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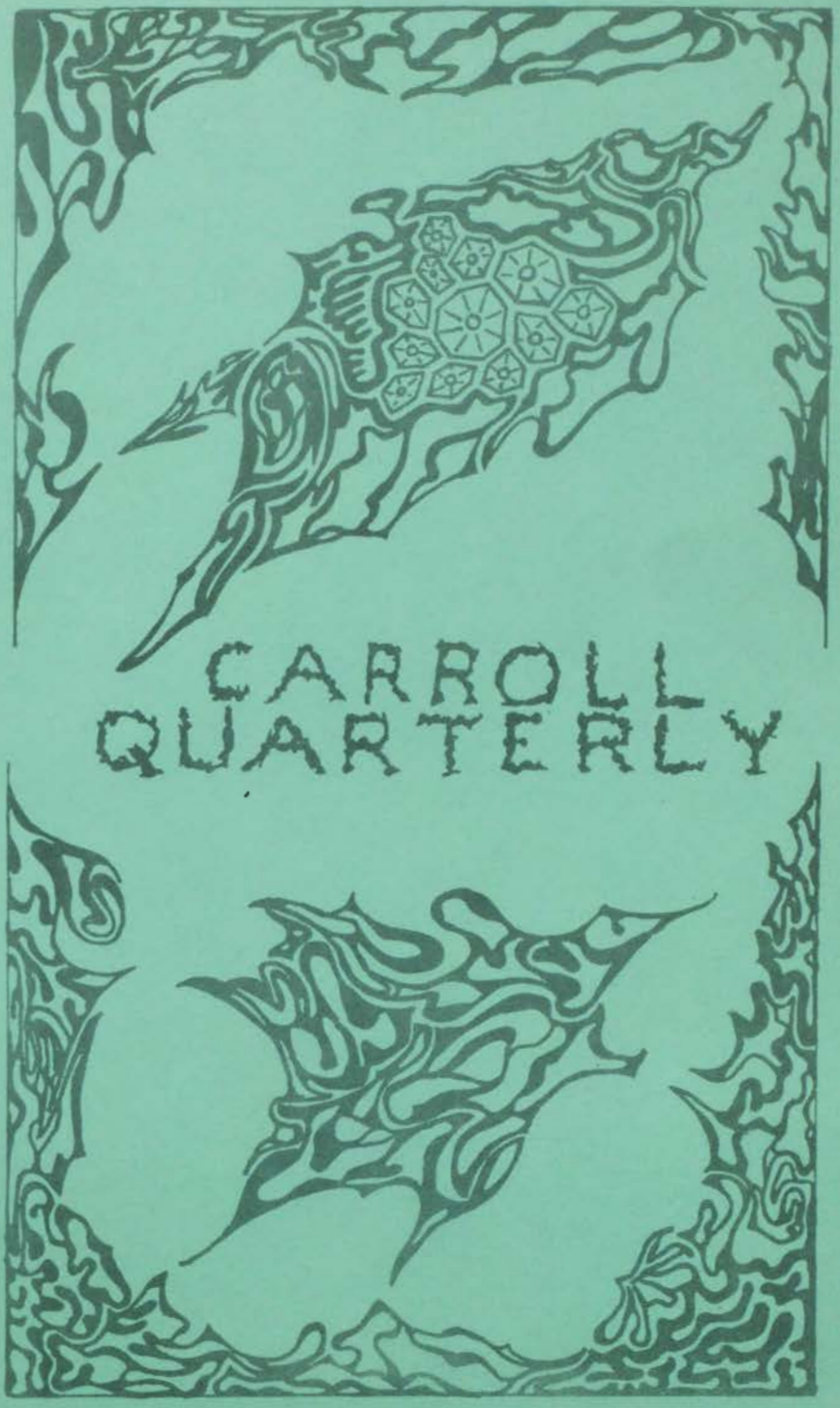

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NOTES GATHERED AT
THE CITY GATES

"EPITAPH/ Leucis, who intended a Grand Passion,/ Ends with a willingness-to-oblige."

--Ezra Pound

Does anyone write poetry with a typewriter? I am not speaking of the finished product, that wonderful array of typed phrases which you are sure an editor will accept out of appreciation for its labored neatness if not for its literary merit. I am asking: does anyone use a typewriter while he is in the stages of creation, pursuing the fullness of statement which is a much to be desired property of the lyric poem. I would think that the sharp chops of the type faces and odor of inked ribbon might upset a poet's concentration. Instead of a device employed to facilitate writing, the machine would become an obstacle separating poet from poem. I hope you are not getting the impression that I advocate discarding the fountain pen, ball-point, and pencil and favor adopting the goose quill in order to return to a purer moment when the spirit of inspiration descended upon us in the likeness of a cooing turtledove rather than in the die-cast form of a yawping 747. We have no business denying the images of our times. I am not saying that we should ignore the machine, but I am suggesting that poetic concentration is easily broken, and that a hasty thought, written because we are bored or distracted or because we just feel like playing with the keys of the typewriter, will make for a hasty poem. More often than not, such a poem is unsuccessful.

If we decide to give poetry our undivided attention, a real fidelity, what can we expect in return? Is our reward inspiration? I believe it is. Here I take inspiration to mean that moment when the poet's consciousness discovers a phrase which sounds as if it were written by somebody important, certainly not by him. It is a moment of anxiety when the poet feels like a plagiarist. Our more melodramatic, poetical friends have told us what inspiration is: a mysterious, sudden illumination which flashes with the caprice

and power of lightning. But inspiration is not gaudy or sensational, it is genuine and invigorating. After its exhilaration passes, it leaves an author with a calm feeling of success, but this feeling is attended by a fear that he will never be visited by it again, and he is almost reluctant to write another poem because he might fail.

There is a section in Wordsworth's Prelude which strictly speaking is a relation of an encounter with the sublime (as Edmund Burke knew it), but I believe it conveys the satisfying experience of inspiration, and so I invite you to read it:

"...when I have hung/ Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass/And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock/But ill sustained and almost (so it seemed)/ Suspended by the blast that blew amain,/Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time/While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,/ With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind/Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky/ Of earth--and with what motion moved the clouds!"

This year the Carroll Quarterly Distinguished Author Awards to to Tom McGarril, Bob Howard (Murn) and Marybeth Onk.

On the sixth day God created man; on the seventh, while God was recovering from the disaster, Shakspere created women. Few playwrights since him have been able to excel his ability in infusing realistic traits in their women. One of Shakspere's stronger women, Katherina Minola, was the highlight of the National Players' production of The Taming of the Shrew, presented through the University Series last March 18.

Despite the occasional feminine groans at the abundant male chauvinism, the audience delighted at the revival of the sixteenth-century comedy which deals with the humorous (though, at times, violent) confrontation of the ultimate self-willed female with the (ultimate?) self-imposing male. The production provided an excellent balance between the dramatic genius of Shakspere and the vibrant, contemporary antics of the Players: it succeeded in effectively reinterpreting the play in the light of modern scenery, music and stage techniques without

over-localizing the universal wisdom of Shakspere.

