Symposium

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W.B.Yeats

Introduction

You are holding in your hands something very special. Although student newspapers and journals of poetry and fiction abound, may be the *first and on/y* strictly scholarly journal of student writing published by *any* community college in the country concerning authors who collectively compose the canon, the Great Books.

. This is the second issue of *Symposium.* The student papers were nominated for inclusion by Great Books Curriculum faculty and students received Great Books Curriculum Scholarship awards But the greatest significance of *Symposium* goes beyond the particular findings and reflections of the students who have contributed to it. *Synposium* demonstrates beyond all dispute a profound truth which we hope this journal will help to take root and spread. This is that community college students can and do write about the best that has been thought and said in Western Culture with proficiency, insight, intellectual excitement and with frequent originality. Why is this so significant? The contents of *Symposium* lay forever to rest the objections by faculty and students that enduring works of the mind are beyond the abilities of community college students or inconsequential to their intellectual interests or personal needs The papers herein were written under the guidance of Great Books Curriculum faculty. They were produced by typical students, in some cases by people who have always been indifferent to writing and were unaware or afraid of the canon. Those who take the trouble to read the contents of *Synposium* will find implicit in it how stimulated, broadened and intellectually transformed the students grew. There is another reward they received. Involvement in the Great Books enabled contributors through their hard work to discover and earn a pride in their own intellectual and compositional mastery. They will put these achievements and skills to practical use in other classes and their jobs. But these things will also equip them to cultivate for the rest of their lives a richer mental life than they otherwise would have had at their disposal. And make no mistake. Their insights often opened up new perceptions to the faculty who in this regard were taught by their own students. And why not? Great Books authors are people like you and me who are concerned about those things that preoccupy us all---how to live our lives and puzzle out its meaning.

In this second issue we have attempted something different. We have selected several authors to explore in-depth and in the round. Miguel Cervantes, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Jonathan Swift have been examined from a highly diverse set of viewpoints and disciplines. It is a chalkboard demonstration of the most humanistic form of diversity—the intellectual diversity of individual thoughts and hearts. Also, for the first time we have included brief papers delivered by Great Books Curriculum faculty members at our annual Faculty Symposium. Lastly, the handsome physical appearance of this journal is the direct result of a generous grant from Chancellor Wayne Watson for which the Great Books Curriculum extends its heartfelt thanks.

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Anatomy of a Hero

by Chad Cheatham

Analysts of myths and legends such as Joseph Campbell and Carl G. Jung have discovered that there is a definitive structure used in practically every tale concerning a hero. The structural elements, analysts assert, are divided into three acts. This ritual pattern involves a change or loss, a descent, and a rebirth or resurrection (Leeming 8). The traditional story-structure used in Homer's *The Odyssey* exhibits how Odysseus develops throughout his journey and why he is considered a hero for the ages.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a hero as a person "in mythology and legend…celebrated for his bold exploits" and probably the most famous of all heroes is Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey*. Odysseus is among the physically elite and is considered by his society the most intelligent and cunning of men.

According to Christopher Vogler, the first act in a heroic myth usually consists of a few key elements. He labels these elements, or stages, as the Ordinary World, the Call to Adventure, the Refusal of the Call, the Meeting With the Mentor, and Crossing the First Threshold (Vogler 12). The Ordinary World exists, Vogler says, to create a contrast to the other world that the hero enters into on the journey. It is in Act I when the hero receives his call and the journey begins. The hero is often reluctant and temporarily refuses the call. This is when an outside influence must try to motivate the hero. Once motivated, the hero is on his way to encounter his first real challenge of the story, the first threshold (Vogler 17).

In *The Odyssey*, Ithaca represented Odysseus' Ordinary World ("The Hero's Journey"). Before leaving to fight in Troy, Odysseus was enjoying the wonderful role of King. He was on top with nobody to bother him. There were neither internal nor external threats. He, like his kingdom, was at peace. This allows the audience to see the contrast to the world that the King explores in his heroic journey.

Odysseus' Call to Adventure, along with other elements of the story, takes place during a flashback. Campbell relates this call to a character type, or archetype, which he calls the Herald. This character's job is to deliver the challenge and to "announce the coming of significant change" (Vogler 61). In *The Odyssey*, it is the

god, Hermes, who takes this role, an has the immortal title of Messenger. It is Hermes who descends to the island where dwelt the

beautiful goddess and nymph Calypso where Odysseus has been dallying for the past seven years.

> **Now Zeus commands you to send him [Odysseus] off with all good speed: it is not his fate to die here, far from his own people.**
> **Destiny still ordains that he shall see his loved ones,**
> **reach his high-roofed house, his native land at last. (Homer VI 125-128)**

When this god-sent message is relayed to Odysseus, he is very skeptical of Calypso's willingness to let him go home. This fear delays his call, thus showing the Refusal of the Call ("The Hero's Journey"). Vogler says the reason the hero temporarily refuses his call is because he is clinging to the comfort of his Ordinary World (110).

However, there can be other reasons for the hero's denial, most of which lie in the hero's flaws. Campbell says, "The refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest" (60). This is quite evident in the case of Odysseus, who, throughout the story, puts off his journey's ultimate goal to indulge in his most eminent weakness, which is women. His stay at Ogygia with Calypso and the year he spends with Circe definitely show how Odysseus continues to refuse his ultimate goal. A hero usually needs one or more immortal or mortal being to get him past the refusal stage and to motivate him to continue on with his journey. These beings will often times give gifts of wisdom or material treasures to assist the hero throughout his journey. These beings are referred to as Mentors (Vogler 31). On Ogygia, the Mentor is Calypso, who comforts Odysseus and assures him that he is free to leave. Once the hero finally accepts his call, he will soon encounter his first challenge, just as Odysseus does after he leaves Calypso.

The final stage before the second act is what Joseph Campbell calls Crossing the First Threshold (Vogler 14). The First Threshold is the where the hero is given a test, often a dangerous one, where he or she first meets the enemy (Vogler 129). When Odysseus makes his way to the land of the Phaeacians, he comes to this First Threshold. This is when Odysseus encounters Poseidon, who is a main antagonist of the story. Poseidon creates a storm for Odysseus, almost killing the great king. Odysseus luckily meets an ally, Leucothea, who acts as a Mentor and gives Odysseus a cloak, along with some much-needed advice, allowing him to survive this first trial with Poseidon.

Though *The Odyssey* is not written in chronological order, the order in which the events are presented to the audience fits well into

the traditional story-structure that Campbell and Vogler have explored and defined. Therefore, in the second "act," when Odysseus tells his heroic tales to King Alcinous, they are presented in flashbacks, but still follow the story-structure. The story is already rolling, but Odysseus will encounter his greatest crisis, a life and death conflict, and his reward.

"Once across the First Threshold, the hero naturally encounters new challenges and Tests, and makes Allies and Enemies" (Vogler19). After Odysseus' First Threshold, he receives help from the most benevolent and famed Mentor in Greek myth, Athena, daughter of Zeus, goddess of wisdom. Athena indirectly introduces Odysseus to an ally, Nausicaa, who is the princess of the land. Nausicaa sends Odysseus to meet with King Alcinous and Queen Arete, who end up being the most helpful allies to Odysseus by eventually sending him to Ithaca. The day after meeting the king and queen, Odysseus is presented with a few more tests. This time they are harmless tests of physical ability. The games end and dinner begins. This is when Odysseus is asked to tell the story of himself.

Odysseus tells his tale, mentioning the visit to the Lotus-Eaters, and how he had arrived on the land of the Cyclops. The story of the giant, Polyphemus is told, which shows how brave and heroic Odysseus is. Next is the trip to Aeaea, where Odysseus meets Circe. After a year of living with Circe, Odysseus finally decides to continue on homeward. Before he can go home though, he must get past another obstacle, which happens to be a visit to the Kingdom of the Dead, known as Hades. Circe ends up being a Mentor to Odysseus, giving him sound advice and his ship's sail a fresh wind for his trip to Hades.

As in most mythical tales, a trip to Hades is what Vogler and Campbell would call the Approach to the Inmost Cave. This is considered the second threshold (Vogler 20). One of the earliest literary depictions of life after death is in *The Odyssey*. "The Land of the Dead that Odysseus visits is a place of darkness, sadness, and despair" (Leeming 64). This is conveyed by the ghost of Achilles who says to Odysseus about the afterlife:

> **No winning words about death to me, shining Odysseus!**
> **By god, I'd rather slave on Earth for another man –**
> **some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive –**
> **than rule down here over all the breathless dead. (Homer XI 555-558)**

Vogler says that the Approach to the Inmost Cave is where the hero will "encounter supreme wonder and terror" (145). Vogler also says that the hero is careful, knowing that he is balancing on the line of life and death (151). The truth of Vogler's statements is obvious when Odysseus is confronted by visions of his mother, a dead crewman, and several deceased warriors such as, Hercules, Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax. He is in obvious awe throughout his visit as these Mentors give him advice, warnings, and prophecies. He eventually leaves Hades, fearing that Queen Persephone will bring death upon his head. Even Circe is amazed at the Odysseus' defiance of death when he returns to Aeaeaand she says: "You ventured down to the House of Death alive, / doomed to die twice over – others die just once" (Homer XII 23-24).

When returning to Circe's island, Odysseus is given more advice from Circe. This time it is about the biggest trial that the great hero will encounter. This trial and crisis is called The Ordeal (Vogler 12). The Ordeal that Circe warns Odysseus about is his trip to Helios' Island. On the way, he encounters the Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis. On the way back, he encounters Charybdis again, this time with more devastating results. Zeus gives Odysseus no choice but to go towards the whirlpool, which ultimately swallows up his whole crew and destroys his ship, his only means home. Vogler says that in the Ordeal, there is a possibility that the hero will die and that he or she is "brought to the brink in a battle with a hostile force" (21). Odysseus drifts for days until he reaches Calypso's island. The tale of flashbacks now comes to an end and the audience is back where it began, at the Call to Adventure.

Act III always contains the return of the hero, who surpasses his final threshold, or what Campbell refers to as the "return threshold" (217). The third act consists of the Reward, the Road Back, Resurrection, and the Return with the Elixir. This is when the hero has come full circle and is able to show what he has learned throughout his journey (Vogler 204). Campbell explains that this is the point of the story, or journey, when the hero must return to the Ordinary World with his reward, whether it be a princess, the Golden Fleece, or "the runes of wisdom." Campbell continues to say that these types of rewards the hero returns with are used to save "the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (193). Odysseus uses his rewards to save people as well as his land.

After a few days with King Alcinous and Queen Arete, Odysseus is granted the unparalleled gift of returning to Ithaca. This

is Odysseus' reward for enduring the ten years it has taken him to get home. The reward is usually the definitive element before the hero begins his final attempt to return to the Ordinary World. Even though Odysseus makes it to Ithaca's soil, his mind is still on the journey, unable to adjust to his Ordinary World. This shows the significant change that Odysseus has gone through on his heroic journey. The hero must be reborn before he can recognize his Ordinary World again.

There a few times back in Ithaca in which Odysseus goes through the stage Vogler and Campbell call the Resurrection. He is asleep on the beach of Ithaca, symbolizing death, only to be awakened by Athena, which symbolizes Odysseus' rebirth. Athena disguises Odysseus as a beggar and sets him up for another rebirth later on when he meets his son, Telemachus, at Eumaeus' hut.

Odysseus' resurrections have been compared to that of Jesus Christ in the Bible, where Jesus appeared to be dead, but arose again to show the power that he possessed (Leeming 298). Odysseus shows this type of power and prominence in his meeting with Telemachus, causing Telemachus to sit in awe of the king's greatness.The Road Back is represented by Odysseus' visit to Eumaeus' farmhouse. This stage is usually placed before the climax of the story (Vogler 14). The Road Back is a quiet point in the story, allowing time for someone to motivate the hero to go and face his final test. The Road Back also displays a definitive change in the aim of the story (Vogler 195). Odysseus' stay at Eumaeus' hut is surely a slow point in the book. It is very relaxing in mood, with no huge conflict at hand. This is another point where the Ordinary World exhibits the great contrast to the world the hero had been in on his journey. The focus of the hero, Odysseus, has gone from his quest homeward, to the deaths of the suitors that occupy his palace. The climax of *The Odyssey* comes after Telemachus returns to Ithaca.

When Telemachus returns to Ithaca, Odysseus reveals that he is the young prince's father, the great King of Ithaca. Together, they plan the killings of the suitors. Books XXI and XXII comprise the climax of the story. It is in these books that Odysseus and his son take on the hundred-plus suitors, killing them all. After the reunion with Penelope, they go to Laertes' farm. A mob comes to avenge the suitors' deaths, but Zeus descends and gives an order of peace. Peace is instilled on Ithaca and Odysseus, once again, reigns as King.

The final element of the story is the Return with the Elixir, in which the hero brings something back that cures or restores the

Ordinary World he left behind before his journey (Vogler 221). It is clear when one looks back on the last books of *The Odyssey*, the most evident Elixir that is brought back to the Ordinary World is the sovereignty strength of King Odysseus' Palace. Odysseus restores this strength when he kills the suitors. Another extension of the Elixir is Odysseus' learned ability to listen to the gods. James Warren says, "He [Odysseus] knew that he had to appease the gods, but how to do so was a different matter entirely" ("A Modern Hero"). By the end of *The Odyssey*, Odysseus not only figures out how to pacify the gods, but also displays his knowledge by obeying the commands of Zeus when the Almighty demands that there be peace on Ithaca. This is a giant step for Odysseus, who swallows his previously untamed anger to appease the gods. The last example of the Elixir is the mere presence of Odysseus in Ithaca. His prominent presence gives Telemachus, Penelope, and Laertes the cure for their broken hearts.

"Most remarkable is the extent to which the Western hero archetype is to this day still a result of the molding which occurred upon the character of Odysseus so long ago" (Greene).

John D. Cox, however has questioned the integrity of Odysseus and the latter's right to be considered a hero. Cox asks, "Can a man [i.e. Odysseus] truly be called a hero when he is so accomplished at lying and deceiving? ("Introduction to Homer"). In response, it must be said that Odysseus' cunning nature and ability to tell a tale are not put in the service of evil but to allow him to survive along his journey. According to James Warren, Odysseus' myth was built on this type of craftiness and it was skills of this nature that fit him in the Athenian mould of a hero ("A Modern Hero"). Without that type of ability, which was often times envied by even the gods, he would have never lasted as long as he did.

Vogler even states that flaws are sometimes appealing to an audience, giving the hero very human qualities that everyone can relate to (Vogler 39). Odysseus is a hero for the ages. Even today the influence of *The Odyssey* and Odysseus is globally shown in film, on stage, and in literature. "The theme of a hero given up for dead, attempting to return home is found in over 125 separate mythological traditions all around the world" (Laing). The archetypes and the grand structure of the hero's journey have all originated within the works of Homer. The story-structure that Homer uses in *The Odyssey* undoubtedly displays the elements necessary to tell the tale of a hero's journey, or what has been called Odysseus' Odyssey.

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Cicero's Critique of God

by Carolyn Horn

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines an agnostic as "a person who holds the view that any ultimate reality as God is unknown and probably unknowable" (23). Cicero, Roman statesman, democrat, rhetorician and lawyer from the time of Christ, makes an argument for agnosticism that remains unassailable today. Through the questions he raises in his treatise, On the Nature of the Gods, he persuasively argues that it is impossible to empirically and logically prove God's existence, which Cicero's asserts is unknowable.

Cicero defends this belief by maintaining that we cannot comprehend the concept of an infinite, eternal God. He adds that just because there has been a long standing popular consensus that God exists, it does not follow that there is any objective and verifiable proof that worshiping God is based purely on anything beyond an emotional need.

Although Cicero states, "the greater part of mankind have united to acknowledge that which is most probable…that there are Gods" (1), he goes on to question the actual physical and metaphysical essence of the Creator. To understand Cicero's views, however, it is helpful to know some background.

The New Encyclopædia Britannica calls Cicero, who was born in 106 BC "the greatest Roman orator" (314). Although a public official and lawyer by trade, Cicero is also an accomplished writer. Cicero's interest and subsequent dissertations in philosophy stem from his early schooling. Rackham, in his introduction to De Natura Deorum, states that Cicero's teachers include "Philo of the Academy, Diodotus the Stoic, and Phaedrus the Epicurean" (x). Cicero, in the book This Was Cicero, considers his writings mere "translations" (qtd. in Haskell 299). Haskell believes the works bear more importance stating, " However lacking in originality he may have been, he [is] the channel through which the fresh wisdom of the Greeks [reaches] the Western world" (300).

Cicero's interest in religious thought may have been sparked in part by the death of his daughter, Tullia, in 46 BC. Haskell believes that Cicero experienced a great religious awakening at this time and writes Consolatio, in which he ponders the soul's capacity for eternal existence (297-298). It is a brief lapse in his Academic logic. Then, almost as abruptly, "he reverts to his ingrained

agnosticism" (Haskell 298). Not long after, Cicero produces On the Nature of the God

One main theme Cicero discusses in the book is our ability to comprehend infinity and how that relates to our understanding of God. Examples of our limited comprehension are the definitions for infinite, infinitude and infinity found in the dictionary: "infinite…something that is infinite, infinitude…1: the quality or state of being infinite, infinity…1 a: the quality of being infinite" (598).

Circular reasoning may actually be the best definition of infinity. For if God exists, surely he must have *always* existed. It is impossible to consider that nothing existed before God. But since many religions try to connect a body or physical essence to God, then He must have had a beginning and therefore an end. This argument is flawed, however, because it cannot be both. Infinite space does not have a beginning. If there is a Supreme Being, our minds cannot even begin to understand what that would encompass. We try to attach a physical form to Him in order to begin to understand, no matter how incorrect the image may be.

I agree with theories put forth in two films, 2001: A Space Odyssey and Contact. The views expressed in these movies, although placing a physical face to a creator, lean towards a God who is omniscient and endless. But this God is more likely to be an extraterrestrial based in scientific speculation instead of superstition.

In Contact, the scientist Ellie Arroway takes a journey on a transport that is built according to specifications sent to us by an unknown entity. She meets with an unidentified life force that appears to her in the form of her dead father. She realizes that he is not real. The alien explains his image by saying, "We thought this might make things easier for you." Apparently, even science believes that we cannot handle whatever truths may exist. Would we be able to listen to a little green man or any other alien force explaining our ontological reality? Of course, scientists do not definitively know what our ultimate reality is either, so they cannot present anything concrete. But the concept of infinity is present in most scientific attempts to define "God."

Cicero also explains the need to attach a physical form to God as "the Gods [are] represented in human form …the more easily to turn the minds of the ignorant from a depravity of manners, to the worship of the Gods" (27). But he then states, "is not everything that had a beginning, subject to mortality?" (11). If God is infinite, he cannot have a physical presence. But if he does not have a physical

presence, "we are utterly unable to conceive how a pure simple mind can exist without any substance annexed to it" (11). A vicious circle that has no definitive conclusion. Thus, we cannot understand infinity.

Another of Cicero's assertions is that of all the diverse cultures in the world, most have a creed that supports the belief in a Supreme Being. This can be explained by cases of mass hysteria, also. Were people in Salem, MA really witches? It is a logical error to think popular opinion is objective truth. Cicero writes, "You have said that the general assent of men of all nations and degrees, is an argument strong enough to induce us to acknowledge the being of the Gods. This is not only a weak, but a false argument…how do you know the opinions of all nations?" (22). Of course in this age of information, it is possible to get a reliable consensus. But the breadth in which these beliefs are manifest varies greatly from culture to culture and is often a basis or excuse for war. Surely God could not want to confuse people about his existence so much that they try to annihilate individuals of differing opinions. If He does exist, why not clearly reveal Himself to all people?

Most cultures adhere to the belief in God, but the exact practices and ceremonies surrounding their doctrines are based on twisted fact and superstitious folklore. In his introduction to Hume's <u>Does God Exist</u>? Ferdinand Lundberg writes:

> **Hume's findings on miracles can be reduced to a simple syllogism as follows:**
> **All reported miracles are false and fraudulent.**
> **All revealed religions are born in reported miracles**
> **Therefore, all revealed religions are born in falsity and fraudulence (xiii).**

A rather harsh assumption, but a sentiment embraced by many critics of religion. In other words, if there is no factual basis for a religious belief, then it cannot be true.

