of young Mozart's success as a musical prodigy (Mozart was fourteen years old at the time of Beethoven's birth), and the father vowed that his own son would emulate the fabulous Mozart. According to this plan, Johann waited until the boy was about three years old and then all but chained Beethoven to the piano. The tiny child was forced to practice scales and finger exercises for endless hours, and if he should stop his practice and dream a while, the stern face of his father would appear specter-like in the doorway and the relentless, harsh voice would call out, "*Ludwig! was machst du?* Go on with your exercises at once. There will be no soup for you until they are finished." Naturally, Beethoven was a musically gifted child, but his longings to join his little friends who were running and laughing in the sunshine—these longings were suppressed by his tyrannical father, so that the child found himself sequestered day after day in the dingy living room with only the piano and an everlasting round of fingering exercises for companions. It should not prove surprising, therefore, that Beethoven should find music to be his only means of expression and sole source of satisfaction later in life. We see that his father pushed the child down a narrow corridor of practice and isolation, but Beethoven would eventually discover that this painful passageway led to a glorious, expansive world of music. At the age of thirty, Beethoven wrote, ". . . my life is very wretched; for nearly two years past I have avoided all society, because I find it impossible to say to people, *I am deaf*. Plutarch has led me to resignation. . . . I live wholly in my music, and scarcely is one work finished when another is begun; indeed. I am now often at work on three or four things at the same time." These are the words of a compulsive artist who can look only to his work for a feeling of fulfillment.

Another of Beethoven's letters, which relates a strange incident, reveals the pent-up pride with vituperation that was always threatening to spill out of the composer. He was strolling down the avenue with the great German poet, Goethe; but let Beethoven tell it in his own words: "Kings and princes can indeed create professors and privy-councillors, and confer titles and decorations, but they cannot make great men — spirits that soar above the base turmoil of this world. When two persons like Goethe and myself meet, these grandees cannot fail to perceive what

such as we consider great. Yesterday, on our way home, we met the whole Imperial family; we saw them coming some way off, when Goethe withdrew his arm from mine, in order to stand aside; and say what I would, I could not prevail on him to take another step in advance. I pressed down my hat more firmly on my head, buttoned up my greatcoat, and, crossing my arms behind me, I made my way through the thickest part of the crowd. Princes and courtiers formed a lane for me; Archduke Rudolph took off his hat, and the Empress bowed to me first. These great ones of the earth *know me*. To my infinite amusement, I saw the procession defile past Goethe, who stood aside with his hat off, bowing profoundly. I afterward took him sharply to task for this." This is the picture of an unhappy, confused man who demanded for his aristocracy of genius the very same servility that he despised when shown for the aristocracy of rank.

The Austrian pianist and composer, Carl Czerny, once visited the great composer; and Carl, a boy of ten at the time, records his impressions: "We mounted five or six stories high to Beethoven's apartment, and were announced by a rather dirty-looking servant. In a very desolate room, with papers and articles of dress strewn in all directions, bare walls, a few chests, hardly a chair except the rickety one standing by the piano, there was a party of six or eight people. Beethoven was dressed in a jacket and trousers of long, dark goat's hair, which at once reminded me of the description of Robinson Crusoe I had just been reading. He had a shock of jet black hair, standing straight upright. A beard of several days' growth made his naturally dark face still blacker. I noticed also, with a child's quick observation, that he had cotton wool, which seemed to have been dipped in some yellow fluid, in both ears. His hands were covered with hair, and the fingers very broad, especially at the tips."

Now that we have glanced at Beethoven's personal life and have undoubtedly made some judgments concerning his character, we shall go on to consider his Third Symphony, the "Heroic Symphony."

Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, in E Flat, popularly referred to as the *Eroica*, is morose, dull, ambitiously conceived but sloppily executed, and its sound is harsh and dissonant.

Isn't that a fair description of the work we could expect such a man as Beethoven to produce? Perhaps, but no description of the *Eroica* could be farther from the truth! Never is the Third Symphony morose, never is it dull; it is never sloppy and never harsh. And never before the *Eroica* was a symphony composed that could boast such strength, scope, passion, and uncanny "rightness" or inevitability; the Heroic Symphony, created in 1804, has that magical inner life that gives the listener the feeling that inspiration is at work and that something memorable and great is happening. The *Eroica* evokes the same feeling that the best compositions of Mozart and Schubert evoke — the awe and exuberance one experiences in the presence of genius. As Leonard Bernstein expressed it in his *Joy of Music*, "... In the Funeral March of the *Eroica* ... he produced an entity that always seems to me to have been previously written

in Heaven, and then merely dictated to him (Beethoven). Not that the dictation was easily achieved. We know with what agonies he paid for listening to the divine orders. But the reward is great. There is a special space carved out in the cosmos into which this movement just fits, pre-determined and perfect."

The inscription on the symphony runs: "Heroic Symphony to celebrate the memory of a great man." If you read through most of the commentators and music critics, you will be bombarded with some tired old stories, none of which can be proved regarding the dedication of this symphony. The most common story tells us that Beethoven originally composed his Third Symphony to celebrate the bravery of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was only one year older than Beethoven. But when Napoleon declared himself emperor of France in 1804, Beethoven was supposedly disillusioned and is quoted as saying: "Then he is nothing but an ordinary man. Now he'll trample on all the rights of men to serve his ambition; he will put himself higher than all others and turn tyrant."

And with those words the fiery Beethoven is said to have ripped the dedication page off his Third Symphony and re-named it *Eroica*. Well if that story leaves you with a warm glow, you may accept its veracity; but it always seemed to me that the Heroic symphony secretly represented—in Beethoven's mind—the composer's heroic personal struggle against maddening deafness and vicious relatives. The little story that we cited earlier (when Beethoven and Goethe encountered the Imperial family) seems to indicate that he numbered himself among the "great men—spirits that soar above the base turmoil of this world." In any event, whether the master composed the *Eroica* in honor of himself or not, we know which was his favorite symphonic creation. In 1817, Beethoven was asked by the poet Kuffner which of his symphonies he liked best of all. "The *Eroica*, of course," answered Beethoven. "I would have guessed the Fifth," mused Kuffner. "No, no," Beethoven insisted, "*the Eroica*."

Some future music lovers who have never enjoyed listening to the Heroic symphony might be misled by the title into thinking of it as a brassy military-type composition bursting with battle songs and triumphal marches. In reality, the Heroic symphony is intense, mournful, and yet brimming over with vitality and rhythm. The long Funeral March theme dominates the symphony and the powerful grief in it consistently expresses itself in bold, pure form and noble expression. But it is not my intention to take up your time with a stale paraphrase of the immense Third Symphony; words can never approximate the emotive power and celestial beauty of a great symphony. Please be assured that this writer could wish for nothing better than to have you prefer to *listen* to *Eroica* rather than *read* what he has to say about it. And if this article should encourage some readers to sample classical music, do your sampling with a light heart and a spirit of adventure.