The marital relationship between Katherina and Petruchio has particular significance to an age scarred by effeminate males and liberated females. The strong characterizations of both of these figures by the Players imparts a relevant commentary on the battles presently being raged between the sexes. Exactly what would happen if enterprising men such as Petruchio should dare stand up to the screaming Katherina? The result (at least to Shakspere) is a lively comedy filled with entertaining physical and mental interactions. Kate is represented in the production as the symbol of the liberated woman who, although she feigns contempt for the worms that cower under her "shrewd" behavior, desires as much attention as her sister, the "inamorata", Bianca. Petruchio, on the other hand is represented as a "peremptory" pseudo-tyrant characterized (with apologies to Dr. Johnson) by the morals of a twentieth-century stud and the manners of a motorcycle gang-leader.

To the serious (?) students of Shakspere (who, no doubt, marvel at his undying flair for doubles entendres) the combination of the unrestained quibblings of Petruchio and Katherina with the spirited activities of the Players is a refreshing insight into the comedy. The actual taming of a shrewish woman is as ridiculous today as it was 400 years ago. It is, nevertheless, entertaining to pretend that such Petruchios do exist who are capable of tempering the hellish Katherina into the sensible Kate. The Taming of the Shrew is not merely an attempt to advance the cause of male chauvinism (however, if the shoe fits...). In the battle of the sexes, it takes the habit of comedy to treat it Shakspere-like as a trifle of no concern.

SNOW by Jane MacIvor

Snow slips in on little cat feet, just like fog.
(Snow slips in on little cat feet, just like fog.)

This poem cannot be understood by the average reader without some explanation: (1) note the use of kinesthetic imagery in the first two lines; (2) and the effective juxtapositioning of the incremental repitition in the last two lines.

FOUR POEMS FOR EASTER

Suffering

stretches out
like pieces of hollow pipe
along an empty street--
persistent night-mares.

Death

is abrupt and flat,
plopped there before you
like a hunk of mud--
a beaconed bill-board.

Spring

is open-ended
continues off the tongue
and settles feathery in air--
papery forsythian petals.

Alleluia

is shaped right
like a good story,
is circled into peace--
a white orchard at dawn.

Francis J. Smith, S.J.

KC-11

Spry old drifter--
windy November
blew you scuffling and jostled
into me, who
just happened to be
there to lodge against
and nuzzle for a span,
in ghosttown streets
of a city still asleep,
while your driver halted
to catch his breath...

though you

were withered, dying with
year and moment alike,
you seeded my eager soul
with the germ of
yourself,
our meeting;

and I blessed you for tales of
every stop on the tattered timetable
hung outside the depot--
rainstained page
torn
from your biography...

then,
in the groping
grey of dawn,
both wind and city began
once more to stir...

you scurried off
as you came--
rolling along in your
tumbleweed fashion--
not under your own power--
and left me
to grow...
strangely glad
to have tugged
at the dagger
that is loneliness,
plunged long ago
into the mind
of you

itinerant

sower of
shattered life....

Oberon

SOME THOUGHTS ON BEOWULF

> We will take heart for the future,
> Remembering the past.
> T.S. Eliot, The Rock

The early part of the medieval period, the years prior to 1100, are commonly known as the "dark ages", a time when the light of learning had almost gone out completely. Learning in this case means classical learning, the philosophy and literature of Greece and Rome. Without the benefits of these Mediterranean treasures, it is assumed that men must have lived in ignorance and error, in a state of unenlightened barbarism. The source of this darkness that extinguished the classical lamps was the wandering Teutonic tribes. The dark age is in fact the time of the Germanic Migration period and a migratory civilization is not conducive to great works of scholarship and art. So I will not quarrel with the general opinion which names these years dark; however, from the midst of this darkness, there flash beacons which are blinding even to modern eyes.

While the people who produced Beowulf, Germans of the dark ages, did not have the advantages of the classical tradition, they did have an insight of vital originality and clarity the spirit of which shaped the civilization of the North and infuses their literature. It is important, then, to consider Beowulf not as an isolated document but as the product of a culture, created not in a vacuum but in a tradition of long standing.

We must consider the culture of the society in which it was produced. We know the poem only through one manuscript from the late twelfth century though the date of composition is usually estimated, chiefly on linguistic grounds, as being some time in the first half of the eighth century. It should be noted that attempts to define the date more precisely are

subject to a good deal of scholarly controversy and Dorothy Whitelock in The Audience of Beowulf[1] presents a good case for a date somewhat later in the eighth century. The society of England at this time was going through a considerable change, in fact, a theological change. In the year 597, St. Augustine landed in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent and began the conversion of the people there to Christianity. Once a base of operations had been established in Canterbury, the influence of the Christian church spread throughout England replacing the native pagan religion. But old traditions die hard and there was a time when the two religions, Christian and pagan, must have co-existed in the minds of the people. Even after the nation had been converted to the Christian way of life, the heroic legends of the old days retained their appeal to the imagination of the people. This is seen to be true as late as 797 when Alcuin, the English scholar at the court of Charlemagne, wrote a letter to the monks of the abbey of Lindisfarne berating them for their interest in pre-Christian literature.[2]

> Let the word of God be heard at the meals of the brethren. There it is proper to hear a reader, not a harper, the sermons of the Fathers, not the songs of the pagans. What has Ingeld to do with Christ? The house is narrow; it cannot hold both of them. The Celestial King did not wish you to have communion with the pagan and profligate rulers in name only; for He is an Eternal King who rules in Heaven, while the other, an abandoned pagan, laments in Hell. Hear the voices of readers in your house, not those of laughing crowds in the public squares.

Even at this late date, Alcuin seems to have regarded paganism as something of a present danger.

It is likely that the appeal of the old poetry was even stronger in the courts of the nobility of England. The aristocracy would have been attracted to the stories of battles and heroes that the old literature dealt with; the concept of heroism is always an aristocratic notion. The poems like Beowulf,

The Battle of Maldon, and Widsith seem to have been designed for a courtly audience and they would have been welcome in the courts even after they had been expelled from the monasteries. Production of a truly Christian heroic poem is rather difficult since for Christianity, the ultimate hero is Christ and a secular nobleman, who probably achieved his position by his valor in battle, does not really want to hear about how the meek are going to inherit the earth.

Although Whitelock (op. cit.) stresses the Christianity of the Beowulf poet's audience, Tolkien says:[3]

> Slowly with the rolling years the obvious (so often the last revelation of analytic study) has been discovered: that we have to deal with a poem by an Englishman using afresh ancient and largely traditional material.

So, like the culture in which it was created, Beowulf contains both Christian and pre-Christian traditions, side by side. Such a combination of Christian and pagan elements would not have seemed unusual at this time. It was the practice of the Christian missionaries in the North to use whatever of the native religious traditions could be adapted to the Christian faith.[4] How seriously the poet took either of these traditions we shall never know. While the Christian element is too evident to be ignored, the emotional effect of the poem and the appeal of its subject matter do not depend upon Christianity but upon the older pagan tradition with which the Christian poet was working. This Christianized version of the story is not enough to change the Nordic warrior-king into a pious St. Beowulf.