One could argue that Christianity has a factual foundation because historians have documented the existence of the man Jesus Christ. While there seems to be a general agreement that Christ is an historical figure, not all believe him to be divine. And although Jesus had a mortal mother, his conception is considered "immaculate." Obviously, a virgin cannot bear a child. But Christianity is based on ignoring this truism. As Professor Gans has observed in a classroom discussion of the subject, biblical scholarship has confirmed that this acceptance of Immaculate Conception and Jesus' Godliness became

an article of faith only many years after Christ lived and its acceptance as doctrine occurred in a climate of dispute.

Doctors can now perform in-vitro fertilization, but this procedure did not exist two thousand years ago. What are we to believe? The Bible? Catholics to Fundamentalists interpret this book in wildly different ways. During the act of communion, Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox religions believe that the Eucharist and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ; Protestants believe that the bread and wine only *represent* the same. The Jewish faith only believes the Old Testament. How can so many contradictory depictions of God exist?

Cicero writes, "there is no subject on which the learned, as well as the unlearned, differ so strenuously…opinions are so various, and so repugnant one to another, it is possible that none of them may be right, and absolutely impossible that more than one should be right" (3). These differing opinions often result in war. There is strong evidence throughout the ages that religion is a major factor in clashes between coexisting civilizations. The Irish Catholics and Protestants have been at war for centuries. Can they be fighting over their different views of the communion? Since both religions believe in God, it must be their different interpretations of their respective doctrines that cause strife. Both of their viewpoints are a matter of faith, which is objective. There is no way to prove either side so there will never be a victor unless one completely annihilates the other. Many times religion inspires or excuses ethnic cleansing—Bosnia, Germany, Rwanda, which is born of a long hatred of differing societies. But since these cultures usually all believe in one God, their religious wars end up looking like extreme feuds. This irrationality drives philosophers to try to find answers to the age-old question of God's existence.

The last area of debate concerns our emotional need to have a God to worship. Most people have moments of wondering if we are alone in the universe. Religion can help fill that void. If we believe that there is a God watching over us, then we don't feel so alone. Ellie Arroway in the movie Contact asks an extra terrestrial if there are others, hoping that the human race is not alone. The alien states that in all his journeys, everyone he contacts asks the same question. "Interesting species [earthlings]–you feel so lost, so cut-off, so alone, only you're not." He picks up a handful of sand indicating that each of the billions of tiny grains is a universe and adds, "In all of our searching, the only thing that makes the emptiness bearable is each

other." Is our feeling of detachment based upon our fear of being a singular species, or the fear of being without a caring and attentive God?

People need something to believe in and praying to God seems to solidify their faith. They hope that He is listening and will answer their prayers. But do people pray to God because their religion tells them to, or because they want to reap the rewards prayer brings? Studies prove that people heal faster and enjoy better health when they pray. Reiner G. Kremer, writing for the Colorado Chiropractic Journal, cites a study in progress at the Arthritis Treatment Center administered by Dr. Dale Matthews of Georgetown University School of Medicine. Two groups suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, all receive "the traditional Christian practice of laying on hands by members of Christian Healing Ministry" (Kremer). One group will also receive "long distance intercessory prayer" (Kremer). Preliminary results show that some participants are completely pain free and asymptomatic. The group that also gets long distance prayer [shows] showing improvement in other health areas as well (Kremer). Is the prayer really working or can this be attributed to mind over matter? The human mind has many places in need of exploration. Praying may be an invocation of powers we have not yet discovered. There is no way to know which is correct, at least not as yet.

Cicero questions whether we should pray to a God we are not certain of. He writes, "if the Gods have neither the power nor the inclination to help us…than what reason can we have to pay any adoration, or any honours, or to prefer any prayers to them?" (2). But he also worries that if we have no faith in God and do not honor Him that our moral code may breakdown (2). The Book of Job addresses this conundrum.

Job falls victim to unending hardships, sorrows and atrocities. Since he is a pious man, he cannot understand why these terrible things are happening to him. If he only knew that God had made a bet with Satan to test Job's faith. What kind of God would do such a thing? Why does he deserve our prayers? In the midst of his sorrows, Job still remains faithful to God saying, "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high" (Job 16:10-21). C. G. Jung writes, "This is perhaps the greatest thing about Job, that, faced with this difficulty, he does not doubt the unity of God" (7). I think this is the greatest folly of Job. There is no reason to pray and remain faithful to a God that would use your life in a wager with the Devil.

Bad things do happen to people, but I believe that is a result of the laws of nature. Job may be the quintessential example of what happens when you worship a God of whose actions and motives you are uncertain. Cicero's question of praying to a God that does not take an interest in us is not the problem. Judging from this book of the Bible, we are better off when God ignores us.

Many people who do not pray may be more pious than God fearing Christians are. A person's religious affiliations or practices does not make him a saint, as in the case of televangelist Jim Baker. Therefore, Cicero's worry over a general moral breakdown if people do not honor God is unwarranted. Many alleged God-fearing people will commit murder in the name of the Pro-Life movement to save the "unborn." These people attend church regularly, but do not have a problem breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Have they caused the moral corruption of the world? Not any more so than non-religious people. Pro-Life murderers are using their twisted emotional connection with God to further their political and personal beliefs, while at the same time ignoring tenets of their religion. Our emotional need to worship God may be summed up as a crutch people use to get them through life. There is no rhyme or reason to prayer or piousness, and there will never be.

Cicero writes in Moral Duties one year before his death, "We maintain…that nothing is known for certain. But probability furnishes a sufficient guide for life" (qtd. in Haskell 302). In other words, we do not have proof of God's existence, but we do have a good idea of how to live our lives according to a general moral code. Cicero believes that no one knows the answers to the age-old questions of religion and faith. Scientific proof certainly seems to be lacking in many areas of religious dogma. But who is to say that a leap of faith is not warranted? It is always healthy to question ideas and have logical discussions – what conclusion is reached is entirely up to the individual. And there is no way to prove that person wrong or right.

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Renaissance

Uses of Humor in *Don Quixote*

by Tracy Wagner

This paper will focus on the types of humor used and the role humor plays in Cervantes' Don Quixote. Specifically, it will analyze Cervantes' use of parody, satire, irony and slapstick. Cervantes had a firm grasp on what makes people laugh and why. He was influenced by several different factors while writing Don Quixote which include events in his own life, chivalric novels, and the traditions of Carnival. An analysis of Don Quixote and relevant opinions and theories will demonstrate these points.

Don Quixote has received much praise since Cervantes wrote it nearly 400 years ago. This novel, which has been translated into over 60 languages, has been a best seller since its debut and is said to be the second best selling book in history. Professor Carroll B. Johnson notes that "professionals of literature, and that includes both writers and critics, consider Don Quixote at the center of the history of the novel" (19). Professor Johnson notes, in fact, that the whole history of the novel can be considered "a variation on the theme of Don Quixote" (qtd. in Johnson 19). It has been called a tale of moral excellence in a depraved world, a story of one man's struggle against the human condition, as well as a cautionary tale of idealism versus realism. The most striking feature of the story, however, is arguably its humor. It is, simply, a very funny book. It is not surprising that Miguel Cervantes is recognized as a great humorist throughout the world.

Critical praise for the book's humor has been near universal. For instance, Thomas Roscoe, a 19th century English writer said that "no work in any language ever exhibited a more delicate or a more lively satire, combined with a richer vein of invention, and wrought with happier success" (Ed. Person 134). The American poet and essayist James Russell Lowell declared that he could "think of no other book so thoroughly good natured and good humored" (Ed. Person 137). Lowell considered Don Quixote "the most perfect character ever drawn" (59). Author Samuel Putnam notes that Sancho Panza has been said to be "the most humorous creation in the whole range of fiction" (qtd. in Putnam 24), and that Don Quixote is the first comedy that bases its humor on "the incongruous clash of reality and

appearance" (32). Even King Phillip III of Spain, upon spying a young man walking down the street roaring with laughter, was moved to remark, "Either that young man has taken leave of his senses, or he is reading Don Quixote" (qtd. in Johnson 25).

What is known about the man who created this literary masterpiece? Miguel de Cervantes was born in 1547 and died in 1615. His early adulthood was filled with excitement and danger. He fought with the Spanish navy to defeat the Turks in 1571 and sustained a grievous injury that rendered his left hand useless for the rest of his life. In 1575 while on a ship bound for Spain, he and a brother were kidnapped and sold into slavery in Algiers. Several daring escape attempts failed, and he was eventually ransomed in 1580.

Later on, in stark contrast, Cervantes' life was ordinary, even dull. He was a chronic debtor employed in a series of tedious jobs. Inept bookkeeping landed him in trouble with his employers; he even spent some time in jail for inconsistencies in his work. His attempts at writing drama were equally disastrous. By the time he finally met success with Don Quixote, he was already well into middle age.

Cervantes obviously had some affinity for his befuddled knight. The sequence of life events is reversed, however, between creator and character. Don Quixote's life was quiet and boring until middle age, when he undertook his new calling and found himself constantly enmeshed in harrowing predicaments. Both writer and character were unsuccessful in their respective endeavors, with the knight faring even worse than Cervantes. Don Quixote's attempts to right wrongs and correct abuses were not merely unsuccessful, they were unmitigated catastrophes.

What makes Don Quixote such a funny book? Much of the humor in the novel comes from Don Quixote's madness and his inability to recognize the truth as it really is. Reality is dull; Don Quixote's way of seeing the world, however misguided, is more exciting than the truth. When faced with a phenomenon he cannot explain, like the windmills-turned-giants-turned-windmills-again, he resorts to blaming the transformation on enchanters (Cervantes 69). These enchanters, who also stole all of his beloved books, constantly torment him and attempt to thwart him in his efforts to dispense justice.

According to Ian Watt, these mischievous enchanters are among the "various devious strategies whereby the hero tries to protect his delusions from the realities that would expose them" (73). Don Quixote believes what he wants to believe, regardless of the

physical evidence that is right in front of him. Don Quixote is so deeply out of touch with reality in matters of chivalry and so involved in his own fantasy world, he is spared the embarrassment of knowing that people are laughing at him and see him as a fool (65).

There is also powerful humor in the witty repartee that Sancho and Don Quixote engage in with each other and people they encounter. When Sancho promises to deliver a letter to Dulcinea and beat an answer out of her if necessary, Don Quixote notes "as far as I can see, you are no saner than I am" (213). Sancho desires to know why Don Quixote has gone mad. Other knights had been provoked into madness by outside forces. For what reason has Don Quixote turned mad? Don Quixote replies that "a knight errant who turns mad for a reason deserves neither merit nor thanks. The thing is to do it without cause…" (203). Don Quixote admits to being mad, but he becomes enraged if anyone else suggests that he is mad.

Sancho tires of Don Quixote's insistence that the barber's basin is really the famous helmet of Malandrino and exclaims, "a man who persists in saying a thing like that must be cracked in the brain." Don Quixote replies, "you have less brains than any squire has or ever had in the whole world" and goes on to say that Sancho should know by now that they are being followed by enchanters (Cervantes 204). In "Sancho's Misadventures," Sancho has fallen into a hole, and Don Quixote happens to ride by and hear Sancho call for help. They had been separated for a while, and Don Quixote feared that Sancho was dead and his soul was calling from purgatory. Sancho reassures his master that "I've never been dead in all the days of my life" (826). When Sancho, as governor, speaks to a constituent whose wife is dead, he dryly observes, "if your wife hadn't died, or been killed, you wouldn't be a widower now" (770). In spite of their mutual bantering, insulting, teasing, and threatening, however, their bond stays strong.

Cervantes uses many humorous devices in Don Quixote with tremendous success. Among these devices is parody, which mocks a style of work for comedic purposes. Parody is an absurd imitation of a school of writing, exposing the over-reliance on tired precepts and the literary weaknesses of the authors. However, to write a parody, the author must have a true appreciation of the original work that he is mocking.

Examples of parody abound in Don Quixote, starting with Cervantes' prologue. In it, he laments the fact that he is not acquainted with dukes and ladies who could write introductory sonnets for him; he is unfamiliar with the Latin phrases that he longs

to use in order to sound more scholarly; he is not well acquainted enough with Holy Scripture to quote it (26-27). In this manner, he parodies the bombastic rhetoric of his compatriot and rival, the poet Lope de Vega, who was courted by the rich and famous and known for his penchant for self-glorification (Laskier Martin 130).

Cervantes parodies the master-servant relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho. Sancho is not the typical, humble servant who acquiesces to all of his master's needs. He is outspoken, argumentative, verbally abuses Don Quixote, and complains constantly.

Don Quixote's speech also falls victim of Cervantes' sense of the ridiculous. In contrast to the eloquent speeches used to compelling effect in the chivalric novels, Don Quixote is sometimes so verbose that people cannot understand what he is saying.

Cervantes in the novel parodies the notion that education equals wisdom. When Don Quixote attacks the windmills because he thinks they are giants, Sancho warns him to be careful, telling him that they are, in fact, windmills. Don Quixote haughtily replies that Sancho has no experience with adventure and therefore does not know what he is talking about (Cervantes 68). Don Quixote feels he is learned in the ways of adventure because he has read about such things in the chivalric novels of which he is so fond. He fails to recognize that one cannot live vicariously through books; one must live through an experience in order to know the truth about it.

The devices of irony and satire are closely related and are prominent in Don Quixote as well. In satire, human vice and folly are censored by means of derision. This is usually meant to bring about a social improvement. In the opinions of some critics, the entire story of Don Quixote is principally a satire aiming to expose the folly of chivalric novels. However, Cervantes himself said he did not use satire, seeing it as cruel and "unworthy of a generous heart" (qtd. in Bell 185).

Irony as a literary device means that the intended meaning is the opposite of what is expressed. There is a noticeable incongruity between what is expected and the actual result. The object of irony need not always be a person. For instance, irony can also target attitudes, beliefs, or social customs. Don Quixote is an example of the ironic victim. In this role, Don Quixote is unaware that the world is not really how he sees it.

According to John J. Allen, there are three requirements for the role of the ironic victim. The first requirement is that there are two

levels to the situation – the victim's view and the observer's view. Secondly, there is a contradiction between what the victim thinks and what the observer knows. Thirdly, the victim is not aware of the observer's reality based point of view (59-60). There are many kinds of ironical situations in Don Quixote.

The irony starts immediately with the narrator, who insists that this is a true story, but does not even know the hero's real name (Cervantes 31). In another episode, Don Quixote accepts without question the innkeeper's assertion that he was also a knight-adventurer at one time in his life. The innkeeper rattles off places he has been to and things he has done, seducing women and cheating juveniles among them (41-42). The innkeeper's actions are the antithesis of the chivalric code, but because his eloquent discourse conforms to the chivalric style of speech, Don Quixote listens respectfully.

Don Quixote insists he is imitating the heroes of the chivalric novels, but Cervantes places him on the side of the authors and readers. "Like them, he is vain, pompous, and gullible," and concerned more with appearance than with substance (Allen 63). In "An Adventure on Leaving the Inn," upon hearing the cries of a Shepard boy being beaten, Don Quixote's first thought is only for himself and his own glory – he thanks God for the opportunity to mete out justice (47). The pain the boy is suffering in inconsequential.

Upon introducing the servant Maritornes, Cervantes describes her unattractive face, followed up by the qualifier "But she made up for her other shortcomings by her bodily allurements…" (118). He then goes on to describe her even more unattractive body.

Later in the story, Sancho has to once more leave his wife to rejoin Don Quixote. Though eager to leave, he feels guilty about abandoning his family again. When his wife asks him why he is so cheerful, Sancho reveals his mixed feelings by replying "If it pleased God, I should be very glad, wife, not to be as happy as I seem" (497).

At one point, Don Quixote and Sancho meet up with galley slaves, criminals who are on their way to be punished. Questioning one of the guards about who the slaves to, he is told that they are the king's property. Don Quixote, however asserts his belief that the men should go free and answer only to God for their crimes. He attacks the guard, and the slaves escape. Don Quixote, who has pledged his loyalty to the king, is now in the tenuous position of having committed treason (178, 258).

Another form of humor that Cervantes uses is slapstick. Slapstick is "physical comedy, characterized by broad humor, absurd

situations and vigorous, usually violent action" (brittancia.com). The humor can be vulgar and often involves bodily functions. Cervantes employs slapstick when Don Quixote concocts his famous balsam that can cure any physical injury including being cut in half at the waist.

The balsam causes him to vomit, but after a few hours of rest, he feel restored. When Sancho swallows the mixture, he becomes so sick that he "[empties] himself at both ends" (129). Don Quixote notes that the pain Sancho suffers is the result of his not being a knight. The ever-practical Sancho then demands to know why Don Quixote gave him the balsam, knowing that only a knight could take it (128).

More scatological humor is used when, in the aftermath of a battle, Don Quixote asks Sancho to peer into his mouth and count his remaining teeth. As Sancho does this, the rest of the balsam in the knight's system comes up, and Don Quixote vomits all over Sancho. Repulsed by the smell and taste, Sancho follows suit by vomiting on his master (Cervantes 139).

In "A Tremendous Exploit Achieved," Sancho has to relieve some gas pains. Quietly lowering his trousers, he tries to relieve himself as noiselessly as possible. Unfortunately, the knight has a keen sense of smell and hearing. Don Quixote pinches his nose shut and offers the opinion that Sancho must be frightened "because you smell more now, and not of ambergris." Don Quixote tells Sancho to move away and chastises him for not having more respect for his master (156).

Slapstick does not always have to be offensive. In one hilarious episode, the servant Maritornes enters a communal sleeping room to meet up with her lover for the night. Don Quixote thinks she has come to see him and grasps her arm. Her lover comes over to rescue her and strikes the knight. The bed cannot support so much weight and crashes to the floor. The innkeeper wakes up and searches for the source of the commotion. Maritornes, afraid of being caught by her employer, climbs into bed next to Sancho. Sancho, feeling a weight on him, thinks he is having a nightmare and flails about wildly, striking Maritornes. Maritornes returns the blows and "the two of them [start] the most stubborn and comical scuffle in the world."

Maritornes' lover attempts to come to her rescue again. The innkeeper follows with the intention of beating Maritornes, whom he suspects of instigating the whole messy affair. The innkeeper's light crashes to the floor and is extinguished, leaving the combatants to land blows in complete blackness. An officer of the Ancient and Holy

Brotherhood of Toledo who is staying at the inn intervenes in the fight. The first thing he does upon entering the room is to fall over the unconscious Don Quixote (Cervantes 123-124). This frenzied activity leaves the reader dizzy.

How did Cervantes use his gifts to make people laugh? According to John Morreall, Cervantes is successful at the three techniques that a humorist must follow: he engage[s] the interest of those he wants to amuse and thus [has] some control over their train of thought"; he keeps us grounded in reality by taking fantastic situations and putting them in the real world; and he continually surprises us by keeping us guessing as to the outcome of each new adventure (82-83).

Cervantes, with his desire to entertain his readers, knew that the importance of humor and laughter in our lives cannot be overstated. According to Bell, "humor is the head that perceives the exquisite comedy of life and the heart that feels its poignant sadness. Without a deep tragic sense there can be no humor, without some inkling of comedy there can be no wit; humor embraces both" (183). Humor bridges the extremes of the human condition. It covers the range of emotion from tragedy to comedy. Adrienne Laskier Martin observes that "humor and its manifestations are of profound and vital significance to both social history and literary studies; without knowledge of what makes us laugh and why, our understanding of human nature and of literature in any given time and place is incomplete" (1). What is considered funny differs vastly from culture to culture and even within a single culture. Appreciation of humor also varies among individuals.

In his book Taking Laughter Seriously, Morreall identifies three theories of humor that help explain why we laugh and what we find humorous. All three theories apply to the humor used in Don Quixote.