It is my opinion that Beowulf is an excellent expression of the spirit of Norse paganism as we know it. It is difficult to say anything definite about the pre-Christian religion of the Germanic tribes since literacy only came in as an accompaniment to Christianity. However, some conjectures can be made based on what written evidence we have and the results of recent archeological work that has been done in the area. Of literary evidence, we have Tacitus' report on the life of Germania from the point of view

of an outsider and the sagas and poems of the Northmen themselves. Of the latter, one of the most valuable is the prose Edda written by the Christian Snorri Sturluson in an attempt to keep the old stories in circulation. Considering the time in which it was written, it is remarkable for its objectivity. Snorri is a Christian, but that does not mean that so attractive a figure of vitality as Thor must be a work of the devil. As Davidson says in Scandinavian Mythology: [5]

> In the early days of Scandinavian Christianity, two scholars, a Dane and an Icelander, set to work to collect and record some of the old stories still current about the gods and goddesses....His (Snorri's) Prose Edda was so successful that our knowledge of the northern myths is largely derived from it, and where we have been able to check his information from surviving poetry, it is surprisingly accurate. But Snorri was writing over two hundred years after Christianity was accepted by the Icelandic Assembly in the year 1000 and the myths presented him with many unsolved problems, as they do us, so that owing to the limitations of his knowledge he may at times mislead us.

Snorri's accomplishment may be contrasted with that of Saxo Grammaticus of Denmark who "appears to have had little love for the legends, and to have found many of the doings of the gods and early heroes stupid and distasteful."[6] Such Christian distortions and the effects of temporal distance combine to make any appraisal of nature of Nordic religion somewhat risky. However, when we turn to archeology for a record of the times in which we are interested, it supports the conclusions based on the literature to a surprising extent. This is very reassuring since it indicates that we can rely upon our written evidence for the most part and that the old traditions probably survived intact for quite a while in spite of the opposition of the growing Christian church. One archeological find of particular interest in a study of Beowulf is the ship-burial at

Sutton Hoo in England which may shed some light on the burial customs described in the poem.

At this point it may be helpful to mention those aspects of Nordic paganism that may have some bearing on the poem of Beowulf. The insight embodied in the native Germanic religion appears to have been rather bleak and harsh; it did not have much to offer by way of hope. For example, the way to go to heaven was to die in battle. This is not the type of outlook that is designed to produce an orderly society of Christian gentlemen.

The ruler of the gods, Odin (in England, Woden), was himself primarily a god of battle and death. It was customary for a leader to dedicate to Odin all of the enemy that might fall in a battle. In this way a massacre can become a religious experience and there is evidence of the ritual execution of prisoners "not merely by slaughtering him, but by hanging him from a beam, or casting him among thorns, or putting him to death by other horrible methods."[7] From what we know of the sacrifices of the cult of Odin, it was not for nothing that he was called the God of Hanged Men.

Another interesting aspect of the Lord of Hosts is that he cannot be trusted, even by his own worshipers. Odin is the giver of victories but he is also busy pursuing his own ends, that is, stocking Valhalla with a good supply of warriors. So, it seems that whenever you need him most, you find that he is fighting on the other side. This tradition of the fickle god was probably not very strong in the early days of the religion, but it must be implicit in the nature of a battle god considering how pronounced it became in the later days. In the Hrolfs Saga Kraka there is the line "I suspect indeed that it is Odin who comes against us here, the foul and untrue." By the time of the Viking Age, it was accepted that the only things a man can place his faith in are his own weapons and his own skill.

Another important god is Thor, the hammer-wielding defender of the gods. Thor's worship probably appealed more to members of the common classes than did the aristocratic cult of Odin. In the myths,

Thor appears as the protector of the homes of gods and men from the monsters which beset them. He is the lord of storms and thunder and is possessed of tremendous strength and vitality. He is also the defender of the social order, in his temple was kept the ring upon which important oaths were sworn, while his hammer was used in the wedding ceremony, was raised to bless a new-born child at his acceptance into the community and seems also to have been used in funeral services. The people of the North were making the sign of the hammer long before they had ever heard of the sign of the cross and small hammers were worn as amulets in much the same way that a modern Christian might wear a small crucifix. A much more personal god than Odin, there is no indication of deceit on his part. On the contrary, his methods are always very straightforward and direct. As W.P. Ker says:[8]

> Thor is the typical Northman of the old sort--bluff, homely, reckless and fearless--not specially intellectual, sometimes outwitted by the cunning of his adversaries, but good at hard work, and instinctively (one may say) on the side of Reason.

His cult seems to have remained vital until the end of the pagan age as he was presented to the Christian missionaries in Scandinavia as the chief opposition to Christ. The stories of Thor always emphasize his character as slayer of the giants and trolls that would destroy the worlds of the gods and men.

This ever-present danger of giants and monsters is one of the most striking aspects of the Nordic religion. Asgard, the realm of the gods, is rather like an armed camp awaiting the next attack. The final battle between the two forces is a part of an eschatology that is as well developed and fully as spectacular as that of the Christians. This is Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, end of the world and culmination of the unique insight of the North. The startling thing about Ragnarok is that order is destroyed, the gods lose. This is the reason that the great warriors are brought to Odin when they die, he is preparing a great army to stand with him on

the last day, if only to hold back the destructive powers a moment longer. In a tenth century poem on the death of a pagan king of Norway, Odin is asked why the man had to die. The god replies: "The grey wolf is watching the abode of the gods." Odin is the lord of victory, choosing who shall live and who shall die on the battlefields of earth, yet, like all of his heroes, even he is doomed. His power may be great; it is not infinite. But this fated eventual defeat does not make the gods any less divine. For so long as they exist, they are order and reason, they are the life, fertility and death of the community.[9] As Ker says: "The winning side is Chaos and Unreason; but the gods, who are defeated, think that defeat is not refutation."[10] The gods are the ordering force in the universe, they created and sustain the world, yet they and their creations are doomed. Man cannot live with chaos, but it is chaos, in the form of the wolf Fenrir, the World Serpent, and the victorious giants, that must ultimately triumph. This concept of the universe as a tragedy on the grandest possible scale had a powerful effect on the early literature of northern Europe and offers an interesting contrast with the safe, harmonious cosmos ruled by the Christian Trinity. In modern terms, it could be called an absurd universe.

This is the universe in which the hero Beowulf lives. The traditional pagan material of the poem is very old. The story of the first part of the poem, dealing with an early adventure in the life of the hero, is essentially the continental folk-tale of the Bear's Son. The principal elements of this tale are: a great man builds a hall; the hall is attacked by monsters; the great man's sons or followers are not successful in their efforts to defeat the monsters; the Bear's Son, a hero with great strength, comes in and destroys the monsters. This same folkloric pattern appears in Grettis Saga of approximately 1300 A.D. and in Hrolfs Saga Kraka. The Beowulf poet has inserted this element into the historical intrigues of the Danish royal house. The events described in the poem took place some time between 450 and 550 A.D. The Danish royal line, founded by the legendary

Scyld Scefing, supplies the material for many of the old poems, rather similar to what the stories of the House of Atreus did for the dramatists of Greece. So, while the poem was probably composed some time in the eighth century A.D. and the surviving manuscript can be dated about the twelfth century on paleographical evidence, we are dealing with a very old story. And the poet is conscious of the age of his material. He knows that the story that he is telling takes place during the old pagan days and he knows better than to try to baptize his characters. As Tolkien (op. cit.) and other recent critics have pointed out, the Beowulf poet was a good poet; his skill in the use of allusions, contrasts and parallels has been compared with that of T.S. Eliot.[11] I am sure he was conscious of the poem's emotional effect and knew that this was due largely to its participation in the pagan tradition. The use of Danish, Swedish, and Geatish history which runs throughout the poem shows clearly that the poet had a definite idea as to when he wanted his story to take place and he must have known that Christianity would be out of place in such a situation. As C.L. Wrenn says in the introduction to his edition:[12]

> . . . as the poet is carrying his audience back in imagination to a pre-Christian antiquity, specific Christian references are not normally appropriate and are avoided. Hrothgar, like Beowulf, acknowledges God, who receives his thanks for favours: but neither--except in the famous homily of Hrothgar at ll. 1724 ff. --- shows specific Christian beliefs. That the poet is conscious of treating of antiquity and wishes his audience to feel this, is attested by ll. 1796-98. Hrothgar's retainer who has the special duty of looking after all the needs of a noble warrior, is concerned with "such needs as warriors were wont to have in those days."

After reading Dorothy Whitelock's impressive work, The Audience of Beowulf, I would not suggest that the poet who arranged Beowulf in the form in which we now have it was anything but a Christian writing for a

Christian audience. However, when she says that "an acceptance of the Christian order of things is implicit throughout the poem,"[13] I must disagree. While we are dealing with a Christian poet addressing himself to a Christian audience, his subject is a pre-Christian hero. The examples of Christianity cited by Whitelock seem to me to be largely drawn from peripheral elements of the poem, chiefly from the words of the narrator. While it is true that the geneology of Grendel is traced back to the descendendants of Cain, the hero remains unaware of his opponent's lineage and there is no indication that he or any of the other characters would recognize the biblical allusions of the narrator. Even these biblical references bear witness to the pre-Christian nature of the story; they are all from the Old Testament. As Bruce Mitchell says in answer to the question "what is Christian in Beowulf?"[14]

> If we mean obviously and unambiguously Christian, the answer is "Nothing"...There is no mention of the great dogmas of Christianity--the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection or the Salvation of Mankind.

What we have here is a Christian poet telling his Christian audience what it is to be a pagan hero. That he has succeeded in doing this without distorting the essential character of his hero may be regarded as remarkable an achievement of objective writing as that of Snorri Sturluson, some four or five centuries later.

Whatever the outlook of the poet, the character Beowulf is, in my opinion, clearly working within a pagan world-view. His attitude toward life is centered around the pagan concepts referred to in the Old English words lof and wyrd. Lof is the esteem, or praise and appreciation of one's contemporaries. All that a man can look forward to by way of immortality is that his fame will outlive him and he will be remembered by the succeeding generations as a hero. As Beowulf says:[15]

> It is better for a man to avenge his friend than to mourn him long. We must all expect an end to life in this world; let him who

> can win fame before death, because that is a dead man's best memorial. (ll. 1385-89)

The theme of lof is stated right at the beginning of the work (ll. 24-25): "For among all peoples it is only through those actions which merit praise that a man may prosper." It is found again in the end of Beowulf's epitaph, the last two lines of the poem where the hero is described as "the gentlest and most gracious of men, the kindest to his people and the most desirous of renown." And the Old English term for this last attribute, the last word in the poem, is lof-geornost. As Wrenn says:[16]

> Beowulf's conception of the aim of a good life is the Germanic heroic one which seeks the praise and appreciation of men above all things and through all, lasting beyond the grave.

Related to this is the concept of wyrd which could be translated as simply "what happens" and represents a belief in a kind of blind fate. In line 455, after discussing the possibility of his dying in the upcoming fight with Grendel, Beowulf says: "Fate must decide." Later, describing his narrow escape from death in a battle with some sea monsters, he says: "Unless he is already doomed, fortune is apt to favour the man who keeps his nerve (ll. 572-3)." Of this statement, Wrenn says:[17]

> Although the poet of Beowulf was a Christian speaking to a Christian audience, the background of pagan philosophy breaks through the newer ethos in such remarks, which appear to confuse fate with God. In such passages it seems that the Christian concept of the Almighty had not been completely superimposed upon the pagan idea of wyrd.

That line, in its imperfect blending of Christian and pagan, is typical of much of the poem. There are, of course, other passages more closely related to Christianity. Talking about Grendel, after their fight, Beowulf says (ll. 977-79): "The guilty wretch must now wait for the last judgement, and the sentence of almighty God." And later, toward the end of his life, when he is brought the news that the royal hall of the Geats has been destroyed

by the dragon, we are told that (ll. 2327-32):

> This was a bitter blow and a severe trial to the hero. Imagining that he had greatly angered the Lord through some breach of the commandments, he became prey to gloomy thoughts, which was contrary to his usual habit.

One of the principal examples of Christianity is Hrothgar's speech of advice telling Beowulf how to be a good man and a good ruler. This contains a reference to "the sinister promptings of the Devil" and advises (ll. 1724 ff.):

> Be on your guard against such wickedness, my dear Beowulf! Choose the better part, which is eternal gain. Avoid pride, illustrious hero. For a little while you will be at the peak of your strength; but it will not be long before sickness or the sword, or the hand of fire, or the raging sea, a thrust of the knife, a whizzing arrow, or hideous dotage, or failure and darkening of the eyes, will plunder you of your might; and in the end, brave soldier, death will defeat you.

Another example of the mixture of the old and new religious traditions is found in lines 175-188:

> Sometimes they promised sacrifices to the heathen shrines, praying to the Devil for help against the oppression which afflicted them all. Such was their practice--and such the hope of a heathen people. Hell was in their hearts; they knew nothing of a Creator, the true God, judge of all acts; nor did they know how to worship the glorious king of heaven. Woe to him whose perversity shall thrust his soul into the abyss of fire, with no hope of change or of consolation. But well for him who can stand before God after death, and invoke the protection of his Father's arms.

In this passage, the poet is describing the reaction of the Danes to the ravages of Grendel. Both religious outlooks are involved, the one commenting

on the other. It is clear where the poet stands, he is decidedly Christian. Yet the position of the Danes is equally clear, "they knew nothing of a Creator, the true God." We are undoubtedly talking about a pre-Christian people. Such a passage illustrates the Christian poet's awareness of the pagan nature of his subject matter and his ability to keep the two traditions apart.

That the character of Beowulf was formed by the pagan tradition is made clear in the account of his death. As he is fighting with his kinsman to kill the dragon, we are told: "It was Beowulf's crowning hour of triumph, his last feat of arms, and the end of his life's work (l. 2709)." The relish of vitality in the face of death is typically Nordic. It calls to mind the last words attributed to the hero Ragnar Lodbrok, put to death in a snakepit by the king of Northumbria, "Laughing, I die."[18]

In the hostile world of the North, filled with the blood-feuds that form so much of the background of Beowulf, loyalty to family and to tribe was of great importance. Revenge for the death of a relative was a man's moral obligation and the murder of a kinsman, an unforgivable crime. At the end of his life, Beowulf takes consolation from the fact that he has always lived up to the code of the Northern warrior (ll. 2732 ff.):

> I have reigned over this people for half a century, and there was not a king of any neighboring nation who dared to attack me with an army or to threaten me with war. The destiny allotted to me on earth I endured; what was mine I defended well. I did not pick quarrels nor swear false oaths. Though wounded to death, I can rejoice in all these things; because when the life quits my body God cannot accuse me of the murder of my kin.