The Superiority Theory states that we laugh at people whom we believe are inferior to us. A person who thinks he is wiser or more virtuous than he really is inspires mirth. Don Quixote is a perfect example of this. He praises himself and his heroic deeds constantly, even though he professes to dislike compliments (Cervantes 257). We laugh at failure, especially when the person striving for the goal does not even realize he has failed. Don Quixote proves this many times, such as when he believes he has saved the Shepard boy from a beating when in reality, after the knight's intervention, the boy receives an even more severe beating (49-50). However, our laughter is tempered

with affection. We find Don Quixote's inflated sense of self-importance humorous but, because he is a well meaning but deluded old man, we also feel benevolent toward him. Henri Bergson, a 20th century French philosopher, takes a darker view of the Superiority Theory: "laughter is the corrective punishment inflicted by society upon the unsocial individual: 'In laughter we always find an unavowed intention to humiliate and consequently to correct our neighbor' " (qtd. in brittanica.com). According to this pessimistic opinion, people laugh at Don Quixote because they believe that by humiliating him, they can persuade him to conform to society's norms.

In the Incongruity Theory, amusement is caused by our reaction to something that is unexpected, illogical or inappropriate to the circumstances. The world is supposed to be an orderly place where we can expect certain patterns to be followed and specific circumstances to have anticipated outcomes. We laugh when something out of the ordinary occurs and our presumed pattern is not followed. There is a marked contrast between what we expect to see and what really happens. This theory gives an explanation of irony. One of the simplest kinds of incongruity that makes us laugh is when something is not what we expect it to be. A knight is supposed to be young and handsome, clad in shiny armor and sitting astride a powerful steed. Instead, we are presented with an old man wearing rusted, moldy armor, sitting on a sad caricature of a noble horse, an emaciated old nag that is covered with sores and never moves faster than a slow walk. A knight is also supposed to be selfless, putting the needs of helpless individuals before his own; it is for this purpose that Don Quixote supposedly became a knight. Not only does he actually worsen situations for the people he is supposed to help, his main reason for becoming a knight is to win glory for himself, which is not a chivalric ideal. He often speaks of his great deeds and valorous exploits and dreams of the stories that will be written about him, even as his narrator makes fun of him, claiming that the hot sun beating down on him "would have been enough to turn his brain, if he had any" (Cervantes 37).

The Relief Theory views laughter as a means of venting nervous energy. A person may enter a situation with tension already built up; the laughter then releases it. On the other hand, the situation itself may build up energy that needs to be expended. This type of laughter, like crying, has a cathartic effect. Throughout the story of Don Quixote, we feel a sense of relief that we are not treated as cruelly as the knight and squire are. We are reassured that, unlike Don

Quixote, our mental facilities are intact. Even though each new adventure leaves our poor hero and his sidekick battered and bruised, we laugh with relief that they have lived through another perilous experience. On these occasions, Morreall notes, it is morally acceptable to cause minor pain for a laugh.

All of these theories have as a basic principle a sudden change. We are caught off guard by what has happened and the end result is a pleasant "psychological shift" which makes us feel good and provokes laughter (Morreall 39).

Provoking laughter is what Cervantes had in mind when he wrote Don Quixote. The humor in Don Quixote has helped make it an enduring literary classic, appreciated and enjoyed by readers throughout history. Cervantes' ability to know what makes people laugh is what places him above most other humorists. Basic aspects of humanity do not change; Cervantes addressed this fundamental core of human nature without being restrained by fashions and time periods. Cervantes always insisted that his primary aim in writing Don Quixote was to entertain his readers. Even if that were the only element in his novel, his success would still have been immeasurable.

Also influencing Cervantes in writing Don Quixote were the carnivals that were popular in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Celebrations such as the Feast of Fools and The Feast of the Ass featured a character known as the clown-king. During the clown-king's short-lived period of rule, Gorkfle reports, "his madness [freed] him from social restraints and [allowed] him to blot out official reason" (20). During the chaos that reigned during Carnival, almost anything was permissible, including aggression. At his unmasking, the clown king would be beaten and subjected to verbal abuse. Don Quixote shares some of the irrationality of the clown-king; however, his madness is confined to matters of chivalry and errant knighthood. The knight also suffers beatings stemming from his interference in other people's business. The verbal abuse he receives usually concerns his state of mental health. Other people he encounters allow him to live out his fantasies, if only so they can ridicule him.

In another tradition of Carnival, the servant was temporarily equal to the master. In "His Meeting with the Goatherds," Cervantes depicts this tradition when the knight insists the reluctant Sancho join him and share a meal. According to Professor Gorfkle, Sancho often inadvertently follows other Carnival traditions. The servant "often frustrates his master's desires" either accidentally because he is clumsy or deliberately because he wishes to prevent an action.

For instance, Sancho ties Rocinante's forelegs together to prevent Don Quixote from leaving. Additionally, the servant makes fun of his master behind his back, thereby reducing the master's positive influence on the audience. Sancho routinely mimics Don Quixote's grandiose speech and wonders aloud about his mental imbalance. Finally, the servant is usually punished for the misdeeds of the master. When Don Quixote's deranged perspective frustrates and angers the people they encounter, Sancho usually bears the brunt of the physical brutality that should rightly be directed at his master. Sancho suffers from beatings, a blanket tossing, and even the loss of Dapple, his beloved donkey (28).

Another tradition of carnival was the hanging of a dummy in the town square, a target of persecution (Gorfkle 54). Cervantes used a similar motif in "The Mule Boy and Other Matters." The innkeeper's daughter, pretending to be in love with Don Quixote, and the servant Maritornes trick Don Quixote into standing on Rocinante's back so the daughter can touch his hand through a hole in the loft. Maritornes ties his wrists and both women depart, leaving Don Quixote stranded overnight. The next morning, some travelers arrive at the inn. Rocinante makes a move towards one of their horses, leaving Don Quixote dangling helplessly in mid-air (Cervantes 391-396).

Cervantes also used a gimmick that was popular in 16th century Italian comedy, contrasting two main characters, a tall, thin man and a short, fat man. Lowell points out that contrast is vital to humor - that a humorist should be a "two-idea" man (42). Aubrey Bell agrees, but adds that the humorous mind, which insists on seeing both sides of every story, is doomed in our "one track mind" world (197).

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Cervantes On the Nature of Individuality

by Robert Jablonsky

Although a one of the greatest, if not the greatest comic novel ever written, *Don Quixote*, by Miguel Cervantes is also a masterpiece of serious ideas. One of them, in fact, concerns the place of an individual in society.

Indeed, Cervantes argues implicitly through *Don Quixote* that an individual is shaped by forces in a complex process. Cervantes believes this for three reasons. Firstly, he presents human nature as a very powerful factor in creating one's personality. Characters in *Don Quixote* reflect basic aspects of human nature, like selfishness or a need to be a part of a group, which have a tremendous influence on their deeds.

Secondly, Cervantes also believes in the strong ascendancy of society over people. Society creates norms and values, and expects one to live accordingly, where every deviance is fought. The power of society can create, and then integrate or alienate an individual as is clearly presented in *Don Quixote*. Thirdly, Cervantes puts a strong emphasis on the strength of a person's individualism. The more individualistic, the less one is shaped by society. The less individualistic, the more society molds the person.

These points may be amply demonstrated through an analysis of *Don Quixote* itself and also through the views of important critics. To best appreciate this novel, however, some background concerning its origins and its relationship to the author's preoccupations should be mentioned.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra lived from 1547-1615. He was an author, known and celebrated throughout Europe, and a soldier whose deeds contributed much to his country's greatness. Even a brief summary of his life gives an idea of where some of the inspirations for a character of Don Quixote came from. Cervantes spent much of his youth as a soldier, fighting against the Turks. During the fight at Lepanto he got wounded badly, but he treated it as a reason for pride and glory. He was kidnapped and sold as a slave by the Moors to Algiers. When he was finally ransomed, he returned to Spain to begin career as a writer, but experienced little success before the publication of *Don Quixote* in 1604 ("Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de" 1). This

novel earned him renown but it did not bring him wealth, or even comfort.

The story of *Don Quixote* has been the subject of at least sixteen operas, ballets, and even Broadway musical, and any number of paintings and sculptures of the imaginary Don (2). The list of novelists who have admired and been influenced by Cervantes' masterpiece is practically endless. This is mainly related to novel's contributions to literature. Cervantes, as a first,

created fully developed characters with lively dialogue, and mixed characters from all classes of society and many ways of life in a single work. He was also one of the first to treat in depth the theme of a hero who sets out to reinvent his own identity by pure force of will. And the theme of the search for identity has continued to fascinate novelists and their readers ever since (Canavaggio 214).

In *Don Quixote* Cervantes explores one's personality being strongly influenced by human nature. He makes this point in several places. One for example, occurs just at the beginning. After all, the main purpose of all Don Quixote's brave deeds was to earn the love of an idealized woman and become famous. This shows that people's deeds are often influenced by human selfishness. What is more, Don Quixote uses the weakness of human nature as a tool to get himself a squire. He "told [Sancho Panza], …, that he ought to feel well disposed to come with him, for some time or another an adventure might occur that would win him in the twinkling of an eye some isle, of which he would leave him governor" (Cervantes 66). These examples prove that when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza undertake to fight evil, they have their own profits in mind. And I believe that many of us have too. We may not be fighting the dragons and giants, but we struggle at work, in traffic, at school or in courts. Often, we accomplish virtuous deeds, keeping our own interest in mind. For instance, when we contribute to charity, we may want to help the poor, but we are also interested in tax deductions. And when we stay at work after hours, besides helping the company meet its goals, we might expect to be promoted for our extra efforts. Thus, the legend of Don Quixote lives on and so do many of his successors who often unconsciously "save the shepherd boy" to gain pride and fame for themselves.

Self-interest is in fact the key point of rational choice theory. This is a frame theory of microsociology, which seeks to understand how and why people make their choices. The social philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, says "that when a man deliberates whether he shall do a thing or not to do it, he does nothing else but consider whether it be better for himself to do it or not to do it" (qtd. in Stark 65). That means that choices are guided by one's preferences and tastes within the limits of information available. In effect, the individual chooses what he sees as most beneficial or as maximized profit. In other words, people choose what they expect to be most rewarding, whether the reward is love, fame, a better life, money, or an island.

On the other hand, sociologists stress that most of what we want can only be obtained through others. Here the exchange theory comes into play, which states that through social interactions, the parties trade tangible or intangible benefits with the expectation that all parties will benefit (66). Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are perfect examples of those theories. Don Quixote needs a squire to fulfill his picture of a noble knight, and Sancho sees a great opportunity to profit from Don's deeds, and get an island. They both interact with each other in order to benefit, and to satisfy their human self-interest.

As mentioned, most of what people want can only be obtained through others. This is especially true, when we explore another aspect of human nature -- the need to be a part of a group. We can only fulfill this need through others. Let's take a look at Don Quixote and how he satisfies the need of belonging.

Quixote, in order to be a part of society, creates himself a role, where he is a noble knight spreading good deeds and freeing people from evil. It does not matter that the reality is different, and he gets mocked for his acts. What matters is that he feels needed, which gives him a sense of belonging to society. The need to belong to a group is so strong, that sometimes it can even trigger tragic behavior. Based on this notion, French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, developed a thesis on the causes of man's suicide. He says that suicide reflects weakness, or lack of a social bond between individual and society, not a weakness of an individual's character or personality. He believes that there are two types of suicide caused by human's need to be a part of a group: *anomic*, which is caused by rapidly changing society where people cannot keep up; and *egoistic*, which is caused by not having a group to relate to (Stark 6). Durkheim proves that human nature plays very a important role in complex process of creating the individual.

Cervantes also explores society's influence on people. He sees society as a powerful factor in shaping one's personality. He points it out in several ways. One, for example, is that Don Quixote is created by society. First, Quixote buries "himself in his books [and spends] the nights reading from twilight till daybreak and the days from dawn till dark; and so from little sleep and much reading, his brain [dries] up and he [loses] his wits" (Cervantes 32).

Then, imperfect society gives Quixote a reason to act. Books - the cultural product of society - make his mind vulnerable to believe, that he can really save the world from evil. So he starts bringing justice to society. For example, when Don Quixote attempts to help the shepherd boy, he makes the countryman swear to leave the boy alone

and to pay his past wages. Certain of the wealthy man's trustworthiness, Quixote rides off, after which the countryman beats the shepherd boy nearly to death (47). Don Quixote's grasp of reality is so abstract, that it ends nearly tragically for the poor boy. Although the knight has noble intentions, he is not respected by society. As a result, he gets mocked and treated as deviant.

Society expects people to live according to its norms and values, and everyone who does not conform is frowned upon. Thus, the poor knight often finds "himself so vilely treated by the very men for whom he had done so much" (181). Quixote does not choose to be deviant; society defines him as one for the term deviance is relative. Sociologists call this approach a labeling theory. The process through which a person becomes labeled as deviant depends on the reactions of others toward nonconforming behavior.

For example, the first time a child acts up in class, it may be owing to high spirits or bad mood. What happens next depends on how others interpret the act. If teachers and other children label the child a troublemaker, and if he accepts this definition as part of his self-concept, then he may take on the role of a troublemaker and become a deviant (Stark 192).

Society's ascendancy over people is not revealed only through creation. Society also makes a use of it. For instance, Durkheim says that deviance contributes to society. It affirms our cultural values and norms, and clarifies moral boundaries. After all, in order to understand and value good, we have to see what is bad. Responding to deviance promotes social unity. People typically respond to serious crimes with collective outrage. And besides this, deviance encourages social change pointing out alternatives to status quo (198).

Perhaps that is exactly what Cervantes has in mind: Don Quixote as a tool to social change. Unfortunately, it takes more than a lifetime of someone like Quixote to change society, but the hope is that there will be others like him, willing to change themselves first. And when they change, " anything which depends on [them] will also be modified. Through [their] deeds and [their] example … that better world [they wish] to revive will necessarily come into existence" (Maravall 84). But it is not easy to win with society. Many individuals are crushed before any change comes.

We are all influenced by society, but the results are not the same. According to Cervantes, it depends on the strength of a person's individualism. The more individualistic, the less one is shaped by society. The less individualistic, the more society molds a

person. Cervantes exhibits his points through character of Don Quixote and his wrestling with society. As critic Americo Castro says, "Don Quixote … [stands] resolutely upon [his] firm consciousness of the desire to live as individual: 'I know who I am,' replies Don Quixote, 'each of us is the maker of his own fortune'; which is not didacticism superimposed upon the work, but rather an aspect of its very structure" (147).

Cervantes displays Quixote as a strong individual. Although the character is mocked and beaten many times, he always accepts it with pride and dignity. He even survives the sophisticated salon of the Duchess and her lecherous ladies, where they play cruel jokes on him, and where he appears more pathetic, more ridiculous, and more disarmed than never before (Cervantes 729). The knight's individualism is so strong, that in spite of pressure from society, he does not give up his values.

The strength of an individual determines person's character and self. In sociological terms, self consists of two parts: the *I* and the *me*. The *I* is the spontaneous, creative part of the self; the *me* is the self as social object, the part of the self that responds to others' expectations. The self is enormously complex, and we are often not fully aware of our own motives, capabilities, and characteristics. The self that we are aware of is our self-concept. It consists of thoughts and feelings about our personality and social roles. The self and self-concept are social products; they are developed through social relationships (Stark 70). Charles Cooley provides a description of how we develop our self-concept. He says that we learn to view ourselves as we think others view us. He calls this the *looking-glass self*. According to Cooley, we imagine how we appear to others and how others judge our appearance, and then we develop feelings about and responses to these judgments (69). In other words, whether we have a good or bad opinion about ourselves heavily depends on what others communicate back to us.

Don Quixote represents a very individualistic self. The *I*, spontaneous and creative part of his self, is stronger than *me* part. Thus, " he is seen as an example of modern rather than medieval man, creating his individual personality with the strength of his own will and imagination rather than carrying out the role that society had defined for him" (Johnson 27).

In conclusion, the process shaping an individual is indeed very so complex that social scientists often debate this topic and find it is

ultimately impossible to decide which factor has the greatest influence on an individual.

I believe, that the closest interpretation is Sigmund Freud's theory of ego, id, and superego. Those three parts, constantly interacting with each other, compound into a human being. Ego represents part of the mind that connects a person to the outside world. Because it can think and act, it is a conscious self. Id is a part of the mind that is completely unconscious, but has needs and desires. Superego is the moral self or conscience, the part of the mind, that is partly conscious, and that rewards and punishes us by our feelings of guilt or rightness, according to our respect for the rules of society ("Freud, Sigmund" 1). Thus, ego, id, and superego are equivalent to individual, human nature, and society.

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Age of Enlightenment

Jonathan Swift: Proto Feminist

by Krystie Podobinsky

Jonathan Swift in his writing often mentions the female body with repugnance. He very often dwells with exaggerated horror both at the sight of a woman's body performing its normal bodily functions or and at the sight of a nude female who falls short of the cold perfection of statuary. Many have concluded from this that he hated women and considered them inferior to men.

A closer examination of his work, though shows this to be a misconception. In fact, Swift perceives women to be on an essentially equal plane with men in three different areas. These areas are as follows: social accountability, educational abilities, and purpose of existence. Actually, considering the century in which Swift lived, his views are extraordinary, and differ drastically from the views of most of his contemporaries.

Jonathan Swift's writings convey that he believed that women should hold a larger role in English society. Proof of these ideals became evident after examination of Swift's works. Swift did not believe, as his society did, that a woman should not be educated. Swift also dismissed the idea that a woman should be valued on her physical appearance, rather than her actions as a human being. To fully understand the views that Swift exhibited the reader must have some background on Swift himself and women's role in society in the 18th century.

The general view of women in the 18th century was that the sole purpose of a woman's existence was that of an object to be enjoyed by men (McGrath 27). Women were necessary for procreation, reproduction, and their domestic abilities. Women were valued only for their appearances and physical attributes. It was a common belief that the education of a woman was unnecessary, based on the role she would play in society (McGrath 27). Despite the presence of female rule in England during that time period, these perceptions of women were common place (Ehrenpreis 250).

One might argue that Jonathan Swift's opinions on the role of women would be considered chauvinistic and sexist by today's standards; however, in eighteenth century England his opinions differed drastically from those of his peers. In examining Swift's

writings, one quickly notices a theme that is repeated continually.

Jonathan Swift believed that *people* typically behaved immorally.

Swift did not judge men and women separately for their actions, but looked at them as equally contributing factors in a society that was plagued

by immorality, injustice, and corruption. Swift makes the assessment in "A Voyage to Laputa" that the human qualities that should be of value to a man are "honor, justice, wisdom, and learning" (Swift 141). In addition, the qualities that should be of value to a woman are constancy, chastity, good sense, and good nature (Swift 141). However, Swift is able to illustrate that the qualities upon which most men and women instead tend to place the most importance on are "wit, valor, politeness, appeal to the opposite sex, amount of sexual conquests, beauty, and skill in dressing" (Swift 141).

Swift valued chastity and virtue as necessary attributes of women. In "A Voyage to Brobdinag" Swift makes this statement which reiterates his displeasure at the behavior exhibited by young women:

> That which gave me [the] most uneasiness among [the] Maids of [Honor] … was to see them use me without any manner of ceremony, like a creature who had no sort of consequence. For they would strip themselves to the skin, and put on their smocks in my presence, while I was placed directly before their naked bodies …(95)

Swift uses the Maids of Honor to represent women who disregard their own virtue and disregard the opinion that is formed when an honorable man witnesses their behavior. To further make his point Swift writes " the handsomest among these Maids of [Honor], a pleasant, [frolicsome] girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride one of her nipples..." (95-96). The sexual reference and the attention to the girl's age, signify the lack of morals instilled in some young women of Swift's time. Swift makes examples of these women, not so much as to degrade them, but to condemn their behavior.

It is difficult to criticize Jonathan Swift's ideals regarding women, when two hundred years later these same issues are still relevant today. Promiscuity, out of wed lock births, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are some of the chronic problems the youth of our society presently face every day. It seems quite evident that Jonathan Swift pointed out a lack of concern among young women of the 1700's, which has blossomed into a global problem that has spanned centuries.

Let's now turn our focus towards Jonathan Swift's views concerning the education of women. Jonathan Swift was himself an educator of women. Swift was considered part of an "enlightened social [circle]," which included Sir William Temple (Ruffner 421). Temple's social circle was one that believed in the education of

women and an expanded role for women in English society (Ruffner 421). It may have been this influence that led to Jonathan Swift's beliefs concerning women. Temple was a distant relative of Swift's mother, as well as a prominent member of society. Swift was employed by Temple as a secretary and also resided in Temple's home.