He was a good pagan warrior and king and he lived and died faithful to the pagan ethic as expressed by his kinsman, the loyal Wiglaf: "To any fighting-man death is better than a life of dishonour (ll. 2890-91)." And he was rewarded according to his

own beliefs, the concept of lof. He won the praise and esteem of his fellows and was remembered by them long after his death. He was memorialized in the traditional pagan funeral rites with fire and gold. The measure of the Geats' esteem for him may be seen in the great amount of treasure that was buried with him (a degree of extravagance not unknown to the pagans, as seen in the Sutton Hoo ship-burial), in the great barrow that was erected and in the elaborate funeral ceremonies. As Beowulf's body is being consumed on the pyre, we are told that "Heaven swallowed up the smoke." This remark is fully in keeping with the traditional pagan cremation ceremony witnessed by Ibn Fadlan, an Arab traveller, mentioned by Davidson:[19]

> When the ship on the Volga was burning,
> one of the men watching the fire declared
> to the Arab that they chose to burn their
> dead rather than bury them in the earth,
> so that they might reach Paradise the sooner.
> As a wind increased and fanned the flames,
> he added with a laugh that the dead man's
> lord, in his love for him, was sending a
> wind to take him away.

All of this has been written to establish my opinion that although Beowulf contains both Christian and pagan elements, it is the pagan which shapes and dominates the work. The vigor of Beowulf in the midst of the sense of doom which pervades the poem is much more in keeping with the traditions of Norse mythology than with the extremely optimistic outlook of Christianity. The idea of Ragnarok which is found throughout the myths of the North produces an acute awareness of mortality and limitation in men. This same spirit suffuses the tone of Beowulf so that in the description of the magnificent hall of Heorot we are reminded that "it was to endure terrible and leaping flames (l. 82)." The picture of Beowulf and the dragon killing each other puts one in mind of Thor, another figure of vitality in spite of doom, as he goes down killing the Midgard Serpent at the end of the world. This is a Ragnarok poem, haunted by doom and glory. The consciousness

of mortal danger is always there; the monsters are always lurking just beyond the fire-light.

The world as seen from pre-Christian Northern Europe presents a bleak prospect; goods, men, and gods, all are doomed. Since the very principles of meaning, the ordering forces of the universe, the gods, must ultimately give way before chaos, the universe is essentially absurd. Death is not reconciled in the resurrection of Christ; dead men go to Hel, the goddess of death, and her realm is by no means a pleasant one. Those who die nobly in combat can go to Valhalla to fight, and fall, at the side of the gods in the last great battle, but this is not salvation, only postponement. Inevitable death conquers even in the house of the gods.

It is not by accident that Beowulf begins and ends with a funeral as if to say that man lives in uncertainty and transiency and whatever we accomplish will be done within the boundaries of our own mortality. Here, the Norse poets are saying to us, is what it means to be a man, to be doomed, to be hopeless, yet never to give in.

Tom McGarril

Notes

1. Dorothy Whitelock, The Audience of Beowulf (Oxford, 1951).

2. Alcuin, "Letter to Higbald, Bishop of Lindisfarne," in D.W. Robertson (ed.), The Literature of Medieval England (New York, 1970), p. 98.

3. J.R.R. Tolkien, "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics," in The Beowulf Poet, Donald K. Fry (ed.) (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), p. 13.

4. cf. Bede, Ecclestiastical History (I,30), Gregory's letter to Mellitus.

5. H.R. Ellis Davidson, Scandinavian Mythology (London, 1969), pp. 15, 17.

6. Ibid., p. 17.

7. Procopius, Gothic War, II, 15, quoted in Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Harmondsworth, 1964), p. 51.

8. W.P. Ker, The Dark Ages (London, 1955), p. 49.

9. This sketch of Germanic beliefs is drawn largely from Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Harmondsworth, 1964) and Scandinavian Mythology (London, 1969).

10. Ker, op. cit., p. 58.

11. David Wright, Introduction, Beowulf, David Wright (trans.) (Harmondsworth, 1957), p. 13.

12. C.L. Wrenn, Introduction, Beowulf, C.L. Wrenn (ed.) (London, 1953), p. 64.

13. Whitelock, op. cit., p. 4.

14. Bruce Mitchell, Introduction, Beowulf, Kevin Crossley Halland (trans.) (New York, 1968), p. 14.

15. All quotations are taken from Wright's translation unless otherwise noted.

16. Wrenn, loc. cit.

17. Wright, op. cit., p. 17.

18. Davidson, Scandinavian Mythology, p. 45.

19. Ibid.

20. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 22.

CHAMADE

In the empty fullness of a moonless night,
From the choir of a well-worn Gothic cathedral,
The organist celebrates the death of his child,
In a wild orgy of horrific music.
He sings of life in his wail of death.

Murn

SPINOZA

for Spinoza now
all is still

for so long he
pursed his pale
lips and lingered,
silent bald eagle
caged in that Upper
Amsterdam attic far above
child's songs and barking
dogs

he wheezed and
went right on
writing even
as glass-dust
caught in his
throat

but last night after coughing
up his last red
Ideas, he laid
his buzzing mind
down and
died

J. G.

THE TEN GREATEST AMERICANS?
SOME NOMINATIONS

Who were our ten greatest Americans? Which ten men or women have had the greatest impact upon our lives, and have done the most to shape the course and direction of their country? The magnitude of the question fairly boggles the mind. Just to consider undertaking the task of measuring the relative contributions of individuals as diverse as George Washington or Susan B. Anthony or Robert E. Lee seems the height of intellectual arrogance. And yet, it is, with all its impossibilities, a problem worth tackling.

The final list will say something about what, from the vantage point of 1971, is important, lasting, and valuable in the United States of today and yesterday and tomorrow. In other words, the names that list will contain say as much about us and our values as it does about the persons we have chosen. With those thoughts in mind, this writer offers his nominations.

A few ground rules for the selection process ought to be established first, however. Three will be employed here. First, all nominees must be deceased. Some perspective at least is essential to a proper evaluation of the permanent significance of anything or anyone. The heat of the moment, the politics of the present, allow for a good deal of passion but not objectivity. Thus the necessity for that first ground rule. The second principle we will follow is that the individuals chosen must have spent the bulk of their lives in America and also achieved their greatness here. This would eliminate from consideration, for example, Christopher Columbus and Albert Einstein, both of whom were primarily Europeans even though the latter became an American citizen late in his life.

The last ground rule is especially important. It

is simply that placement on the list does not imply approval of every aspect of a person's career or contribution. The choice is based solely on the effect the individual has had on life in the United States. That effect may, in some instances, have had its harmful side. Progress does have its accompanying cost and not all persons responsible for that progress qualify as saints. But there will, nevertheless, be no denying their influence upon later generations.

Following those guide lines and acknowledging quickly that complete agreement on either the choices or their ranking is impossible, these are the nominees. They will be presented in inverse order, beginning with number ten to, hopefully, preserve a bit of suspense for the reader.