While residing with Temple, Swift met a young woman named Esther Johnson, whom he referred to as Stella ("Jonathan Swift" 443). Stella was the daughter of a housekeeper, also employed by William Temple. Swift was given the job of tutoring Stella when she was a young girl and he a young man. It has been speculated that Stella became Swift's mistress later in life; however, they were not romantically involved when he became her educator ("Jonathan Swift" 443).

In a society that deemed the education of women unnecessary, it is a remarkable fact that Swift took on the responsibility of educating Esther Johnson. In addition to tutoring Stella, Swift also acted as a tutor to a young woman named Esther Van Homrigh, whom he would refer to as Vanessa ("Jonathan Swift" 444). Swift's opinions regarding the education of women are restated time and again throughout Gulliver's Travels. For example, in "A Voyage to Lilliput," Swift writes:

> **… The young ladies [are] as much ashamed of being cowards and fools, as the men: and despise all personal ornaments beyond decency and cleanliness; neither did I perceive any difference in their education, made by their difference of sex…(43)**

The meaning of this statement is quite clear and it proves that Jonathan Swift was a supporter of educating women.

One might argue that Swift sometimes writes that a female's education should differ from a man's in that it includes topics relating to domestic life. However, during the 18th century, it was normal practice for a woman to run the household, and a man to take care of the family's financial well being. In the 1700's it was extremely rare for a woman to hold a job outside of the home. It was also commonly believed among men that women need not be educated at all, because their main purposes in society were to tend to domestic dealings, procreation, and reproduction (McGrath 27).

Another fine example of Swift's views, concerning the equality of women, lies within his personal relationships; proof of which can be found in his personal correspondence. An example of this can be

found in Swift's comment in a letter written to a young lady. Swift writes, "I am ignorant of any one quality that is amiable in a man which is not equally so in a woman…so there is no quality whereby women endeavor to distinguish themselves from men for which they are not just so much the worse" (Ehrenpreis 250).

The largest collection of Swift's personal letters, are now known as the Journal to Stella which is comprised of letters that Swift wrote to Esther Johnson between 1710 and 1713 ("Jonathan Swift" 445).

Throughout his letters to Stella, Swift treats her as an equal, making no allowances for lack of intellectual capabilities, and trusting her to follow his direction and meanings (Ehrenpreis 260). Swift often sent Stella political pamphlets, and in Journal to Stella he can be quoted as telling her, "…I find I can write politics to you much easier than to any body alive…" (97). It can be argued that Swift would not say anything negative to Stella, because she may have been his mistress. It was rumored that the two were secretly married, although the exact relationship between Stella and Swift has never been defined. However, throughout his letters to Stella, the general feelings expressed are that of friendship; thus Swift would have had no reason to falsify his admiration of her. After her death in 1728, Swift stated that Stella was "the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I or any other person, was ever blessed with" (Journal to Stella v). He also praised her for her knowledge of history and philosophy, and her understanding of government (Ehrenpreis 260).

These examples not only reinforce Swift's opinions regarding the education of women, but they also give us the impression that Swift was capable of admiring a woman for her intellect and her achievements. In addition, these examples show that Swift personally believed that both sexes were equal, in that they should be judged based on their qualities as a person, and not on their sex alone.

The final area which sets Swift's views apart from those that were accepted in 18th century English society, are his views concerning a woman's purpose in existence. As noted earlier, the majority of men believed that the sole purpose of a woman was for a male's sexual enjoyment, child bearing, and domestic functions (McGrath 27). Consequently, women were valued for their physical attributes and their appearance. Men placed such importance on these things that vanity and jealousy became rampant among women. Jonathan Swift continually dismissed the importance that men placed on a woman's physical beauty throughout his writings. Likewise, he criticized

women for their behavior regarding their own appearance, and the lengths they would go to for male attention.

Indeed, in "A Voyage to Laputa" Swift paints an amazing picture of a society of men and women that are so without morals, that the government taxes the principles that the general population finds important. The men are allowed to pay the amount they see fit based on the following: how attractive they are to women, the amount and nature of favors they receive from women, and their wit, valor, and politeness. The women are taxed based on their beauty and skill in dressing (Swift 141). Thus, a man wanting all of his neighbors to think he was continually sleeping with different women would go poor paying out excessive amounts of money to the government.

In "A Voyage to Brobdinag," Swift uses the giant Brobdinagian women to illustrate flaws in a woman's beauty that are generally overlooked, or hidden. The women of Brobdinag repulse Gulliver because he can see the huge pores, spots, and pimples that mar their skin. Additionally, he is overwhelmed by their body odor. Gulliver is then forced to make the connection that the women of England, that he normally finds so beautiful, have the same flaws, but he just does not see them as easily because they are of the same size (Swift 71,95).

In the poem "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" Jonathan Swift criticizes the lengths a women will go to in order to appear beautiful. Swift writes of Corinna, a young lady who climbs four stories to return to her room at midnight, who then removes her hair, her crystal eye, and her teeth, in addition to a myriad of other things designed to make her beautiful (1-29). Rather than being evidence that Swift hates women, however, it serves many other purposes. It dispels the unrealistic and superficial conceptions vision men have regarding a woman's beauty, a misconception, incidentally that operates as an unpleasant and often destructive psychological burden to women themselves in many cases. It draws attention to the young woman's lack of virtue, and it makes light of the amount of work necessary to make Corinna look as beautiful as she does at first sight.

The best example of this, however, comes in the poem "The Lady's Dressing Room." In this poem, Swift writes of a young rogue who sneaks into the room of a lovely maiden when she is not there. The young man is mortified to find her room in a total state of disarray: her filthy clothes strewn about, her washing cloths soiled and stinking, her vast array of brushes and combs encrusted with dandruff and hair, and lastly, proof that she had bowel movements. It is with

pure genius that Swift uses bodily functions to symbolize the equality of men and women (1-49, 98-110).

All of these examples could be construed as derogatory to women and the female body; however, it is not the female body Swift is bashing, so much as the behavior of men and women in general. These examples make light of the importance men placed on women's physical appearances. These examples depict the vain manner among women, their willingness to deceive, and the lengths they would go to achieve their illusion of themselves. Are women of today's society any different? We spend millions of dollars a year on cosmetics, plastic surgery, and miracle diets. Jonathan Swift, once again, was ahead of his time. These examples remove the pedestals women are placed on, by the men of English society. Swift puts women on the same level as the men, where they are to be judged based upon their capabilities, and of being a worthwhile person, instead of an object of beauty. He goes to the extreme of using bodily functions as a means to symbolize equality, which also serves to express the ridiculousness of the entire situation. Essentially what Swift is saying is that the value of a woman should be based on who she is, and not what she appears, or what a man desires her to be.

It is reasonable to assess, that Jonathan Swift held the opinion that women had flawed characters, that they possessed qualities in their personalities that were unattractive, and they put too much importance on issues that had no substance. It is also reasonable to assess that Jonathan Swift desired a better human race than existed in the 1700's. He wanted a society in which women were educated equally with men. He wanted a society in which men and women placed a great deal of importance on their virtue, morals, and intelligence. Swift desired a society, in which both men and women determined the value of another human beings, based on the behavior that person exhibited, not on the way that person looked.

Swift's use of vulgar examples and degrading symbolism was in response to the vulgar society in which he lived. Jonathan Swift's views on woman are put into practice in today's society more than at any other time in history. His views were way ahead of his time, considering the standards for women in the 1700's. Most of the problems that plagued Jonathan Swift's society are still relevant today, with the exception of female education. In examining his writing, this reader found many parallels between 18th century England, and soon to be 21st century America. In conclusion, it is reasonable to assess that if Jonathan Swift were alive today, he would still desire all of the same

things, but he would be pleased to see that we have achieved some of his dreams.

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The Unloved One: The Crippling of Jonathan Swift

by Sandra Cruz

Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*, depicts a negative image of women. However, following Swift's life from the beginning, it is easier to understand why he views women as he does. Life's circumstances have brought him many deceptions with women thus creating an angry and bitter man.

Jonathan Swift, the famous English writer was born in Dublin on November 30, 1667 to Abigail Swift. He had from the start a very pitiful life. His father, Jonathan Swift Sr., died before young Swift was born. Although there is no real evidence why, his mother gave Swift up as soon as he was born to a caretaker. Most of the biographies on Jonathan Swift agree that Abigail Swift never played a big role in his upbringing; therefore, young Swift lacked that mother-child bond. This may have been one of the reasons why he was uneasy around women and always created a shield around himself.

His caretaker was a nurse who taught Swift how to read and write by the age of three. According to John Middleton Murry in his critical biography, *Jonathan Swift*, young Swift could read any Chapter of the Bible (14). These could be considered early indications of Swift's brilliant abilities to write.

At three, he was given to his Uncle, Godwin Swift with the result that Swift never felt truly comfortable with human relationships. Swift throughout his life found himself in as many feuds with men as he did women. Both genders provided Swift with keen disappointment. He was often bitter, rancorous and revengeful.

Sir William Temple was the first to hire Jonathan Swift on a professional basis as secretary and companion. Before Temple died, he entrusted Swift with "the task and the profit of editing and [publishing] his letters and memoirs." (*Swift, Jonathan,* 504) This infuriated Lady Giffard, Temple's sister, for she had been with him ever since his wife and son had died.

Lady Giffard considered herself his closest relative and confidant. Giffard's disappointment at her brother generated everlasting hostility towards Swift. Unappreciative of her anger towards him, Swift's days at Moor Park (Temple and Giffard's home) had come to an end. Again, Swift was forced out of a home he had learned to love thru the unwelcoming actions and hatred of a woman,

this time, Lady Giffard. Upon leaving, Swift quit tutoring Stella, whose real name was Hester Johnson, daughter of Lady Giffard's waiting gentle-woman. Swift all through his whole life felt compelled to help women better their education. Education was important to Swift and it became his tool in approaching women.

Jonathan Swifts' first documented love affair was with Miss Jane Waring, Swift referred to her as Varina in his letters and later writings. She was a woman of neither wealth or beauty. It is possible that Swift's main attachment to Varina was more emotional that physical. Evidence shows that when Swift was into the second year of courtship, he proposed to Varina. Slow in her response, she rejected his offer. I believe this meant two things for Swift. One, he was not important enough to receive a prompt response and two, he had never been equally reciprocated. This was the boiling point for Swift with women as we can see in John Middleton Murry's observation:

He was generous, but he was fiercely proud. He had offered all himself, and he expected all of her. He did not get it, and he went his way. He said to himself: Never again! Never again would he expose himself to emotional humiliation at the hands of a woman. He never did. He inflicted a deliberate humiliation on Varina, in revenge. (61)

This can explain Swift's brutal behavior with women from 1699 until his death. John Macy explains in *The New Republic* that not only did this affect future relationships with women, but it also touched upon his feelings for children (354). Swift may not have wanted children for the sake of protecting any future child from having to bear all the pain and suffering he had had to endure. Swift is also quoted by Macy as saying after he broke up with Varina that he was "not fond of children." Swift also labels children as a woman's "litter"(354).

In 1701 he returned to Dingley where he met up with Stella and found her to be an astonishingly beautiful twenty year old. They had remained great friends and Swift did not hesitate to invite Stella to go live in Dublin were he resided most of the time. With little persuasion, she packed up and moved. She knew her attraction to Swift was more than friendship yet she dare not reveal this to him for this might jeopardize their friendship. Swift quickly came to the realization that Stella was no longer a pupil; she was his great friend and probably his closest and most trusted confidant.

She had all the qualities of a proper lady; old enough to court and young enough to help him in his later years, yet he dared not break his vow for his heart was to never belong to anyone and his

emotions were never again to be revealed. He is believed to have kept a purely innocent relationship with Stella. There is strong rumor that Swift married Stella. Nevertheless "Scholars are unsure of Swift's exact relationship with Stella. They may have been secretly married." (*Encarta*, 2). Perhaps after the Varina

experience, Swift forced himself to be colder towards all women. Victoria Glendinning, author of *Clasping Rage but Keeping the Ladies at Arm's Length* states that Swift "always defended himself against emotional dependency and preached that gospel to others. Strategy for emotional survival was flight from all risk of grief and pain or disappointment – at the price of fleeing also from the pleasures of sweetness which might make life worth living for most people" (8).

This must have been done with great difficulty because Swift's nature was to be generous and kind. This is easily detected through out Swifts entire life. Through his professional works, personal journals and letters, he struggles greatly with what he wants to do and what he should do. The women in Swift's life must have sensed his struggles within his mind and his heart. Women were attracted to him not only for his looks but also for his style. His women most likely tried to break down the wall that separated them from him and spent their entire lives devoted to this cause.

One woman who committed her life to Jonathan Swift was Hester Vanhomrigh, the famous Vanessa. Vanessa had a solid financial status among her social class and came from a good family. However, it almost seems as if the Vanhomrigh family had been cursed to die at a young age. She lost her parents by the age of seventeen and both her brothers a year later. She was left alone with her sister, Molkin who died a few years after of tuberculosis. Vanessa would have the same fate two years later in 1723.

Throughout the course of Swift's and Vanessa's relationship, he always saw her as a spoiled, rebellious rich girl. In her, he did not see the proper cordial manners he found in Stella. As with Stella, Swift felt the strong desire to teach and correct Vanessa. He had little success; she was very stubborn. He saw in her great abilities but felt she was lazy and lacked desire to grasp the opportunity he was offering her of making her a polished person. Her strong personality is what annoyed Swift the most but it was also the force that attracted him most about Vanessa. He tried to keep their relationship as private as possible by asking her not to write to him, a request she never honored. Vanessa became passionately enamored of Swift and Swift felt a strong attraction toward her but never enough to break the barrier. At this time it is uncertain if he was being faithful to his oath to never become emotionally dependent or if it was because of his possible secret marriage to Stella. Swift saw in Vanessa all the qualities that Stella did not have. She was independent, strong and very in love with him.

Vanessa never refrained from demonstrating to Jonathan Swift her feelings toward him.

On the other hand, Stella was the opposite. Yet, he saw in her all the qualities that were ideal. Stella refrained for fear of pushing away the man she lived for. Swift might have liked it like this. He had the best of both worlds. He had never been as loved by anyone as these two women loved him. He was savoring every moment and he could not have gotten enough. It's almost as if he were experiencing something for the first time and didn't know when to let go. Unfortunately Swift's selfishness was doing no one any justice. Two women were ageing and dying next to a man who promised nothing and received all from them.

Vanessa was losing her battle with tuberculosis and needed a commitment from Swift. Swift refused to promise her anything and in view of her failing health, he retreated into his world and wrote more fiercely than ever; perhaps to elude reality. Vanessa, having no one, must have taken this as a sign of no love or insufficient love. Feeling alone, unloved and dying, she rewrote her will in the month of May and died exactly a month later. There was no mention of Jonathan Swift. She also left in her will that *all* her letters and correspondence between her and Swift were to be published. Swift, a man constantly disillusioned by women, had once more received an incredible blow. It must have crossed his mind that Vanessa only wrote to him and kept copies of all her letters with a second agenda in mind. Would she have black mailed him into marriage if she had not fallen ill? She also had professed her belief in God for she had always attended a parish during their time together but "in the last minutes of her life, Dean Price, the Minister of her parish offered her his services and she responded with 'no price, no prayers' and so she died" (Murry, 311).

Had she not only betrayed him in the end with the letters but also professed to believe in God for the sake of her relationship with he who was a devoted Anglican Clergyman? Tormenting thoughts Jonathan Swift must have had to deal with. This could have only added to his loneliness and mental anguish. Stella remained loyal to Swift until her death in 1728. She was the only woman who never failed him and Swift realized this. Her passing affected Swift greatly. Swift's health, his writings and his love for life went into a downward spiral. "He suffered from increased attacks of vertigo, and a period of mental decay" (*Encarta,* 3).

Gulliver's Travels* was published in 1726 anonymously when Swift was at the peek of his powers. The Third part of the book, *A

Voyage to Laputa is not considered as great as the other parts, one, two and four, which he had written prior to Vanessa's death. She saw the manuscript throughout its creation. However, she never read part three. *Gulliver's Travels* is a book about Lamuel Gulliver, the man Jonathan Swift feels he is; always too big, too small, or too smart. The women throughout the book nevertheless are described as selfish, sex driven, man-hungry adulteresses. They only want the sex and have little interest in child rearing. In every instance, it's similar to his life. The selfishness can be compared to his abandonment by his mother. The sexual intensity in women is similar to the strong desire woman had for Swift who was an ordained man of God. Vanessa is assumed to have been the one who pressured Swift the most. In Lilliput, the queen forces Gulliver out after Gulliver, who in his mind had been nothing but good to her, helps save her apartment in her kingdom from burning by urinating on it. Consequently, the Queen of Lilliput feels repulsion towards him and wants him dead. During Swift's time as ordained minister, it was Queen Anne who could promote or demote Swift and due to her delay, he wrote the infamous, "A Tale Of A Tub" in which he indirectly talks about the Queen. Upon reading this book, the Queen was "offended, and therefore [Swift] lost his chances for ecclesiastical preferment in England" (*Encarta*, 1).

Maybe Swift was remorseful after the Queen Anne took action for in the second part of the book, *A Voyage To The Country Of The Houyhnhnms*, Gulliver is very kind in word and action towards the queen of that nation. We know Jonathan Swift used his writing abilities to vent his anger, here we see how it backfired on him.

Swift's strong bond with Stella can be seen in second part of *Gulliver's Travels* when he is cared for by a little girl, the farmer's daughter, who becomes very attached to Gulliver. Glumdalclitch took care of Gulliver's every need and protected him fiercely. He also talks in every chapter of how he frequently left his wife in order to pursue his dream of seeing the world. His thirst for knowledge of the world obliged him to venture into the sea voyages. Not too far from Swift's own life, for numerous times he abandoned Stella and Vanessa for weeks and sometimes even months on end, in pursuit of his career. In the book, *Gulliver's Travels*, there is strong evidence that Swift was as unstable and uncertain about women as Lamuel Gulliver was. He never stayed long enough to feel committed and never left long enough to be forgotten.

Jonathan Swift became paralyzed in 1742 and suffered greatly of aphasia. Aphasia caused Swift to loose all verbal understanding and

speech. In 1745 he was afflicted with labyrinthine vertigo, which eventually claimed his life later that same year. He was buried next to her. When Swift's items were collected and viewed, it was discovered that this man who had left this earth in "hopes of escaping anger and injustice, had left behind him, written on an envelope, "Only a woman's hair" (*Swift, Jonathan*, 506).

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Jonathan Swift's Woman Problem

by Rita Hoffman

Jonathan Swift has often been characterized as a misogynist in literary criticism. Indeed, he tends to categorize women, in his writings, as ladies, whores, servants or virgins, never presenting them as a whole person. Seldom does he write of them as mothers or as someone with minds and morals equal to men. However, upon closer examination he can perhaps best be seen, first as a man who was probably ignorant and fearful of women, half the human race. He was a man who perhaps would rather forsake wife and family then take the chance of being rejected by someone he loved (Greenacre 27). In addition, his writings may reflect an unthinking absorption of the society's ideas of women in his time.

To understand Swift's views and relationship with women, we must first understand how he was raised and how his young adult life influenced his later years.

Swift was born 7 or 8 months after his father's death, but "came time enough to save his mother's credit" (Pilkington 57).In other words his mother was married to his father and the time of his conception which saved her reputation. His mother hired a wet nurse who "amicably kidnapped him," (Murry 13). His nurse took him from where he was born in Ireland to England. He was kept by the nurse for approximately three years because when his mother found him, she sent instructions to "not hazard a second voyage till he was better able to bear it" (Murry 14). Most mothers, by contrast, would be willing to go to any lengths to have their child returned to them, even if it meant going on a long ocean voyage to get the child themselves.

By most accounts, the nurse took good care of Swift and he was returned to his mother when he was approximately four years old. He lived with his mother and older sister, Jane, for a time before his mother and sister left for Leicester and he want to live with his Uncle Goodwin who enrolled him soon after in a boarding school in Kilkenny (Greenacre 24). Swift did not see his mother or sister again till he was 21 and it was he who sought her out and not the other way around. Between his birth and going off to boarding school, he lived with his only immediate family for only approximately three years. This was hardly enough time to establish his identity as part of a family nor could he have had time to be "suffused with a warm maternal glow" (Ehrenpreis 32).

It is in these early years when boys usually start getting their knowledge of the opposite sex and form their mental and emotional model of women through the formation of their first love relationship a woman, their mothers. In a normal family, consisting of both mother and father, boys start to understand that women are more than one dimensional people. Swift was not exposed to this having lost his father to death and his mother to abandonment.

Swift probably had little exposure to the opposite sex in the sense that he wouldn't have seen them except as a finished product. Even though his Uncle Goodwin had many children, and assuming that approximately half would be girls, he only lived there a short time before being sent to boarding school where he lived with other boys (Greenacre 24).

Swift's school holidays were brief. Most boys get their first glimpse of a woman's anatomy by spying on their mothers or sisters. Not being raised by his mother or living with his sister, Swift would have never had the chance to see an adult women when she first got up in the morning, when she was sick or nursing another child. This is the way most boys learn about women and Swift had little chance for this. He also would have little chance to understand how women think or speak and thus would have ambiguous feelings after the rejection of his first love, Varinia.

The women in Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels* are occupied by queens, whores, nurses, nursing women, ladies of the court, a young sex crazed Yahoo and a benevolent but distracted nag. In Lilliput, the queen is autocratic and infuriated when Gulliver urinates on her apartment to keep it from burning and avows revenge (38). In Brobdingnag there is a queen who saves him, the maids of honor who toy with him and his little nurse, Glumdalclitcg, the only female character, significantly, to actually have a name, who loves him but still takes the opportunity to laugh at his expense (Swift 100).

In Laputa, a wife is someone who would rather prostitute herself than stay with her neglectful husband (Swift 139). In Houyhnhnms there is a young female Yahoo who is "inflamed with desire" at the sight of Gulliver (Swift 233).

Nowhere in *Gulliver's Travels* are women more than one dimensional. They are gross, lusty, sexual, benevolent and disgusting. They are ladies, whores, caretakers, saviors or autocrats. Never does Swift suggest they are more than what he presents them to be. Nor does he suggest that they think, feel, love or are morally responsible.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver on occasion observes women in terms of their breasts but unlike practically all the rest of his gender, he can find little in them to appreciate. He writes, for example, "I must confess no object ever

disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast" (71). "There was a woman with cancer in her breast swelled to a monstrous size, full of holes" (Swift 90) in Brobdingnag. In Houyhnhnms describing female Yahoos, "their dugs hung between their fore feet and often reached almost to the ground as they walked (Swift 193).

Elsewhere, in Swift's poem, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," Swift writes about Corinna as she gets ready for bed, "Pulls out the rags contrived to prop/ her flabby dugs and down they drop." Or he describes their bodily functions as in "Steprhon and Chloe, "The bride must either void or burst" (Swift 544) or in Cassinus and Peter" that the great secret is "Caeliash" (Swift 550). This leads Suzanne Grubar to write that Swift had a "horror of female physicality" and that he equates "female youth and beauty with crumbling, inadequate material" (140).

Firstly, however, this, to me, speaks more to his confusion regarding women than misogyny; that he is attracted to women on one hand but repelled by them on the other. Women's artifice and smells, to Swift, must have been both erotic and disgusting.. The contradiction of their modesty and sexuality, the appearance of delicacy against the reality of biological necessity; the idea that women prattled and appeared vapid yet were perceptive and intuitive seem to have further confused Swift. Given that there was no one central female figure when he was growing up to help him reconcile these contradictory views, it is no wonder that had to categorize women to try to understand them.

Interesting, Swift was twenty-three years when his mother Abigail Swift visited him at his boarding house, passing herself off as his lover. This was noted as an example of Abigail's liking of practical jokes, which purportedly Swift inherited (Greenacre 23). However, I think it speaks more to the relationship between Swift and Abigail and by extension to his relationship and ideas of other women.

We can neither bring Swift back from the dead to speak to him as Gulliver talks to the dead in Glubbdubdrib (167) nor can we retrospectively psychoanalyze him; we can however make certain assumptions based on the patterns shown in his writings and his personal life.

Swift never married but did have three serious relationships with women. He proposed marriage to Jane Waring (Varina) who was seven years his junior and was hurt by her rejection (Murry 60). Later, when Varina changed her mind, Swift rejected her (Murry 60 - 61). He

also had a serious relationship with Esther Johnson (Stella) who was fourteen years younger than he. This relationship or friendship lasted till she died. During his friendship with Stella, he also entered into a relationship with Vanessa or Esther Van Homriglis a woman twenty-one years younger than himself.

Whether Swift was in love with Stella or Vanessa or secretly married to Stella is anyone's guess. Murry writes that Sift wanted to marry Vanessa (276) but instead married Stella to give her a "feeling of security" (280). On the other hand, Ehrenpreis writes that Vanessa's "wheedling and coercion left him chilled" (20) and the more assertive she became in showing her attraction for him the more he withdrew (Quintana 210). His strange relationship with Vanessa did not end till her death in 1723. We do know that what these three women had in common was that they were all fatherless and in poor health and that Swift enjoyed the upper hand in these relationships even as he distanced himself from them (Ehrenpreis 22).

He also enjoyed tutoring both Stella and Vanessa as Gulliver was tutored in all his voyages. Prior to his final break-up with Varina, he wrote "Resolutions when I Come to be Old". Two of these resolutions were not to enter into marriage with a younger woman and not to be flattered or think that he could be loved by a young woman (Murry 65).

Ehrenpreis thinks that Swift picked these increasingly younger women so that he could give them the family and himself the childhood they and he never had (22). It seems likely, though, that he was afraid of women's sexuality and in his relationship with increasingly younger women, he could control that fear by controlling them. This fear is shown by Gulliver in his reaction to the young Yahoo in Houyhnhnms After all, man fears most that which he cannot understand.

Secondly, Swift wrote about women in accordance to societal ideas of women in the late fifteenth and sixteenth-century.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, we hear men telling Gulliver about their society and commenting on English society, laws, politics and the education of children. In Lilliput, we hear the diminutive king who is filled with his own self importance. In Brobdingnag we hear the benevolent king who gives Gulliver a disparaging, but accurate opinion of England (Swift 107 - 108) In Laputa we hear from Munodi, a great lord (Swift 148) who's thinking is at odds with the rest of his society. In Glubbdribnib, Gulliver meets and questions famous men from history (Swift 167).

We never hear the voices of the women however. Gulliver encounters several women in his travels but we never hear their opinions. We never find out how women think or what they feel about their own society. We also never find out what they think about Gulliver's society. The reason for this is that women did not have figurative voices. Gulliver dines frequently with the queen in Brobdingnag who saved him from the farmer and notes that she enjoyed his company (Swift 84); however what they talked about is not mentioned. In Lilliput, Gulliver is visited often by a "great lady" (Swift 46). However, what they talk about during those visits is also not mentioned. In Laputa, he notes that he only had conversations with "women, tradesmen, flappers and court pages" (Swift 147), but the topic of the conversations are never mentioned. The conversations that he had with the queen, the lady and the women in Laputa are not brought up because it doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. Women's voices were not important in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Richard Brathwaite writes that it would be equally unbecoming for a woman to "discourse of state matters" as it would be "dispute of high points of divinity" (Fraser 244).

In the time of Swift, women had no voices of their own. They were considered the legal responsibility of their fathers or husbands (Hufton 57) Married woman had to be careful what they said in the presence of their husbands, for if a wife maligned or made unfounded accusations, she was considered foolish, irrational or silly, but her husband could be charged with slander (Hufton 56). Whatever a woman said in public was a reflection of the ideas of her father or husband. The ideal wife was obedient, for if not their husbands were allowed to (within reason) physically discipline them (Hufton 56).

Another reason women did not have voices was that because they were considered to be devoid of reason or rationality. Crampe-Casnape quotes Montesque "Reason is never found . . . among those with beauty. When beauty asks to rule, reason sees to it that the request is denied" (328). If women possessed any reason at all, it was not equal to a male's powers. Women were granted an imagination, but not conceded the ability to carry out an idea. According to Swift's society, the ability to weigh the pros and cons of a decision, to make judgments or to generalize were lacking in women's minds (Crampe-Casnabet 330).

The only mental quality granted women was the capacity to be an obedient and faithful wife who brought up children (Crampe-Casnabet 329). "Obedience and chastity makes them first dutiful

daughters, then loyal wives (Desaive 265). Like the young Yahoo, in Voyage to the Houyhnhnms, women were also supposed to be filled with lust and "suffers from limitless desires" (Crampe-Casbanet 326).

Nevertheless, to characterize Swift as a misogynist would be to ignore his consistent acts of respect toward them. For example, he hired Mary de la Riviere Mandley after she was released from jail for libel, to write political pamphlets. Swift respected her as a "fellow writer" (Gelbart 422). He thought women should be educated if only to be a companion and of interest to their husbands when their beauty faded (Swift 212). In "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms," In the Houyhnhnms, equal education is given to both male and female horses, but of course the female receive education in domestics. The master horse is appalled that English society gives a lesser education women then to men: For the general view of women in his time was for rigid standards.

Swift tried to achieve an insight into women that he was not exposed to in his youth. I do not approve of course of the way Swift depicts women in their roles as nurses, ladies, queens or whores without voices to tell us what those times were like from their perspective and what it felt like to be a women who had no control over her own life, However, it is a reflection of the times that Swift lived in. The paucity of love in his childhood and the little exposure he had to women when he was growing up also attributed to the corrosive and probably excruciating personal isolation Swift suffered as a natural extension of the badly distorted views he had of women.

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Gulliver's Travels: A Moral and Political Handbook

by Edwardo Hernandez

Every society has an identity that is shaped by the moral behavior of its citizens and the rules and regulations imposed by its government. In *Gulliver's Travels* Swift uses each part to form a basis upon which to criticize allegorically land symbolically the behavior of his own government and the people at that time

The sections describing his voyage to Lilliput and Laputa portray the simplemindedness, greed, and ignorance in Swift's society. These two sections are the most critical of aristocratic governments and are sections that convey his beliefs about England's government policies. The sections that describe the society of the Brobdingnagians and the Houyhnhnms can be interpreted how Swift feels his country ought to be governed. These sections deal with societies that try to follow a fair way of living, and ruling, even if it may seem imperfect at times.

The first voyage to Lilliput is one that captures our attention because of their quick and creative action they take in capturing this giant who lands on their shore. We are fooled by the image of their size into thinking that they are harmless and that their reaction is justifiable since they are faced with something foreign. As the story progresses, however, we realize that their size does reflect their vanity and deceitful ways, and that "their vices, their appetites, their ambitions, and their passions are not commensurate with their tiny stature" (Monk 73).

As Gulliver learns more about the Lilluputian culture he can observe how absurd some of their ideas are. The elections of government officials consist of who has better rope balancing skill's, a ridiculous and arbitrary way to choose someone for office. There are a couple of things that Swift might be trying to say allegorically. Swift might be referring to British government, where officials were chosen in a similar way. They were not chosen by balancing on a tightrope but they weren't chosen by having valuable skills or an understanding of the people's needs. The ministers were chosen in an arbitrary way. Another interpretation could be that Swift was trying to give his own view concerning the balance needed between the king, the aristocracy and the people. Swift also believed that the individual should try to

avoid joining the extreme of any political party, here the Tory or Whigs who were the two political parties in England at that time (Voight 13).

The Lilliputians forced Gulliver to swear and obey certain rules. They did this without realizing that Gulliver could crush them at any moment. In this

way Swift satirized the British society, as it believed itself to be more powerful than it really was. The British government imposed harsh laws on its own people and tried to bully other countries without realizing that at any moment someone stronger could defeat them. They had the conception of being the most powerful country in the world.

After Gulliver refuses to help in the invasion of the Blefusco he is accused of treason. This another way in which Swift satirizes the inhumanity of English royalty. The Lilliputians also persecute many members of their society over something very insignificant, like on what side to break an egg.

Also, the Lilliputians want to exploit Gulliver as much as they can, and when he refuses they come up with a plan to punish by blinding him. The English society is like the Lilliputians in that respect, in that they wanted control over more people and more land, and those who opposed their views were subject to terrible punishments. When *Gulliver's Travels* was written, Europe was a dominant power and England, despite its small size, was a country which defeat almost any nation that posed a challenge. (Tuveson 45).

The voyage to Laputa gives Gulliver a different perspective. In this country their way of life is based more on theory than practice. Unlike the Lilliputians who were a society based more on actions than theory, the inhabitants of Laputa devote too much time to the creation of new theories. Swift emphasizes the need for balance between theory and reasonable practice. Here we encounter a government that floats over its kingdom. This image of a floating island is a physical representation of just how oblivious the English government was to the concerns of the people (Vickers 80). After being introduced to this idea Swift then focuses on reasoning and its importance in governing. The people of Laputa place great emphasis on mathematics and music that seems reasonable until we realize that these ideas have no practical application for the people.

When Gulliver is introduced to the king, he encounters a very odd situation. The king's servants slap him with a flapper when it's his turn to speak and they slap the listener when it's their turn to listen to keep people having a conversation from wondering off into their own thoughts. Hence, we see that the king and the nobility who inhabit the island have no real concern besides their thoughts and theories. Swift satirizes the aristocracy of his own land because in reality the English rulers didn't concern themselves with the needs of the lower class.

Although the scholars of Laputa are constantly thinking and coming up with new ideas they are unable to come up with something useful. When Gulliver visits the land of Lagado he converses with one of the lords who explains to Gulliver that the chaotic state of the land started forty years ago. The lord explains that at that time some people traveled to Laputa and came back with ideas in mathematics and art. Gulliver also learns that it was these new ideas and new techniques which had left the land in ruins. In this part we see that reasoning is a virtue that not everyone poses, although it is something so basic. The Laputans' devotion to the life of the intellect leads them to follow theory a the expense of sound practice, something that is obvious when an abstracted tailor makes him a suit of clothes by first measuring him with quadrant and compass (Gilbert 122).

Swift also satirizes the scientists' of his time who believed that all their ideas were correct, and who condemned the ideas of those before them. Swift was living in times of scientific changes when "modern science . . . was exulting in the certainty resulting from its new experimental and mathematical bases and complacently condemning the errors of the ancient . . . "(124). Swift satirizes the reasoning behind the academics of his time. The academics in Laputa can't come up with anything useful for their people. Swift does not criticize the methods or the idea of experimenting but rather the useless results obtained.

In Gulliver's visit to Glubdubdrib he is able to speak with any historical figure that he liked. When Gulliver describes his conversations with these historical figures he speaks of them with reverence. Throughout this section Swift gives us his view of the importance of reason and just how useless modern ideas and practices can be without it.

In the land of the Brobdingnag Swift introduces a different form government and a different way of living. In this section the conversation with Gulliver and the king gives us an insight into how a governing official should be. During his conversation with the king Gulliver learns that the kingdom is run by someone who follows moral values and someone who knows the importance of history, poetry, and mathematics (Nokes 123).

Swift again uses the image of their size to convey a certain feeling. By describing just how gargantuan these Brobdinagian are Swift is able to make Gulliver seem insignificant. Swift gives us a view of humanity from a different angle where we are able to realize that

mankind's own sense of grandeur exists only because we have falsely assured ourselves of no world larger than our own (Rawson 160).

Although the people are living under someone who rules with justice there are still people who act of destructive self interest. The farmer who found Gulliver is a good example because he tried to exploit him by showing him in public and charging for it. Swift is trying to imply that even with a good established government there are still going to be people who don't follow a life of morality.

Swift also satirizes the philosophers of his time who never got tired of admiring the human body. The philosophers of his time saw the human body as beautiful, perfect and intricate when in reality "our beauty is only apparent and our disproportion's real" (Monk 75). Swift makes Gulliver and the reader ealizes just how imperfect and sometimes nauseating the human body can be. Gulliver sees the lousy bodies of beggars, cancerous breasts, huge pores, course hairs, and the horrible odors that came from women. Swift uses the good giants to strike an unexpected insult to human vanity and introduce a motif that he introduced in Laputa which is disgust, disgust not only to the human body but also to their ideals and their way of living (75).

Swift goes on to criticize the cruel ways of English dominion as Gulliver gives his description of European government to the king. Gulliver introduces the idea of gunpowder and the destruction that is possible by using it. Gulliver does not understand why the king refuses his idea or the king's hesitation to expand his kingdom. The English behavior towards its neighboring countries is being satirized because England would not have hesitated to oppress another country by using harsh tactics, and at times English government did use senseless violence to expand their wealth (Leon 45).

The land of the Brobdingnagian is a land where everything that Gulliver does is reduced to the level of triviality and curiosity, because to the Brobdinagians he is nothing more than a miniature curiosity.

In the concluding chapter of *Gulliver's Travels* Swift reaches a stage where he sees people as the moral inferiors of animals. This is a society controlled by horses who also seem vulnerable to the crazy humanoid Yahoos. Gulliver learns that the Houyhnhnms is a society with a very different language, set of beliefs, morals, and eating habits. Although the behavior of these creatures seems foreign he is still able to appreciate them more rather than the Yahoos. Although the Yahoos resemble human beings he is threatened and disgusted by their untamed ways. The horses follow a benevolent way of life even when they try to keep their feelings from playing a major role in their lives. The fact that the horses were very amiable, simple, and controlled help Gulliver understand them better. As Gulliver discusses morality with the Houynhnms Gulliver finally realizes his society is horribly flawed. The Houyhnhnms don't understand the concept of love, but rather live in a way that only requires reasoning and the ability to survive and provide for themselves. Although they are creatures that don't worry much about feelings they are not violent or insensitive creatures.

In the book of the Houyhnhnms Swift satirizes society by showing that even a society of animals can conduct itself in a more "humane" way than human beings.

The Houyhnhnms seem to be the embodiment of reason. They don't know love, ambition, or grief, and they cannot lie (Monk 76). Swift uses Gulliver as a symbol for humanity, who is faced with both aspects of human nature. The Houyhnhnm land represents a plea for society to rise above its evil and achieve a level like the Houyhnhnm (Dennis 60).

Swift however was also angry with the English people. He felt some academic's discoveries ere mostly used to expand the power of those already powerful. Swift was trying to imply that many things had to change in society in order to come close to living sensibly. As Nigel Dennis explains:

> **Swift regards all liberty as an arrangement of severe disciplines: these are binding upon all persons from the king himself down to lowest subject . . . Freedom of speech is the prerogative of government by law established: it can be neither enjoyed nor demanded by the opposing minority so long as the powerful majority keeps its actions within constitutional bonds. Freedom of belief may exist but it cannot be eradicated, and it should never be translated into freedom of worship.**

Gulliver was supposed to represent humankind and most of the time he displayed ignorance and unreasonable ideals. Society as a whole has been unable to change much since there is still much corruption and unfairness in the world. In order to change it would be wise to view things from a different perspective as Swift did. Every society has a certain evil side. . But Swift was trying to say that we have to start by changing our evil behaviors individually

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A Dissenting View of the Great Dissenter

by Angela Bogat

Voltaire is often credited with being an inspiration for the French Revolution and a writer who as much as anyone in history helped create a climate for social change to bring about a more just world. The philosophy he advocates in his most famous novel *Candide* however, is anything but revolutionary. In it he attacks the assertion of Leibniz, a well known optimistic philosopher, that this is the best of all possible worlds. In fact, Voltaire does this with such satiric ferocity that he all but totally discredits and destroys it.

Voltaire satirizes Leibniz's ideas in several ways. First, he does this through his description of Candide's birthplace. The Baron was considered the wealthiest and most powerful lord in the region, yet the conditions in which he resided were utterly horrible. The townspeople lived in poverty and starvation, yet the Baroness was a large, hefty woman, thus insinuating that *she* never missed a meal. By mentioning this scenario, Voltaire wishes to elicit his readers to ask the question *"What is wrong with this situation?"* Voltaire's answer, which is revealed throughout the book, is that this is an example of evil in the world in the form of vice and greed and therefore not the best of all possible worlds. Further on in the book, Candide finds himself in the Bulgarian army fighting in a war battle. After witnessing thousands of men slain, he wonders how this could happen in the "best of all possible worlds." The murder and slaying of soldiers does not seem a possibility in the finest world, yet that is precisely what takes place in *this* world. Occurrences like these are why Voltaire does not swallow the idea that this the best of all possible worlds.