10. With Thomas Alva Edison came the foundations of modern technology in the United States. When the "Wizard of Menlo Park" died in 1931, he had well over a thousand patents registered in his name. They ran the gamut from simple household gadgets to huge mechanisms for transmitting electrical power for whole cities. Edison, who could hardly be called a school drop-out since he never really dropped-in (his formal education amounted to a grand total of three months), considered himself a practical man. He avoided pure science and sought instead to develop or perfect only devices with an immediate promise of financial success

The scope of his efforts encompassed much of what is taken for granted in the everyday life of the world today including the electric light, the phonograph, the dynamo, motion pictures, the telegraph and the telephone. As a man he had his faults. He was over-conscious of publicity, jealous of his competitors, a haphazard husband and father, a tyrant to his employees (he admitted that he worked them much and paid them little), and a good deal less than sophisticated in his political and economic views, but he was also probably the greatest inventor in history. The worth of his contribution is beyond calculation.

9. In many ways Benjamin Franklin was not one but

many men. In one lifetime he assumed the varied roles of author, publisher, scientist, inventor, philosopher, postmaster, diplomat, political theorist, and statesman. He was indeed the best known and most distinguished man of his own time. From Poor Richard's Almanac which he began publishing at the age of twenty-seven to his experiments with electricity, his fame was wide-spread even before the American Revolution.

In the years immediately before Lexington and Concord, he served in London as a kind of "ambassador" from the colonies to the British government. He worked tirelessly for reconciliation and never despaired of it until shooting actually began. A member of the Second Continental Congress, he served on the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence itself, and then in the greatest service of his lifetime, travelled to France in 1776 to secure French assistance in the war. The culmination of his efforts was an alliance agreement without which independence would hardly have been possible. There were more French troops in Washington's victorious army at Yorktown than American and they had reached there largely through the diplomatic skill of one Dr. Franklin of Philadelphia.

Those same abilities were called upon when Franklin led the team of Americans who negotiated the treaty of peace with England in 1783 and when, four years later, he helped calm the troubled waters of angry debate in the Convention that formulated the new Constitution. Always a man of the future, in 1790, in his last public act, he signed a petition to Congress calling on that body to abolish slavery in the United States. It would be difficult to conceive of an assembly of great Americans without his presence.

8. One famous historian has commented that the two greatest contributions the United States has offered to the world are its Constitution and the assembly line. While the former was the work of many fathers, the latter is generally associated with only one--Henry Ford. It was largely Ford alone who transformed the automobile from a luxury

item possessed by a few wealthy individuals to an intimate part of virtually every American's existence. It might well be argued, in fact, that the twentieth century began in 1908 when Henry Ford produced the first Model T, his "universal car," for no other inanimate object has probably so changed our customs and life style as that vehicle and its successors.

Americans had a love affair with the Model T that lasted almost twenty years and that, in the process, made the Ford Motor Company one of the largest industrial organizations in the world and made Henry himself a billionaire. It happened because he had had the vision to see that there was an enormous market waiting for the manufacture of an inexpensive and easy to maintain vehicle, and because he had the genius to devise a means of producing such a product. That genius was not, of course, unlimited. As he grew older his personal prejudices became more evident and his vision deteriorated in dogged stubbornness, a refusal to face changing times and economic conditions. But his achievement remains and the love affair, though now a bit frayed about the edges, still continues.

7. In 1964 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to a revolutionary, a seeming contradiction, but the revolution that Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for was a peaceful as well as a long overdue one. His revolution had begun in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 when, as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, he led a boycott to protest discrimination on that city's buses. It won one of its greatest victories in 1965 when an equality in public accomodations bill was signed into law by the President of the United States and it was still continuing in 1968 when a sniper's bullet in Memphis robbed it of its leader.

Yet, with King at its helm, his movement had achieved more for black Americans in a dozen years than had been achieved in the previous three and a half centuries of their life in the United States. Just as important, he had also laid the groundwork for the inevitable gains of the future.

At that first meeting in Montgomery, he had told his friends: "If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, 'There lived a great people--a black people--who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility." The success of Dr. King in meeting that challenge is evidenced by his place on this list.

6. The American Constitution has been called a "living" document in the sense that its broad and general provisions must be interpreted by human beings for it to have application to specific situations. The humans who have had the strongest voice in the interpretation of the Constitution have sat upon the Supreme Court of the United States and none have spoken more strongly and with more effect than John Marshall. This surprisingly gentle and personable Virginian served as Chief Justice longer than any other holder of that office, and almost singlehandedly marked the Constitution with his own belief in the necessity for a strong central government capable of protecting citizens from threats to their liberty and property.

He further galvanized a rather lackluster branch of the federal government, the judiciary, into an instrument of power and importance. In the process he dominated his Court so completely that he himself wrote almost half the decisions rendered by that Court during his tenure, and he found himself in the minority less than 1% of the time, dissenting in only nine of over one thousand cases. The mark of Marshall's greatness is that he utilized his power to the fullest and in so doing shaped the meaning of the Constitution irrevocably for the future.

5. He was approximately six feet tall with reddish-brown hair, a pleasant looking gentleman, a fine family man devoted to his wife and children, a good and attentive Christian, and enormously generous in his charitable giving. Yet he was also the most hated man of his era. There is little doubt

that John Davidson Rockefeller was a portrait in paradox as well as in oil.

During the later years of his long life, it spanned almost a century, the public animosity towards him mellowed into a sort of folk hero admiration but during the time when it had been virulent, it was something to behold. And well might he have been hated, for he had committed a dastardly deed--he had led the destruction of the old America of small towns, farms, and businesses and replaced it with a new and frightening civilization of mass production industry, giant corporations, and extremes of wealth and poverty. Many looked back longingly to a supposedly simpler time now gone forever and blamed Rockefeller for its disappearance.

He had led the way in the expansion of the petroleum industry, a key sector in the post-Civil War economy. His Standard Oil organization had also introduced management techniques now taken for granted in the administration and organization of large-scale business and he himself had pioneered in what he called "scientific giving" through the establishment of instruments such as the Rockefeller Foundation. His contribution and his legacy is thus the modern industrial society with both its good and its evil.

4. One of the oldest of historical clichés is that "great crises make great men." In the history of the United States, no crisis has been greater than that of the Civil War and that it produced a great man in the person of Abraham Lincoln is obvious. The problem with the inclusion of Lincoln on a list such as this is not explaining why he is there but instead, defending the decision not to put him in first place.

The greatness of the man is indisputable, as every school child knows, but his moment was brief, exercising significant influence for less than five years. Later generations have also imparted to him actions for which he was not responsible and views he did not hold. The Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in the United States, Lincoln's views on Negro rights fell a good deal short of

equality, his record on civil liberties was unbecoming, his reconstruction policy questionable.

Overwhelming everything, however, are two stark facts--he preserved the Union in the face of a titanic threat to disrupt it and he put slavery on the road to extinction. They remain as permanent monuments to the achievement of the sixteenth President of the United States.