Voltaire not only examines the mishaps and ill fortune of Candide, but he also presents the misfortunes of the world through other characters in the book. Voltaire does this in order to demonstrate that the world is full of misfortune and that no one is immune to it. For example, both Cunegonde and the Old Woman each have an opportunity to tell their tale of woe to Candide. Cunegonde witnesses the murder and dismemberment of her family, is repeatedly raped, stabbed, and forced into slavery. When she examines and tries to make sense out of all that has happened to her, she comes to the conclusion that she was deceived when she was told that "all is for the best in the world" (Voltaire 113). Her realization is that of Voltaire himself. The Old Woman has a story to tell too, one

that greatly surpasses the misery of Candide's or Cunegonde's. The Old Woman was born to a wealthy family and spent her youth living in a palace. However,

she and her mother were abducted by pirates and taken as slaves. She witnesses the murder of her mother, is raped, beaten, and repeatedly sold from one owner to the next. The most humiliating experience of all for her: having one of her buttocks cut from her. She never gave up hope for one simple reason, though. She loves life too much. She calls her passion for life a weakness, a curse. Staying alive means more opportunity for turmoil and grief.

The Old Woman sees the irony in this and so does Voltaire. The Old Woman makes it a point to mention that everyone has their tales of suffering and woe; it is a part of life. There is no man, or woman for that matter, that has never cursed his or her own life or felt as if he or she was the most unfortunate person in the world. To the Old Woman and Voltaire, this is what life is all about. These are the existing conditions of *this* world.

In the end Candide, representative of Voltaire, comes to the conclusion that the best life is one lived without thinking but simply just doing, doing what needs to be done. For Candide, he needs to cultivate his garden. Cultivation is work, work essential to his survival. This simple task can be generalized to encompass all of humanity. Voltaire sees the objective of human existence and survival as doing what needs to be done in order to insure this. In other words, one should do what it takes to stay alive and only concern oneself with those things. The prevalence and the purpose of all of the evils in the world really do not matter to Voltaire. According to him, humans exist with the challenge remaining in existence. The human race needs to keep itself alive and advancing. The evils in the world may make life harder, but not impossible.

After deciphering Voltaire's message in his book *Candide*, however, it is clear why he took the standpoint that he did. Voltaire wrote for all classes including the lowest. As a man very much involved in the governing bodies in Europe, Voltaire used his writing to instigate changes in the way things were being done and in the way people were being treated. His purpose was not necessarily to cause a revolt, but rather to calm the lower-class. By suggesting and encouraging all people, including the poorest of the poor, to submerge themselves into their work, Voltaire hoped that the struggle between classes would subside. The rulers and monarchs would continue to rule and the peasants would continue to cultivate their crops. All classes are plagued by the evils of the world, but all classes do prevail over them in the end. Boredom, vice, and need are present at any economic level. Work is also present. Combating these evils by

concentrating on one's work is the best way to keep away of the evils in the world.

Evil in The Brothers Karamazov

by Angeline Tomcik

Dostoyevksy in *The Brothers Karamazov* is obsessed with the question of why evil exists and what this fact tells about the nature of life and God.

This is done through the kind-hearted Alyosha. Dostoyevsky's religious dilemmas are most striking, as throughout the book. Several characters criticize all of the major western religions and derivative "cults" that were around in Russia, like the Startsy order that Alyosha belongs to. However, general religious good will is not criticized.

Dostoyevsky seems to be saying in this novel that "religious" people, who tout Gospels and verse from the Bible and publicly shun all manner of sin, are often hypocrites that only perform "Christian" acts to make themselves appear bigger or more pious than other people. They want their good works to build them a stairway to heaven.

Truly good people are like Christ in that they practice their faith through good works quietly, without grandeur or thoughts of payment in kind. They don't preach or teach the lessons of Jesus; they show by example the ways of the Lord. Even someone who is not a Christian or familiar with the faith in any way, can't help but be taken with the pureness of spirit as evidenced in such Dostoyevsky's characters as Lizaveta Smerdyashkaya, Starets Zosima and above all, Alyosha Karamazov.

What about Ivan? He and Alyosha are full brothers born of a heartless man, Fyodor Karamazov and a religious woman, Sofya Ivanovna. Sofya's faith is what got her through her short life and her horrible marriage. Through her, Ivan and Alyosha have redeemable qualities that are obviously lacking in Dimitri (their older half-brother). Dimitri seems to be beyond help, almost glad in his wicked ways. Ivan is different than Dimitri; he is not a womanizer or a violent man, yet he is not all religious hope and zeal like Alyosha either. In a conversation with Alyosha from the chapter, "The brothers get to know each other," Ivan is quite lucid about his feelings towards God. He states that he accepts God wholeheartedly, accepts His word and the eternal harmony and order of life that God created. What he doesn't accept; is the creation of the world by God (293).

I suppose he is aggrieved, like St. Augustine; that if God created the world and everything in it, He must have created evil as well. Where St. Augustine, however, tries to exonerate God from any wrongdoing, Ivan is not so charitable; he is hurt and angry with God. Ivan feels that all the harmony of heaven cannot ever eradicate the suffering and hardship inflicted

by evil in the world. Ivan in essence, wants to know why anyone must wait to die to find peace and joy (307).

Ivan's trust and faith in God are shaken by this inner conflict, but it is compounded by his relationship with his earthly father. Fyodor Karamazov is a thoroughly despicable man. Ivan finds him disgusting, devoid of humanity and is repulsed by him (173-74). His father's thievery, debauchery, drunkenness and hatefulness have caused Ivan to question God. If this is his father: a man who is capable of such evil that he imposes on people whom he should love, isn't God, in a way, the same sort of father?

Ivan loves God but feels betrayed by him. What's the point in loving another father who doesn't have your best interests at heart? Or wouldn't help you if you were suffering in any way? In Ivan's view, God is really no better than Fyodor Karamazov and that hurts him deeply (163).

In the Startsy order of monks, the priest listens to all of your confessions and concerns and grants absolution through a set amount of prayers and also consolation and advice. Ivan is, in a way, like a Starets; he takes all of the pain torture and anguish from the people he reads about into himself. Without faith, he cannot release this pain from the victims or from himself (88). Instead, Ivan is consumed with the overwhelming grief of human destruction that evil in the world produces (306).

Ivan wonders why there is evil in the world. St. Augustine attributes its existence to human free will which humans use to explore the darker side of themselves and thus create evils.

Some philosophers have argued that milder forms of evil actually stimulate and invigorate us. Nietzsche states that, evils in our lives are meant to challenge us and strangely, we need these hurdles to make life worth living. His point of view is similar to Voltaire's idea that was expressed in *Candide*. At the end of the story, all of the characters are living on a sort of commune, in seeming serenity. Yet, they are bored and long for the excitement and adventure that life's travails once held for them (98-99). But it is the evil that is heinous, cruel, devastating and demoralizing. Slavery, child abuse, torture, rape, murder and the like, are deeper more desperate forms of evil. It is those evils that wrack Ivan's heart. From where does this evil manifest? Who has an explanation for this? Two more recent topics may help to clarify this.

Bataille claims in *Tears of Eros*, that it is our human nature that leads us on this quest for aggression and evil. It is inherent in our

makeup to derive pleasure from inflicting pain, drawing blood and hurting another (60-69). This drive can't be stopped, just stifled by laws or religion (79). Sartre believes it isn't human nature that compels us, just our own choices that can induce "good" or "evil" actions. To me, these reasons are valid but to fully accept them is a cop-out.

I agree partially with their views but I also have faith in the better side of man. Like Rousseau, I think that beneath all of the self-interest that bogs man down, there is an understanding, an empathy that makes people care about their fellow human beings. Even after such abuses have been laid upon people, life goes on; they live and love, trust and care again. Perhaps after such torment, these victims are even more appreciative of the good things in life <u>because</u> life has been cruel to them.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky shows us through the lives of the Karamazovs what non-faith does to your life. Greed, sexual depravity, mental torment and all manner of hopelessness befell the worst of the nihilists in the story. Dostoyevsky touches upon the shattering of the Enlightenment through the events that capture the Karamazov family. In a note regarding Alyosha, Dostoyevsky writes, "it may be he in particular who sometimes represents the very essence of his epoch, while others of his generation, for whatever reason, will drift aimlessly in the wind" (5).

Dostoyevsky seems to be saying that, no matter what movements occur in the world; from political upheavals or new philosophies that may arise, one must stick to their principles and be guided by their conscience. Alyosha is overwhelmed by the world; it is crazy, disordered and overbearing to him. His faith is put to the test on many occasions. He is always true to himself, he is not a hypocrite, nor does he ever stray or waver in his beliefs. Dostoyevsky elucidates that there is indeed evil among us, but as long as there are people like Alyosha in the world who prove that God and goodness exist the earth isn't a hopeless place. Life has meaning and purpose and is ultimately beautiful

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Modern Age

The Glimmer Twins: F. Scott Fitzgerald and Jay Gatsby

by Carrie Grachowski

Many times character development comes from an author's personal life and this can clearly be seen in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald and, more specifically, in his novel *The Great Gatsby*.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born on September 24, 1896 in St. Paul, Minnesota. His father, Edward Fitzgerald, was a failure as a furniture manufacturer and as a salesman. The family lived on an inheritance his mother, Mary, received from her father. Fitzgerald began writing at boarding school and, later enrolled at Princeton University. On academic probation, he quit Princeton and enlisted in the army in 1917. While in the army he met Zelda Sayre and fell in love. Zelda was from a wealthy southern family who broke off an engagement to Fitzgerald when he was unable to support her in the lifestyle to which she was accustomed. This prompted Fitzgerald to work feverishly to become a success. He became famous with the publication of *This Side of Paradise* in 1920 and married Zelda immediately (Bruccoli 4).

It was 1925 when Fitzgerald finished *The Great Gatsby*, a time of great change in America. The Industrial Age had brought progress and prosperity. The automobile and the airplane were becoming a part of everyday life, providing access to worlds and lifestyles unheard of before. Fitzgerald was swept up in the frenzy of this fast life.

F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda lived the extravagant lifestyle of celebrities traveling from America to Europe. Credited with the creation of the term "The Jazz Age", with all of its excesses, during the 1920's Fitzgerald's lifestyle would eventually be his and Zelda's downfall. Zelda gave birth to a daughter, Scottie, but was unsuitable as a mother. She became obsessed with becoming a ballerina. Her intense training ruined her health and strained their relationship. She later slips into madness and spends the rest of her life institutionalized where she eventually died in a fire in Highland Hospital in 1948 (Bruccoli 4). Fitzgerald became an alcoholic and E. L. Doctorow writes in *The Jazz Age*:

> **He lived rashly, susceptible to the worst influences of his time, and lacking any defense against stronger and more selfish personalities than his own, and when he died, at 44, he**

> was generally recognized to have abused his genius as badly as he had his constitution. (36)

Fitzgerald seemed to be searching for his own identity while writing about current events of his day. He was not recognized as the great writer he was during his own time and many of his stories were failures. Doctorow goes on to say in *The Jazz Age* that Fitzgerald is "disarmingly confessional…about his pathetic need always to prove something to somebody" and "he was haunted by his inauthenticity" (36).

Similarities between F. Scott Fitzgerald and his character Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* are numerous. Jay Gatsby comes from humble beginnings and considers his father a failure, much like Fitzgerald's father. Gatsby strives to change his identity so much that he even changes his name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby (Fitzgerald 104). Gatsby joins the service, as did Fitzgerald, and meets a girl named Daisy who is from a rich family, similar to Zelda. Gatsby falls madly in love with Daisy, but feels unworthy of her love. He is determined to become a success by any means possible and resorts to bootlegging to amass wealth. He spends a short time at Oxford University and assumes the persona of a well educated man to impress those around him, like Fitzgerald at Princeton. Gatsby finds out where Daisy is living, in the wealthy area of East Egg on Long Island, and purchases a house in the neighboring West Egg to be close to her. He spares no expense, as Fitzgerald doesn't when he has money, in throwing lavish parties hoping she will notice him.

Daisy Buchanan is a shallow woman married to a brute of a man named Tom. They are very wealthy but they have no depth of character. They live for the moment, for immediate gratification. Daisy has a daughter she cares little for, much like Zelda with her own daughter. When describing her daughter, Daisy states "I hope she'll be…a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald 21). This sentiment was spoken by Zelda about her own daughter (Smith 118-20).

Jay Gatsby's unrealistic perception of Daisy only brings him grief and despair in the end. Indirectly, it results in his death when Daisy accidentally murders a woman while driving and Gatsby takes the blame for it. The husband of the woman kills Gatsby and then himself. Daisy never defends Gatsby or admits her own guilt. No one attends Gatsby's funeral except for his father and his friend Nick Carraway. His quest for identity leaves him with nothing.

The Great Gatsby defines the era of the "Jazz Age" in its description of the characters, their social life, and their aspirations. Fitzgerald is described by E. L. Doctorow in *The Jazz Age*:

> He was intellectually ambitious-but thought fashion was important, gossip, good looks, the company of celebrities. He wrote as a rebel, a sophisticate, an escapee from American provincialism-but was blown away by society, like a country bumpkin. He went everywhere he was invited.

This description of Fitzgerald exactly describes that of Jay Gatsby. Gatsby was obsessed with his image and with being popular in society. Like Fitzgerald, Gatsby is questing for an identity that will prove him worthy of love and admiration.

Ironically, when published *The Great Gatsby* sold poorly and contributed to Fitzgerald's alcoholism and the disintegration of his personal life (*Fitzgerald* 2). Critics called his work at the time superficial and Fitzgerald, himself, blamed this on consumer's preference for bulky books. He was poor at financial management and in order to maintain the lifestyle he and Zelda were accustomed to he would write numerous pulp short stories for magazines. At the end of his life, in debt, Fitzgerald went to Hollywood to write screen adaptations. He lost his contract with MGM Studios and worked as a freelance script writer and wrote short stories for *Esquire* magazine. He died of a heart attack believing himself a failure on December 21, 1940 (Bruccoli 4).

Why did F. Scott Fitzgerald use so much of his personal life in the development of his characters? In The Modern Library's 1934 edition of *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald comes to his own defense with: Critics… felt that my material was such as to preclude all dealing with mature persons in a mature world. But, my God! It was my material, and it was all I had to deal with."

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Identity and Happiness

by Nichole Hermann

Questions of identity are at the heart of F. Scott Fitzgerald's, *The Great Gatsby*, and Arthur Miller's, *Death of a Salesman*. Both authors created characters who were searching for the American dream with deeply flawed souls. The characters, James Gatz, known as Jay Gatsby, and William Loman believed that the pinnacle of personal happiness and social success, was the American dream which is defined as possessing great wealth and status.

In order to achieve wealth and status, both characters put on a façade. First, both Fitzgerald and Miller's characters worshipped a person from the past. Secondly, the authors created characters who had low self-esteem and so strove to be well liked by everyone. Thirdly, the authors created characters who never truly earned their wealth or status nobly but lied to build what they had gained.

These points summed up how the quest for American dream for the characters diminished their inner character and identity. To understand this quest for identity some background concerning the titles of the novel and play, plus the author's literary goals should be mentioned. F. Scott Fitzgerald had written *The Great Gatsby* during the 1920's, known as the Jazz Age or the Roaring twenties. World War I had ended and the moral certainty of our nation was destroyed. Fitzgerald had created a character, Jay Gatsby, who was searching for the American dream with no morals by taking up the occupation of a bootlegger, a forerunner of drug running, which was illegal and looked down upon but which paid extremely well. Gatsby's extreme wealth and extravagant parties had given him great status which is partially reflected in the title.

Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, focused on how individuals followed the value system given by society . Miller's Willy Loman, was a character who was concerned with the appearance of individuals and not their inner characteristics or thoughts. Willy Loman also had to be not only liked but *well liked* by everyone in society.

The protagonist of *The Great Gatsby*, James Gatz, had been born into a poor family of whom he was embarrassed. At the age of seventeen, James met a wealthy man, Dan Cody. Viewing Dan Cody as an idol, James strived to be as wealthy and assumed a new identity,

Jay Gatsby. Jay pretended to have an Oxford education. That was a lie to fit in a social class where he did

not belong and to gain Daisy Buchanan's love. Daisy was a woman from Jay's past who he thought he had loved, but his understanding of who she was as a person was an illusion.

Daisy was a beautiful woman who came from a wealthy family. Jay was a young man who had lied about his status but when he in fact became wealthy, using illegal means because Daisy earlier was forbidden to marry him because he was poor, Daisy still did not commit to him.

This left Gatsby wealthy but with low self-esteem and lacking love, trust and friendship despite his having gained a reputation and cachet for having thrown parties where hundreds would attend. Being so empty, Gatsby would not mingle with his guests. He tried to fool himself that he was well liked for himself and not his wealth. Ironically, at the end of the novel at his funeral, only his father who Jay had abandoned appeared proving that Jay Gatsby's new identity was an empty one for it never brought the love and true respect he so craved.

In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman was a normal common man, but that was intolerable to him. Willy strived to be a major social figure. Early in his career, he had known a successful salesman, Dave Singleman. Dave was not only liked; he was well liked by all his clients. Adoration and wealth was Willy's American dream, out of which he constructed his identity. Willy also tried raising his two sons to follow his American dream. The main conflict in the play was that Willy's sons, especially Biff, did not live up to Willy's standards. Willy had always thought that Biff would succeed due to his exceptionally handsome appearance and because he was well liked.

But Biff's confidence in his father and himself was shattered when he had found Willy with another woman. Biff had always believed and admired his father for his supposed success. Biff's confidence was never the same and he no longer viewed his father as a role model. Parents are children's primary role models and when that is lost, the children are lost in life. The problem Willy had was that he was never well liked nor a successful salesman. Telling lies to save face with himself and his family deluded Willy. A man with such pride, Willy never allowed his family to know his self-esteem was destroyed. Willy had tried to convince himself with his lies that he was not a failure. Due to his powerful self-hatred and guilt of his past memories, he becomes emotionally ill and has flashbacks of his past. For example, one of the most morbid flashbacks was a delusional conversation he had had with his deceased brother Ben. Willy had felt

he was worthless. He ultimately decided to commit suicide for the life insurance money. At the play's conclusion, t his funeral, as with Jay Gatsby, only his immediate family showed up. These were the people who really knew him as the true Willy Loman.

***The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman* are tragic stories that revolved around an individual trying to find his identity. The main characters of each, Jay Gatsby and Willy Loman, are men with low self-esteem who were dead to who they really were on the inside. Despite each man's success, Jay and Willy viewed themselves as failures. With extensive lies, their new identities, and illusions, they felt they could fool themselves into happiness. Both stories end tragically in murder and suicide but the real tragedy was that these were men who tried fooling themselves that they were well loved by society, but in reality were truly loved by family whose love they ignored or dismissed when compared to that of the larger society.**

The Good Soldier Svejk: The Way It Is And The Way It Should Be

by Paul Balsavich

One of the most famous and widely read novels published after the First World War was *The Good Soldier Svejk* written by Jaroslav Hasek, a Czech in Bohemia under the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. It has been described as one of the most powerful and brilliant literary protests ever written against oppression, corrupt officials, authoritarianism, and war. We need to look at "the way it is" implying "the way it should be" for Svejk in his time. The story begins with Svejk as a civilian when Archduke Ferdinand is assassinated at Sarejevo in Bosnia precipitating the First World War. Under the Hapsburg Monarchy ruling the province of Bohemia where Svejk lived, there were few laws protecting the citizenry from prosecutors, magistrates, or review boards. In civil life there were plain clothes inspectors seeking to jail dissidents and malcontents (13). In the military there were spies and informers betraying their comrades (79). Family letters were censored and their contents describing miserable conditions at home used as evidence to sentence their writers to lengthy prison terms. About one-third of those citizens apprehended only for interrogation stayed in jail without any interrogation for the whole four-year war (92). These abuses including physical brutality were inherent under the Emperor's rule even without detailing that aspect of human frailty we will discus later. At that time it certainly was not "the way it should be."

Although *The Good Soldier Svejk* was a popular success from the beginning, literary critics did not take it seriously for many years. However, it is as relevant for readers today as it was then. And Bosnia in the Balkans remains a hot spot even today. Svejk is the classic "little man" fighting against the establishment, officialdom, bureaucracy, and bungling by incompetents in the aristocracy, bureaucracy, military, police, doctors, and clergy holding power and control. Soldier Svejk has some semblance of the "Sad Sack" cartoon character in the US army of World War II, a hapless enlisted man in every unit relentlessly dogged by misfortune. There is also a touch of Inspector Clousseau, the bumbling French detective in the Pink

Panther movies in which inevitable disaster befalls those schemers bedeviling him.

However, Josef Svejk is revealed as a more complex, authentic character than these, and is certainly based on the experiences of his creator, Jaroslav Hasek, who actually served in the 91st Infantry Regiment of the Austrian Army and to which Svejk is attached in the novel. Yet Svejk is not the biographical duplicate of Hasek who had shown himself utterly incapable of living a life conforming to any standards of genteel society. Hasek was bohemian in lifestyle and essentially an anarchist, whereas Svejk conformed and professed adherence to law and order to the point of absurdity. Before the examining magistrate Svejk says:

> **I've probably got more on my conscience than Your Worship . . . "that's clear from the statement you've signed," said the magistrate . . . "They didn't bring any pressure on you at the police station, did they?" Why, of course not, Your Worship. I asked them myself if I had to sign it, and when they told me to do so I obeyed . . . There must be law and order (25).**

Other characters are modeled after 91st Regiment real life personnel and during his military tour Hasek absorbed material for their character development and dialogue, as well. One of the most flagrantly corrupt officials is the regimental chaplain. Young Otto Katz of Jewish ancestry had himself baptized as a Christian, and after his ordination won appointment as a Regimental Chaplain, a position he demeaned with his dissolute behavior. Another chaplain asks why he, Katz, was a chaplain:

> **"My dear colleague," answered Katz . . . "soldiers going to their deaths don't need the blessing of God for it, the chaplaincy remains a decently paid profession . . . I do what I like. I represent someone who doesn't exist and myself play the part of God" (139).**

How could Chaplain Katz be so openly venal, self-serving, and supremely hypocritical?Hasek uses satire to the utmost throughout the novel and the misadventures and travails of the ever-present Svejk make for a tale highly satirical, humorous, symbolic, irreligious, and bawdy. Svejk is lampooned as the only loyal Czech in the Austrian army of 1914, with his crowning achievement coming when he is captured by his own troops! Why did Svejk do such foolish things as

proudly proclaiming that he had left previous military service after having been officially certified by an army medical board as an imbecile? At police headquarters Svejk is led into an office:

> **. . . beaming with his natural simplicity, [Svejk] said as he came into the office:A very good evening to you all, gentlemen . . . "Take that idiotic expression off your face" . . . I can't help it replied Svejk solemnly. I was discharged from the army for idiocy and officially certified by a special commission . . . I'm an official idiot (20).**

To understand Svejk's character remember he lived under the government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with its Austrian-Germanic rigid, authoritarian rule and highly militaristic culture. In the absence of democratic principles there was an almost complete absence of civil rights as we know them. Legal protections did not apply equally to all members of society. Svejk survived in his dangerous world by adapting to the immediate situation with his own inimitable behavior. His simplicity, gentle countenance, innocent gaze, good-humored smile, pretended agreement, and never-ending stream of anecdotes completely disarm his infuriated superiors. Svejk is a survivor in any situation he finds himself, leaving his tormentors frustrated, or speechless, or just mumbling to themselves. But Svejk is not merely a long-suffering, perfectly innocent victim of oppressive society. He shows an instinctive cunning or "street smarts" which repeatedly saves him. In the few times he has the upper hand he can certainly be decisive, almost ruthless. But there are times when Svejk's complete subservience and abject acceptance of any abuse makes the reader wonder whether the medical ruling of "imbecile" might not be correct. After having been questioned at police headquarters:

> > **. . . Svejk told all the detainees that this kind of interrogation was fun . . . In the old days . . . it used to be worse . . . nowadays it's fun being locked up . . . There's no quartering, no Spanish boots. We've got bunks . . . we get soup . . . bread . . . a jug of water. We've got our latrines . . . be glad at least you're not alone here (21).**

Defending a "modern way" of imprisoning citizens and being happy about it would surely be done only by an imbecile! In civilian life, however, Svejk makes his living by selling mongrel dogs whose pedigrees he shamelessly forges to order for the breed wanted by the

buyer. He swindles and cheats his fellow Czechs without compunction, but his way of doing it seems almost funny. In the end Svejk emerges as a modest, anonymous, sympathetic hero. That was "the way it is" then.

But what about "the way it is" today? Truly, human conditions have undergone remarkable improvement with more democratic governments and more benevolent treatment of the governed than ever before. However, there are still too many of the world population living under despotic regimes, suffering varying degrees of repression and other miseries. But this is largely beyond our control or immediate power to influence. More germane is "the way it is" in our own United States. We have the great, good fortune to live under the most inspired, visionary, and revolutionary concept of political governance yet conceived by man. Our founding fathers have defined specific inalienable rights in our precious Constitution: our citizens choose their own officials, government is limited to those powers granted by the Constitution and laws passed by elected legislators, guaranteeing full and equal protection for each and every citizen. Fortuitously we are born into this priceless political legacy and fatuously tend to take it for granted. So, are we guaranteed a golden age--life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--free of the injustices satirized in the life of Svejk? Obviously not—why? It's simply that fair and equal treatment under the law depends primarily upon, and is no better than, the integrity of the human beings charged with upholding this ideal. Because all human beings are flawed their faults are reflected as inequities in society and need redress for the common good.

Just proclaiming "fair and equal" for all is easy, but it seems that our human nature does not object when some advantage, accidental or contrived, favors us rather than someone else. Yet, it's probably fair to say that our vast majority have some sense of good principle guiding relations with their fellow human beings. If this were not true, disregarding social mores and lawful regulation would inevitably result in chaos, and ultimate disappearance of our society as befell previous lost civilizations. Then where is our risk today?

Aside from outright criminals, what about individuals who maintain all outward trappings of the law-abiding society yet furtively scheme to impose their dictum by any means? They form cliques inside government, business, societies, churches, academia, armed forces, etc. They are the insider rings, the good-old-boy networks,

the underground, who insidiously undermine any semblance of a merit system without regard to "fair and equal". They operate secretly against legitimate leadership, other cliques, or some targeted individual. The intended target may be subjected to invasion of privacy, character defamation, personal harassment, even criminal trespass, theft or vandalism of property, danger to health or person. There are surely risks in "the way it is" today as there were in the time of Svejk. Is this cause for apprehension or pessimism? Rather, our spirit should be fortified when we encounter and combat incipient-criminal renegades who subvert "the way it is." Upholding "fair and equal" protection for each of our fellow citizens, however humble, is incumbent upon all of us, that our society may become in every respect the "way it should be."

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Male Womb Envy in Frankenstein and Brave New World

by Samantha Moline

Sigmund Freud contributed many ideas which have had a great impact on society and one of them was his famous Penis Envy hypothesis through which is said that women felt inferior to men because they did not have a penis. Freud's theory is not generally accepted today and ironically I believe that it is much closer to the truth to claim that men suffer from womb envy. Men's obsession with creation

An examination of two literary works, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley illustrate my assertion.

The protagonist of Mary Shelley's novel is Victor Frankenstein who discovered through his research the ability to create life. While narrating the story of his monster's creation, Frankenstein states: "What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world was now within my grasp" (Shelley 31). This statement implies that men have always sought to create human life. Their ability to create a human life in conjunction with a woman is not enough.

***Frankenstein* is set in the early nineteenth century when the natural sciences were still very primitive. Even then, men thought that science contained the answers that would enable them to create human life, independent of God or women. This novel prophetically illuminates men's determination to create life. Scientific studies have continued with these goals and are born out today. More recently there have been many new advances in the reproductive sciences. For years now, doctors have been able to fertilize embryos outside the womb through in vitro fertilization. From this we get the term test tube babies. It is theoretically possible that scientists can now create human embryos from the genetic material of an adult through the use of cloning, Though this has not yet been done with humans, scientists have been successful in creating a viable cloned lamb. Men are very close to independently creating human life.**

***Brave New World* is another farsighted novel. In this novel, Aldous Huxley portrays a vision of what human society will be in the future. The first and possibly the most shocking aspect of this new society is how human life is created. Cloning research had not yet even begun when *Brave New World* was written. Because of the reproductive**

methods portrayed in the future society of *Brave New World*, men had complete control over the population.

As one critic says Huxley creates a world where, "The first step in production of citizens is a financial transaction and a patriotic act" (Williams 11). Williams refers to the fact that in the novel, women donate their eggs as

a patriotic act and are paid for doing so. This is done today, though not because of any sense of patriotism. Women are paid to donate eggs, which doctors then use to help impregnate women who cannot otherwise conceive. This is not so shocking, but what is done with the eggs in *Brave New World* is.

"Babies of course, are born- or rather decanted- in the laboratory; and by a process known as the Bodanovskify one egg can be made to proliferate into ninety-six children, all of them identical in feature, form, and brain power" (Chamberlain 27). These ninety six babies would develop in test tubes until they would be viable in our environment like a newborn baby. Men were not content to then let nature take its course. As a character explains, "We decant our babies as socialized human beings. . . as future sewage workers or as. . . future world controllers" (Huxley 14). Instead, every potential new citizen was manipulated before birth so that role in society was predetermined.

Seventy percent of all female fetuses produced were sterilized (Huxley 13). "To obviate the possibility of childbirth", the thirty percent of girls not sterile are "put through daily Malthusian Drill in their impressionable teens" (Chamberlain 27). Huxley also writes about a small and uncivilized population coexisting outside of the modern society in *Brave New World*. The people living in these crude communes were despised as heathens and freaks. They received no social conditioning and were products of nature. They were especially despised because they continued to produce children naturally. The role of motherhood and the act of giving birth were repulsive to the advanced society of *Brave New World* (Williams 18).

Huxley's novel starkly presents men's drive for control and manipulation of human life. Huxley presents a future society implementing many new forms of technology unknown to science when the novel was written. The parallels between what scientific abilities were foretold in the novel and the present scientific abilities now are obvious. More breakthroughs in genetic manipulation and cloning are occurring everyday. In Huxley's novel, men have completely usurped the unique role of giving birth from women. Most people would believe that Huxley's novel is very fantastical. In fact the ability for men to completely take over the role of producing children is a scientific reality.

History shows that as men first became obsessed with the idea of creation, they revered the phallus. They endowed the phallus with extraordinary abilities. Men believed that they were solely responsible

for the creation of human life. As time went on and knowledge of the natural sciences increased, men learned that they were not completely responsible for the creation of new life. This was a sore blow to the male ego.

After this revelation, men transferred their obsession of the phallus to an obsession to create life through the application of science.

***Frankenstein* further illuminates men's passionate obsession to create life. The application of intense scientific research led Victor Frankenstein to discover the secret of life. That same determination drove modern scientists to make a similar discovery, the ability to clone life. Where scientists would use genetic material, Frankenstein used various body parts from assorted human corpses.**

Men can now independently reproduce themselves or anyone else. In this case, reality seems more incredible than fiction. Though we live in a world where overpopulation is becoming an increasingly major problem, jealousy of women's ability to nurture life and give birth continues to compel men to find new ways to reproduce.

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A Comparison of "Barn Burning" and *Light in August*

by Veronica Flores

"Barn Burning" (496), and *Light in August* were written between 1928 and 1936, considered "a period of extraordinarily sustained creative activity" (Millgate 1) in William Faulkner's career. In Faulkner's choice of setting, tone, character and writing style, the similarities between both works become apparent.

In "Barn Burning" and *Light In August*, the settings are in a rural Southern part of the United States. "Barn Burning" is set around the late 1800's, while in *Light in August* the period is set closer to the year it was written, 1932. This become apparent from the references to the automobile in both works. For example, in "Barn Burning" the narrator states how roughly the father struck the mules, but "...without heat. It was not even sadistic; it was exactly that same quality which in later years would cause his descendants to overrun the engine before putting a motor car in motion..." (498). This shows that animals were still the choice of transportation, and it wouldn't be until "later years" that a "motor car" would be used. In *Light in August* , the men Joe used to work with mentioned that he "'got rich'" (37) and that he was "'...riding in a new car'" (37).

Briefly, the situation in "Barn Burning" is about a share cropping family who is constantly moving due to the father's appetite for burning the barns they're supposed to be working in. Obviously, there must be a psychological reason for the father's behavior, but it's the youngest son's reaction to it which is emphasized. The young boy, Sartoris Snopes, is haunted by his father's behavior and becomes the center of the story's theme. *Light in August* has a more complicated and involved plot. It contains a series of characters and situations which are later loosely tied together at the ending. The main characters in *Light in August* , like Sartoris, are running away from or seeking something in their lives.

The most important of these characters, as far as how they relate to Sartoris, are Joe Christmas and Lena Grove. The two never actually meet, but their lives are connected from the people they both come in contact with. These supporting characters assist in the development of the main characters. Like Sartoris, Joe is running away from his life. However, Joe also runs from a haunting past,

which he knows very little about. He is biracial, and therefore was placed in an orphanage shortly after birth. He goes through life without being able to fit anywhere in this racially divided

society. Lena Grove, however is searching for the man who got her pregnant and left her.

The tone in both stories is quite similar. Since they are both set in a similar backward world of the South, both stories evoke a tragic and fantastical view of the world. In "Barn Burning", most of the folks are poor and lead a somewhat futile life.

In *Light in August* , there exists the same lifestyle of basic survival. Both represent a world divided between the haves and have nots, whites and non-whites. The stories also contain references and attitudes about blacks which demonstrate the racism in Yoknapatawpha. One example in "Barn Burning" occurs in the beginning of the story, when Sartoris' father is in court over his latest barn burning incident. His father had been arguing with a man whose hog has been getting in to his corn. After the latest incident, his father keeps the hog. He claims that a black man who was sent over to pick up the hog told him that the other man had said "'wood and hay kin burn'" (496). The next day the barn the Snopes were using was burned down.

During the court hearing the judge asks about the black man, using a derogatory word to describe him, by asking "'Where is the n-----? Have you got him?'" (496), to which the father responds: "'He was a strange n-----. I don't know what became of him.'" (496). *Light in August* also contains many racial incidents, especially since one of the subplots deals with the fact that Joe is placed in an orphanage for being half black. The most profound incident occurs when the girl Joe had wanted to marry tells him, "'Bastard! Son of a bitch! Getting me into a jam, that always treated you like you were a white man! A white man!'" (189). This occurred after Joe and this girl, a prostitute, had been discovered at a dance by his over-protective and religious foster-father at a dance. After her outburst, and being wounded by her pimp, he is devastated. He thinks to himself: "'Why, I committed murder for her. I even stole for her'" (189). Furthermore, the women in these stories are viewed in a negative manner. The emotions and reactions of these women are somewhat ridiculous. In *Light in August* , Lena's action of running away from a home where she was ill treated is credible, but the way in which the narrator describes her next actions is incredible. Lena is near the end of her pregnancy when she decides to travel alone, on foot, and without any money, believing that strangers will take care of her, as she continues her search for the man who abandoned her. She is under the belief that this man's intentions are to marry her, but that he had to go away to a job, in a town she

doesn't even know the name of. This gives the impression that Lena is brainless and incapable of reason, or that she is simply deceiving herself.

In "Barn Burning" the adult women of the Snopes family are also made out to be incapable by their acceptance of the father's behavior, but then again, in the suppressed society they live in there isn't much else they can do. Sartoris' sisters are described by the narrator as "big bovine, in a flutter of cheap ribbons" (499), and that's pretty much their description throughout the rest of the story, as no mention of their thoughts is made. The description given of his mother and aunt was that of women who were not there to make suggestions, but to work and obey the father. This is revealed when Sartoris learns that his father is about to burn down another barn, and he is trying to escape the womenfolk in order to warn the barn's owner. When his mother grabs a hold of him, the aunt says, "'Let him go. If he don't go, before God, I am going up there myself!'"(507), to which the mother replies: "'Don't you see I can't?'" (507).

The theme in "Barn Burning" is developed by the use of foreshadowing. This is demonstrated by lines such as the one found on page 496, which states: "...the smell and sense just a little of fear because mostly of despair and grief, the old fierce pull of blood." This foreshadows how Sartoris felt each time his father burned a barn and had to go before a judge because of it.

However, the theme in *Light in August* is more loosely connected and does not readily become concrete until the end, but also with the use of foreshadowing. One example of this is found on page 3, when Lena has been on the road for a while after having left her family who treated her badly and whose mistreatment had escalated after learning of her pregnancy. She thinks to herself, "...although I have not been quite a month on the road I am already in Mississippi, further from home than I have ever been before." Thus, this foreshadows later events, as she continues her travels through the country, not really in search of the baby's father, but like one character towards the end of the novel mentioned, "'I think she was just traveling'" (444).

The similarities in both stories become more apparent as the lives of the characters in each story unfold. Joe Christmas' life comes to a tragic end when he is shot down for killing his mistress. The mistress, Joanna Burden, a white middle-aged woman from the North, comes from an abolitionist family. She is isolated from the society, save for black neighbors whom she supports through educational funds. When she becomes entangled with Joe, she tries to relive her youth and take advantage of the few "good" years she had left. When

she decides to have a baby, Joe becomes enraged and kills her during one of their violent arguments. Perhaps he had been afraid of what this child, like him, would suffer for being biracial. However, some of this conflict is resolved for him right before his death when he is able to meet his biological mother's parents. Being a white Southerner, the grandfather in this case, is understandably against him. However, the grandmother loves him, and when Joe finds himself being tried for Joanna's murder, she advises him to escape and run for cover in an outcast minister's home. Here, the narrator describes his struggle between his "black blood" and "white blood" where he can't decide what actions to take. Furthermore, towards the end, "he did not kill the minister. He merely struck him with the pistol and ran on and crouched behind that table and defied the black blood for the last time, as he had been defying it for thirty years" (393-394).

He was then shot down and castrated by an overzealous militant. However, he was freed from the life that tormented him, although tragically.

Meanwhile, Lena Grove finally catches up with the man she is looking for, only to be abandoned again. A man, Byron Bunch, whom she meets in this town, helps her throughout her pregnancy. He is in love with her, despite the fact that she has another man's child. They start traveling together in search of the man, and according to another man who gives them a ride, "'I think she was just traveling. I don't think she had any idea of finding whoever it was she was following. I don't think she had ever aimed to, only she hadn't told him (Byron) yet'" (444). So, she must have known that she was never to get together again with this man, but was happy to be freed from her difficult life at home and on her way to a new beginning. Sartoris' freedom came when he turned in his father, an act which made "the grief and despair now no longer terror and fear but just grief and despair" (508). Finally free, "he did not look back" (508). All three characters had been avoiding, and at the same time searching for something in their lives. Must, had now resolved some of their conflicts.

There is a moral and psychological issue each character struggles with through life though, tragically, they do not seem to learn anything of significance as a result.

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Great Books Curriculum Faculty Symposium

The Individual and Society: Three Narratives in *Frankenstein*

by Professor Margo Gariepy

"Alas! why does man boast of sensibilities superior to the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings." – Frankenstein

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the story of three individuals and their search forplace in the society of 18th century Europe. It is the story of Robert Walton, explorer and expedition leader; of Victor Frankenstein, a scientist pushing the boundaries of knowledge; and of his tormented creation, who struggles for acceptance in a world to which he can never belong. As we will see, in these narrators Mary Shelley has reflected three faces of individualism which characterize the changing Romantic philosophy of her time.

Walton is a young man of privilege and promise. He yearns to lead an expedition into the unchartered waters of the Arctic, but his father has forbidden him the means to pursue this folly. He complains bitterly to his sister: "... do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury; but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path" (3). A fortuitous legacy frees him to launch his ill-fated expedition, and he sets off on his chivalric quest. Between Walton and Victor Frankenstein their is a passionate bond; Walton sees in Victor the same Romantically heroic role he assumes himself. They are brothers, sharing an obsession which separates them from all others.