3. While the Civil War was the grave crisis of the 19th century, the Great Depression was that of the 20th. The first crisis produced a Lincoln, the second produced Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Roosevelt did not end the depression. There were still far too many Americans unemployed as late as 1941 but he did prevent us from going the way of Europe. Under the pressure of economic hardship, desparate Europeans turned in the 1920's and 1930's to men on horseback, dictators ruling totalitarian states. Roosevelt convinced Americans that our economic and political system was not bankrupt, that government was responsive to their needs, that it did know and care about their suffering. He gave Americans back faith in their system and in so doing, he preserved private enterprise and democratic institutions in the United States. The New Deal relief programs helped ease somewhat the physical devastation of the Depression and, more importantly, the reforms established have significantly safeguarded the nation from a repetition of the 1929 debacle. Add to this the leadership of the wartime coalition against fascism and his peerless skill as a political leader and one has the ingredients of the legitimate greatness of the man.

2. When George Washington became the first President of the United States on April 30, 1789, he was fifty-seven years old. He could look back on an active life as a surveyor, a plantation owner, a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and as the victorious commander of American military forces in the Revolution He had also been instrumental in the calling of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and had presided over that body as its chairman. He would have liked to have retired to Mount Vernon but

he was the unanimous choice of the nation for President and he had never refused the demands of duty.

He proved equally skillful in governmental administration in the years after 1789. Whatever knowledge he lacked about the intricacies of diplomacy or finance, he more than made up for by surrounding himself with the most brilliant subordinates ever attracted by any American President. Just as important, despite his enormous popularity, he continually resisted all temptations toward imposing his personal rule on the nation. He regarded the holding of power as a trust and he understood that men have a duty to serve, not a right to govern.

He had emerged at a time when the United States was not yet a reality. When he left office in 1797 it was well on the road to international importance. His legacy was the very existence of his nation and the stability of its institutions.

1. In Washington D.C. today there is a domed memorial to a man, upon which the following inscription is engraved: "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Those words written to a friend by Thomas Jefferson do much to sum up the life of the individual who is nominated here as the single greatest American who has ever lived.

His intellectual genius was staggering. A later President, John Kennedy, paid tribute to it when he commented at a gathering of notables at the White House that it was undoubtedly the most extraordinary massing of brilliance since Thomas Jefferson had last dined there alone. As one biographer has pointed out, no man in this or any other country in the Western world--excepting only Leonardo da Vinci--ever matched Jefferson in the range of his activities, in the fertility of his thinking, and in the multiplicity of his interests.

He was a mathematician, architect, scientist, lawyer, inventor, philosopher, farmer, political theorist, educator, diplomat and statesman. He set up an educational system; he built a university; he founded a great political party; he helped design the national capital; he was instrumental in estab-

lishing America's coinage; he doubled the territory of the United States; and he laid the foundations of its foreign policy. His authorship of the Declaration of Independence, one of civilization's epochal documents, would alone entitle him to greatness. Most of all, however, he was the very embodiment of the American idealism and optimism that was born at the moment of the nation's founding. He held an abiding faith in democracy, in man's ability to rule himself justly and effectively, a faith that still survives, weatherbeated but intact, two centuries later.

Those then are the ten nominations. Disagreement is inevitable. No women are on the list, for instance. No figures from literature or the arts and no labor leaders appear. Good cases could be made for a Samuel Gompers or a Mark Twain but the choices made are the choices presented. The argument begins now!

C. Joseph Pusateri

ON THE PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY A FRIEND LAST SUMMER

it is said that Dylan Thomas
by raging moon
light sat him down
with whiskey-reeling blood in his eyes
while at the same time
i--sifting through assorted old
50% off years
as poets and other more patriotic
parasites often do--
i without no whiskey
but sweet cigarettes rolling
satanic music through my ears
eye that photograph taken
by a friend last
summer
and wish I had not finished off
that wine so fast.

Kid Domino

POEM FOR CAROL

you
who purely placed silver
a new crescent moon
in the crazed old wanderings
of my night
who with
down and still silent
soft lips sang open grass
in the canyons of my dark dream
who out
of the rusted irons
and wires
of my scraped skeletons of thought
have wrought and woven
a flower's lace
you
while i stood
trembling and fearing
the winter
in fall
have clothed me
in robes of your own
and only making
and i stand blinded by hearing
the sight of your music
falling sun
through my fingers.

Kid Domino

LATECOMER

if i seem to come late
it is not the rain
you have been waiting too long
and i am short-sighted but

quick witted. i will tell you a story
to relieve my message, never to
relive old days. this is the last spark
i will be gone as it sizzles
out in the water.

young children crouch
by a large lake at dusk
pushing their milk-carton boat,
with lighted candles out to sea.
i was among them
and sent my boat gently with a wish
which came true
but i believe in wishes no more.

and so you will have your own dawn
though you may think you have lost the knack
you never had the talent.
morning will come unbidden
like rain.

Carol Furpahs

SING, WE ARE WAITING

sing, small alice, sing.
tell us you have lost your flute
and so must use your own voice.
sing, the trees have taken your flute back
it has become their branches
their birds measure the stops
so the wind comes through.

sing alice, they are humming your tune first
we are all waiting for something new
but you are always new
though i have heard you play
a thousand times, to hear you
sing a thousand more, it is still new.

we do not bend often in winter
we are stiff. we have not grown.
heavy clothes pack us in
too many layers to break through
alone or silently. sing small alice
we are all waiting.

Carol Furpahs

A STATEMENT ON THE CINEMA
OR, HOW I WAS HUMPHREY BOGART'D INTO SUBMISSION

I am fascinated by the cinema because few forms have changed with as much rapidity and unpredictability as the film. Every new movie seems to bring to the screen a new genre of viewing; so, to speak of particular trends is almost meaningless. Yet there are certain popular elements organic to several modern films. And it is these similarities which I would like to discuss.

The most frequent complaint among the survivors of the Legion of Decency is that the films have become too violent. This change can be easily substantiated through such films as Bonny and Clyde, Soldier Blue, The Wild Bunch, and most recently, Straw Dogs, Dirty Harry, and Clockwork Orange. I am in agreement with these survivors. Indeed violence is common in film production. Yet violence need not lead to a poor film. It may enhance and add meaning to some movies or it may be used as a device for packing in an audience.

Bullitt and The French Connection are two movies which present violence for the sake of sensationalism, and box office receipts. Neither movie offers much in the way of important universal or particular themes. The merit of each movie lies in excellent camera work--with violence thrown in to heighten the cinematographical appeal. The French Connection in particular, is a visual experience, yet has nothing outside that experience to recommend it as a great film. A complicated plot is forcibly carried by GeneHackman's portrayal of "Popeye Doyle", a tough narcotics cop. Hackman deserves recognition for his fine acting but the whole film suffers from an intrinsic plot defect. The ending(the crook escapes) is so unsatisfactory that it renders all the violence depicted up to that point meaningless--that is, without morality. You might think that violence and morality are strange companions. Yet they must go hand in hand if a film

is to deliver a significant message to the audience. To depict a murder merely for the sake of bloodletting leads only to shallow sensationalism. People who meet spectacular cinematic deaths for the sake of spectacular cinematic deaths become things--not real characters, just human ketchup bottles to be overturned. The risk any violent film takes is to "thing" all its characters to the point that there are no real people left; just a bunch of mechanical killers and mechanical victims. Violence committed on a moral level--that is, it is moral or immoral, but never amoral--is far more touching and significant than violence committed for the sake of spectacle. The Greeks discovered this long ago, but modern film directors are still learning it.