Frankenstein has pushed the limits of science. He has effected "animation upon lifeless matter" (31) and created a loathsome monster. Victor speaks of the brainstorm which has disclosed the secret to life: "...I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect .... I was surprised, that among so many men of genius who had directed their enquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret" (31). Later in the novel he tells Walton, "... I believed myself destined for some great enterprise .... [Sentiment] of the worth of my nature supported me, when others

would have been oppressed; for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow creatures" (156-57). Here Victor is echoing a prevailing sentiment of the Romantic hero, a man whose self-sacrifice will benefit the greater good.

The benighted Creature is the third narrator, expressing a wholly different face of individualism. He is "the noble savage." Without experience of the world, the Creature is innocent and benign. However, as soon as he

experiences society, he is viciously abused: "...children shrieked .... women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones, ... I escaped" (74). Hiding near a cottage in the woods, the Creature awakens to his senses and develops resources of intelligence and fortitude. He adopts the language and manners of the people living nearby. He steals into their home to borrow the works of Milton, Plutarch, and Goethe, and he takes on the emotions and values he finds therein. He delights in the affection and compassion he observes among the family and longs to make himself known to them. Still, he is wary. He says, "... I applied much personally to my own feelings and condition. I found myself similar, yet ... strangely unlike .... I sympathised with and partly understood them, but I was unformed in mind; I was dependent on none, and related to none .... My person was hideous and my stature gigantic. What did this mean? Who was I? What was I? "(91) He continues: "... I was wretched, helpless, and alone. [And] when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me" (92).

When he encounters Victor again, he turns on him with hellish fury. He rages: "Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even *you* turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance .... I am solitary and abhorred" (93). Maddened by the prospects of wandering about to be hunted and abused, the pitiable outcast entreats Victor to create for him a companion.

"What I ask of you is reasonable ...," he implores; "I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; ... it shall content me ... (105). But he finds scant sympathy in Victor. "I swear to you," vows the Creature, "by the earth which I inhabit, and by you that made me, that with the companion you bestow I will quit the neighbourhood of man, and dwell, as it may chance, in the most savage of places. My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy! My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments I shall not curse my maker" (106).

The poignant argument at last persuades Victor, and he sets about his loathsome task. But when he has finished, the horror of what he has done overcomes him, and he destroys the female he has made. Thus, the Creature

is betrayed again by the humanity he has relied upon for protection and compassion, and he enacts his terrible revenge -- he will destroy every one that Victor loves.

Thus we see that the three narratives of the novel portray three faces of the Romantic individual. The first two are true Romantic heroes – individualists who stake a claim on posterity; whose arrogance is grounded in the privilege of their class and the limitless opportunity of the age. But the third is a perversion of them; he is the anti-hero, the pariah. He is the embodiment of a frustrated underclass; seduced by Romantic ideals of equality and brotherhood --and betrayed by them -- he exacts his inexorable revenge.

Memory, Computer Technology, and Identity at the New Millennium

by Professor Joo Lee

"Those who acquire [the art of writing] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources." (Plato's *Phaedrus*)

The body provides what appears to be a definitive measure of personal identity. But just as the body occupies space, the soul occupies time. By using the word "soul," I do not mean to imply anything necessarily religious. We do, however, make a distinction between the body and the soul—between an outer and an inner life—in everyday language, so it would be disingenuous to drop this distinction altogether. I am using the word "soul" in the Classically Greek sense, encompassing all of those qualities we usually attach to a person's inner life, setting aside the question of what that exactly entails. With regard to the soul, then, there is no surer way to determine personal identity than through memory. My beliefs, desires, and fears may change over time; but because I *remember* these changes, I can be reasonably certain that it is "I" who have experienced them. That idealistic, naïve adolescent I remember was me, not some complete stranger—although I may find myself astonished that this should be the case. I share this astonishment with Augustine, who, in his Confessions, finds himself unable to account for the apparent "loss" of his infancy. Yet despite this potential experience of self-alienation, memory enables us to constitute at least the semblance of an integral self.

When memory is threatened, so is the sense of identity. The total loss of memory is a terrifying prospect. Alzheimer's disease reduces individuals to nameless shadows without the substance provided by a past. The possibility of amnesia reminds us of how tenuous our grasp of personal identity really is. In the 1991 movie *Shattered*, the protagonist suffers a disfiguring accident in which he also loses his memory. Unbeknownst to him, his reconstructive surgery was not so much a reconstruction as it was a transformation: he is reshaped in the image of the man he murdered. Having lost his memory, he adopts the identity of the man he now physically

resembles. You can imagine his shock when he discovers the truth. The reason this movie is so disturbing is that it questions the legitimacy of personal identity. In a sense, it summons Descartes' infamous evil genius by

putting both the physical and spiritual criteria of identity into doubt. With neither body nor memory, one is left with literally no-thing.

Alzheimer's disease and traumatic amnesia are, of course, limit cases. But our hold over ourselves is no less uncertain under "normal" conditions. Freud and psychoanalysis have alerted us to the manufactured quality of all of our memories. Furthermore, Sartre and existentialism would insist that any identity we ascribe to ourselves is a matter of *bad-faith*. Yet we tenaciously hold on to the idea of personal identity. In the "real world," in fact, we cannot function without it. At the surface, we meticulously construct our identities, from the clothes we wear to the texts that line our bookshelves. Below the surface, we maintain identity through a complex network of beliefs, ideals, and the memories upon which they are based.

The legitimacy of this identity is not something I want to dispute. Rather, I would like to consider how our sense of identity—the stuff of the "soul"—has changed in the light of recent technological advancements. Computers have fundamentally altered the way we look at the world and at ourselves. We have progressively come to see the truth of reality as based on a code. A genetic reduction is problematic enough, but a reduction to digital data may be even more disquieting. Biology and technology come together in the futuristic science fiction genre of cyber-punk. Novels like William Gibson's *Neuromancer* undermine the traditional relationship between body and soul, between matter and spirit. Spirit becomes nothing more than matter in its transcription onto magnetic tape. Although personal memory currently plays the central role in our sense of individual identity, it is not difficult to envision a day when that role will be seized by hard drives. Already, I am deathly afraid of losing my hard drive—the collection of fragmented thoughts that I hope to be my posthumous legacy—to some insidious virus that would destroy my aspirations to immortality. With the progress of technology, our sense of self is becoming increasingly a function of cold, external determinants.

The warmth of personal memory is being displaced by cold, digital data. Letters—a medium of communication that demanded the touch of a friend's hand on a sheet of paper, which sometimes even conveyed magic scents and associations—are fast becoming antiquated as e-mail gains new adherents every day. We are losing our souls to magnetic tape and electrical impulses. Personal identity is being fractured and dispersed in what Jean Baudrillard calls "the ecstasy of communication." In the epigram to this paper, Plato warns

us of the dangers of writing. If Plato is right about the function of memory, the dangers of writing pale in comparison to the dangers that present themselves in the digital age.

Who am I? The answer to this question has never been so difficult to discern. I am hesitant to locate the truth of my being in something as impersonal as my genetic code or the digital data to which my thoughts can be reduced. Like the texts in my bookcase, the files in my hard drive reflect who I am without defining all that I am. Against the tide of computer technology, I still want to maintain that I have a soul that cannot be reduced to matter. Plato saw memory as the key to the soul. So too did Marcel Proust. Unlike Plato, however, Proust does not rely on an elaborate metaphysics to account for the reality of the soul. Instead, Proust locates the truth of identity in the deep recesses of a thoroughly material and unconscious—or, more exactly, involuntary—memory. For Proust, involuntary memory is something that transcends consciousness—it is lived, not thought. For this reason, it cannot be reduced to digital data. When that unique odor of a summer night's rain wafts into my den, I am miraculously transported to my youth. This transportation is immediate, and it attests to the continuity of the soul through time. Furthermore, unlike voluntary memory, involuntary memory does not present past selves as something alien. In the experiences of involuntary memory, I am my present self, but I am simultaneously my past self, and this simultaneity is where I can locate my soul. No digital media can alienate me from my involuntary memories—they are too personal, escaping any impersonal reductions. They are ultimately, in fact, the stuff of the soul. Yet there is always the chance that involuntary memories may amount to nothing more than romantic illusions, reflections of an unconscious that will eventually be mapped and codified like every other aspect of human behavior. But this much is clear: if there is a soul to be found in today's information age, it can only be found through some form of irreducible memory.

The Past as Prologue and The Search for Identity

by Professor Harriet Rosenman

The Phi Theta Kappa Honors Topic, The Past as Prologue, is the perfect entry to the current Great Books Program topic, the Search for Identity. We develop our identities not through our genetic makeup but through the past experiences we have had. It is through the music to which we listen, the conversations in which we participate, the classes that we have taken in school, and primarily through the literature we read that we seek to determine who we are. The characters we meet in this literature "[challenge] us to confront ourselves in them...They continue to inform us [of] who we are" (Rutter xi).

For example, Homer's poem, *The Odyssey*, is the story of Odysseus, a valiant Greek warrior who fought for 10 years in the Trojan war, a war waged to retrieve the beautiful Helen who left her husband Menelaos and ran off with Paris, a Trojan prince. After the Greeks' victory, Odysseus begins his voyage home to Ithaca where his wife Penelope waits with their son Telemachos who was born just before Odysseus had left for Troy.

In the 10 years it takes for Odysseus to reach Ithaca, he shows himself to be a rather unusual type of hero. Contrary to the bravery of Achilles, the archetypal hero of the *Iliad*, Homer's poem about the events in Troy, Odysseus is a hero because of his craftiness and his intelligence. Not perfect, he makes mistakes because of his egotism. He is also a hero who refuses to accept the immortality offered by Calypso, a beautiful goddess who has kept him captive on her island for 7 years. Instead, he is a husband hero who does not give up his dream of returning home to Penelope and Telemachos.

Who we are and when we are determine how we look at the specifics of the story. For example, Alfred Lord Tennyson, a 19th century English poet, and James Joyce, a 20th century Irish novelist, present different views of Odysseus. According to Tennyson, Odysseus is an adventurer, a hero that longs for the knowledge that can be gained only by experience. In his poem, *Ulysses* (which is the Roman name for the Greek Odysseus), he describes Odysseus 3 years after he has returned to Ithaca. As the speaker in Tennyson's poem, Odysseus says that he is bored and must set out for new adventures. He describes himself as being saddled with an "aged wife" and longing for more adventure. He says, "I cannot rest from travel; I will

drink/ Life to the lees." This metaphor illustrates how he wants to experience all that he possibly can, to grab all of the gusto he can get. To use

Matthew Arnold's analogy, he wants to squeeze the last drop of moisture from the towel of life. When he says, "I am a part of all that I have met", he echoes the idea that we are what we have experienced. He pledges "To follow knowledge like a sinking star, / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." And so, although by this time he knows that he is old, he is not ready to give up. Instead, he sets out on a new voyage, "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Tennyson's praise of Odysseus as a person who prizes knowledge is much different from a modern feminist interpretation of Odysseus as a philandering husband who has been playing around for at least 8 years with two beautiful goddesses while his faithful wife Penelope has stayed home weeping for her absent husband and refusing to take one of the young suitors wooing her as a new mate.

Tennyson's heroic picture of Odysseus is also very different from that of James Joyce in his novel, *Ulysses.* Joyce transforms Odysseus into Leopold Bloom, a nondescript man in Dublin whose odyssey consists of his wanderings in that city through the course of only one full day, June 16, 1904. Ultimately Bloom returns to his wife Molly at the end of the book, just as Odysseus returns to Penelope at the end of *The Odyssey.* However, all during the day Bloom has been thinking about his wife and the meeting she is going to have at 4:00 p.m. with Blazes Boylan, her business associate with whom she is going to have an affair. Bloom knows about it, thinks about it much of the day, but does not go home to interrupt. What kind of a husband is he? What kind of a hero is he?

Odysseus gives up an offer of immortality from a beautiful goddess to return to his wife--to preserve the sanctity of the family. Bloom goes back to Molly at the end of the evening, after midnight, to do the same thing. The last 40 pages of Joyce's *Ulysses* consists of a soliloquy by Molly, an interior monologue in which she examines her life, her relationship with Bloom, how they fell in love, what happened to their marriage, and her feelings about Blazes Boylen. She ends the soliloquy with remembrances about having met Bloom when she was a young girl in Gibralter. She says, "I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes." As Molly ends with the word "Yes," she is affirming her love for Bloom and her hope that their marriage will bloom once again.

One might interpret Joyce's approach to domesticity and marriage as being comparable to Homer's, but if Odysseus was the philanderer who returned to the faithful Penelope, perhaps Joyce is presenting Molly as the philanderess who ultimately returns to Bloom. So what kind of a hero is Odysseus? Is he a hero because he gives up Calypso and immortality for domestic bliss with Penelope? What kind of a hero is Bloom? Is it heroic for him to acquiesce in his wife's infidelity? Or is it more heroic for him to realize that his marriage can still be saved? And since it is Molly who has the last word in *Ulysses*, is her emphatic "yes" *her* heroic acceptance of the past, both hers and Bloom's, and the prologue to a renewal of the marriage?

As we consider such questions about the reunions of Odysseus and Penelope and Leopold Bloom and Molly, we discover that there are no easy answers to these inquiries. But discussing these issues leads us to question our own lives: What kinds of heroes are we? What kinds of husbands and wives are we or do we expect to be? And, finally, what discoveries can we make about who we really are?

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Hamlet and the Problem of Identity

By Professor Phillip Virgen

More has been said and written about William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* than any other text in the Western literary tradition. For me to add my poor two cents worth, is tantamount to foolishness and audacity. But please excuse it as the sort of foolishness and audacity engendered by first love. Shakespeare's plays, and especially the poetic language that infuses all of his writing, was, and still is, my first love. First loves also inspire epiphanies: brief moments of sudden insight. My moment of insight occurred when, as a college sophomore, I first read *Hamlet*. Although I would go on to read many more plays by Shakespeare, that reading of *Hamlet* changed my life forever. Regardless of whether or not I became a professor of literature, a construction worker like my father or a cowboy-boot maker like my grandfather, I knew then that reading, studying, acting, and teaching Shakespeare's plays could—no MUST—always be a part of my life. You are probably wondering what (or even how) the son of an ex-Marine who was also a high school dropout and the grandson of an abuelito/grandfather who never learned to read or write in either English or Spanish, --could find so fascinating in a four hundred year-old text? I was fascinated by Shakespeare's poetic language, language that drove me (and drives my students) to marginal footnotes and opposite-page glossaries for definitions of words. But despite the archaic and unfamiliar vocabulary, Shakespeare's poetic language was somewhat familiar in its rhythms and cadences because that English informed the English I had learned from the Authorized version of the Bible, my other great first love. However, it was primarily the character of Hamlet who, because of extraordinary events, is forced to question all he thinks he knows to be true, captured my imagination. "Who am I?" is the question Hamlet and all of us ask.

Michael Neill illuminates the attraction of the play for me: "Over the sensationalism and rough energy of a conventional revenge plot is placed a sophisticated psychological drama whose most intense action belongs to the interior world of soliloquy." Neill's statement seems surprising in light of the fact that by the end of the play nine people will have died, five of them killed by Hamlet. Indeed, in the final scene of the play four dead bodies will litter the Danish throne room; a sight which the young Fortinbras says "becomes the field [of war] but here shows much amiss" (*Hamlet* 5.2.447). How then, can the

"interior world" of Hamlet be more intense? It is more intense because as mentioned earlier, extraordinary events have forced Hamlet to question everything he held true.

While he is away at college, Hamlet's father, King Hamlet, dies suddenly. After a brief interim, Hamlet's mother, Queen Gertrude, remarries. Her new husband, Claudius, becomes the king of Denmark. Hamlet returns for the funeral of his father and is present at the marriage of his mother to Claudius. Hamlet is deeply saddened by the death of his father and disturbed by his mother's subsequent wedding. His feelings are evident in the remarks he makes to his friend Horatio: "Thrift, thrift Horatio. The funeral baked meats/Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables./Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven/ Or ever I had seen that day" (1.2.187-90). Whatever grief and misgivings Hamlet feels, they are nothing compared to what he finds out next.

Unbeknownst to Hamlet, his father's ghost has been seen by members of the Danish night watch. The sight of King Hamlet's ghost terrifies the watch, as well as Horatio, who also sees the ghostly apparition. Horatio tells young Hamlet what they have seen and urges him to also watch. The ghost does reappear and it speaks to Prince Hamlet. What the ghost of Hamlet's father tells, him, turns Hamlet's world upside down and challenges everything he thought was true. In brief, the ghost tells Hamlet that his death was not accidental, not the result of a serpent's bite, but an act of murder. The murderer was Claudius, King Hamlet's own brother, who poured poison in King Hamlet's ear as he slept. Although Claudius now wears the crown of Denmark, the ghost urges Hamlet to revenge his murder by killing Claudius. The Ghost tells Hamlet:

> **Let not the royal bed of Denmark be**
> **A couch for luxury and damned incest.**
> **But howsoever thou pursues this act,**
> **Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive**
> **Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven**
> **And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge**
> **To prick and sting her. (1.5.89-95)**

The words uttered by the ghost change everything in Hamlet's life, from his appearance to his actions. Gone is the Hamlet Ophelia once knew and perhaps loved:

> **The courtiers, soldiers, scholars eye, tongue, sound**
> **The expectation and rose of the fair state**
> **The glass of fashion and the mold of form,**
> **The observed of all observers. (3.1.150-54)**

Ophelia laments the change in Hamlet: What a noble mind is here overthrown!. . . quite, quite down" (3.1. 149, 153).

Hamlet is thrust onto a dilemma. One horn that impales him is the ghost's injunction to remember him by revenging his murder. The other

horn of the dilemma is his distress over how the ghost's news has affected his relationships with all those whom he loves: Ophelia, his mother, and life. Although the Ghost has asked him to remember, Hamlet is also forced to re-evaluate. Hamlet's relationship to Ophelia is influenced by the repugnance and disgust he now feels at his mother's "o'er hasty marriage" to his uncle Claudius. That disgust at the "damned incest" spills over into his rejection of Opelia's love, which coupled with her father Polonius'death, drives Ophelia into madness and death.What remains fascinating to me about Hamlet is that his search for answers to the question "Who am I?' is that what he knows is all changed by the ghost's words. Hamlet remembers the ghost's injunction to leave his mother to heaven, but the news forces him to re-evaluate his attitude and feelings toward his mother. Of his mother's remarriage he says it is "such an act that blurs the grace and blush of modesty/ Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose/ From the fair forehead of innocent love/ And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows as false as dicers oaths" (3.4.40-45).

Hamlet's view of life is also newly jaded, the consequence of remembering and re-evaluating. He sees Denmark as a rank, oergrown garden, full of weeds and stinking of corruption. In Act Two Hamlet states that now, "this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air. . . a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors" (2.2.293-297). Furthermore, Hamlet states that "Man delights not me, nor women neither" (303-304). These are harsh statements; they are statements uttered by an individual whose psyche has been shattered by his father's murder and his mother's apparent incest. His psyche is so broken that the madness he feigns becomes real madness that lashes out in rash acts of violence.

Hamlet seeks answers to his problems, but just as we grope our way to understanding in fits and starts, Hamlet also delays his "solution"—revenging his father's murder. He delays because he must test the ghost's story; because he must confront his mother, and because he must re-evaluate the new relationships, which are "little more than kin, but less than kind." Hamlet arrives at a final solution—but that solution is compounded of mistakes, passion, filial duty, betrayal and unfortunate accident.

I will not spoil the play for you by telling you how it "ends;" my wish is that you will all become readers of *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* is a play, that as Susanne Wofford reminds us, invites us to "be among the shapers of future understandings of *Hamlet*, which will serve to articulate the concern of future ages as much as they do the moral

lessons of the past. *Hamlet* will continue to puzzle and possess the minds of future generations, who can make the play their own only by in turn taking critical possession of it. "Remember me!" says the play, and we will not forget."

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