The screen, however, is not totally bereft of violence with a moral cause. Sam Peckinpah's Straw Dogs demonstrates just how effective violence can be in delineating values and morals. The movie begins slowly but quickly picks up steam as the grisly climax draws near. The violence is highlighted by good editing and photography, and it is both profound and sensational. The picture goes beyond the triteness of "a man's home is his castle" and explains the foundations of human dignity. Dustin Hoffman is excellent in his role as a flustered American who confuses his peaceful inclinations with a desire not to become involved in anyone's problems. He professes the platitudes of peace only because he wants isolation and noncommittment. It is the ugly assault on his English home(his last refuge of isolation) which strips away this lie. Dustin is forced to admit his real motives for peace--an excuse for cowardice in the face of conflict. The propensity which Dustin shows for violence once he decides to defend his home leads one to believe that Peckinpah wanted it understood that even the meekest of men harbor some violent inclinations. This is an undeniable human heritage. Yet with violence comes dignity. Dustin kills in order to protect and in so doing, comes to an honest appraisal of himself.

Violence , in short, peels away lies. It is the ultimate exposure of self to truth. One can disagree with Peckinpah's statement in Straw Dogs, but the point is that he does use violence to powerfully depict a theme and not just to raise a few lunches.

Another point which is directly related to the question of violence in the film is the antihero. With the rise of violence came the decline of the here. The antihero has since taken his place. The antihero is, in a sense, a product of the same search for realism that produced violence. The new hero must bumble and make mistakes to draw viewer sympathy. Note that it is sympathy rather than admiration which the film producer is seeking to elicit from the audience. The old style hero is thought to be too epical to be realistic. He is not the man on the street. He is superlative in everything he does--the fastest gun, the strongest man, the toughest gangster. He is rarely comic. His fall is tragedy. Not so with the antihero. He is not even second best and often is the worst at what he does. He is a bungler and frequently comical. Yet it is contended that this hero is more realistic because of his vulnerability. He is open to feelings and his range of emotion is much broader than the hero. The hero is thought too invulnerable and self-sufficient to display or warrant much sympathy. Such is not always the case. The hero experiences an entire spectrum of emotion, but in such a dignified way that these emotions subtly embellish character portrayal and do not become ends in themselves such as Love Story á la mush. The epic hero, however, usually concentrates on tragic emotion with light, humorous touches added. His dignified bearing gives these feelings a profundity which no antihero can ever approach. The difference between the elevated hero and an earth bound antihero in eliciting a tragic response can easily be illustrated: it hurts more to fall from the top of a ladder than to fall from a bottom rung. In short, the antihero is basically unsuited for tragic roles.

A good example of the depth of tragic feeling achieved by the old style hero is found in the performances of Humphrey Bogart. Bogart is often accused of being too "hard", too invincible to produce tragic effect. Yet The Caine Mutiny, The Left Hand of God, The African Queen, and Casablanca deny this accusation. In these movies Bogart retains his consistent epic toughness and in each he falls despite this toughness. The Caine Mutiny represents Bogart at his best. He portrays a crazed, yet still proud naval captain with a forcefulness only Bogart can transmit. Even in his

demented state, the captain draws a tragic response as his rank and ship are taken from him by subordinate crew members. The Caine Mutiny, in many ways approaches King Lear in depicting the tragedy which insanity can bring to men accustomed to power.

Within the last year, however, appear certain hints that the hero may soon enjoy revival. Although the clumsy antihero still remains firmly in command of the cinema, one heroic picture does emerge. The success of Billy Jack indicates that audiences still have not lost their taste for the epic hero. There are several flaws in Billy Jack which cannot be overlooked. The camera work is rarely consistent and the whole film suffers from trying too hard to be "right on" and relevant. Yet the dedication and simple strength of Billy Jack win you over. He takes action when it is needed and he is not marked by hesitation and confusion. Billy Jack reaffirms the difference between bravery and cowardice--a distinction the antihero cannot make. Billy Jack utilizes the common western theme of the strong defending the helpless to good effect. His imprisonment brings a tragic feeling. It was not a senseless murder as in Cool Hand Luke, but a bloodless sacrifice for the Indian school he protected. This sacrifice was consistent with the well-defined values of Billy Jack. The antihero, on the other hand, is subject to hazy, half formulated, and often contradicting values which leave him incapable of tragic emotion. He becomes a victim instead of a protagonist.

With emergence of the antihero and the violence needed to enforce his weakness comes a drastic change in the purpose of the cinema itself. The theatre ceases to be a place of entertainment and instruction. It becomes a house of spectacle. The film producers cater to the senses, but their intellectual fare is meager. Stanley Kubrick, for example, produced a visual, audible feast in his 2001: A Space Odyssey, but his plot , so obscure, leaves the viewer bewildered and at a loss for a theme to unify the brilliant spectacle . The cinema gravitates more toward a bombardment of the senses while ignoring the most important element of all--plot. It is plot which gives a film impact, meaning and its raison d'être.

Yet change is a trademark of the cinema, and all this may pass for better or worse.

Chris Sticken

CZ-21

I go walking when the moon calls for me...

the reins of my thought
in shadowy hands
are given a shake--
I lope off at an easy pace,
my footsteps as soft as any ghost's,
and only fallen leaves in their
scratchy voices speak in whispers of
my passing...

If by chance I should meet
some other walker,
a ranger for his own reasons,
he will likely avert his owlish eyes
or, if bold, glance nervously backward
at what glided by with a stirring of air,
and stiffen against a shudder...

I go walking when the moon calls for me...

for in the dark
I am

frightfully unmasked,
overwhelmingly black

Oberon

BLACK SANDALS AND SEAGULL FEATHERS

Tire tracks from Black Sandals
Mark the sandy shore
In symmetrical patterns.
They go in no set direction
Yet they are not washed away.
Black Sandals mark an age
That Will stand.

off in the surf
play the children.
born in the streets they awake to the new sun.

Tire tread covers the streets
The campuses
The jungles.
Tire tread covers the right
left
and
middle.

Not limited to this neighborhood,
the tread willwander.
It will shame Sherwin Paints.

It will laugh at the right
Listen to the left
But make its own line.

somewhere on the beach
two sea gull feathers
float to the ground,
their former
glides freely in the blue.

The boy with Black Sandals
Picks up the feathers
And lodges them in his
Long flowing hair.

he has no country
but only his people.

Dennis Archambault

CABALLERO

Though I always walk in,
every Friday evening
I ride home bareback from the bar
on a midnight courser.
Waste paper scatters before
our headlong gallop, and the clatter of
her hooves always seems to bring light
to a dozen windows, though we whirlaway
before they can catch a
glimpse...

my coattails slap in the wind
like some jouster's smart pennants; stream
ing mane lashes my face as I hug her straining
neck and press my thighs tighter against the
rhythmic power in her body.

Later, spent by our flight
through backstreet and alley,
I rub down her glistening flanks and heave
in unison with her, gusting fatigue and
fervor in our great breaths.
I stable her in the ramshackle garage (struggling
to remember she will be gone by daybreak)
and stumble off to sleep...

and yet,
though I know that
wishes are the only horses
a drunk and a beggar may ride--
I still awake on Saturday mornings
windburned
and credibly saddle-sore

Oberon