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Narrative Methods and Social Contexts in the Novel of Dislocation

by

Gisèle Marie Baxter

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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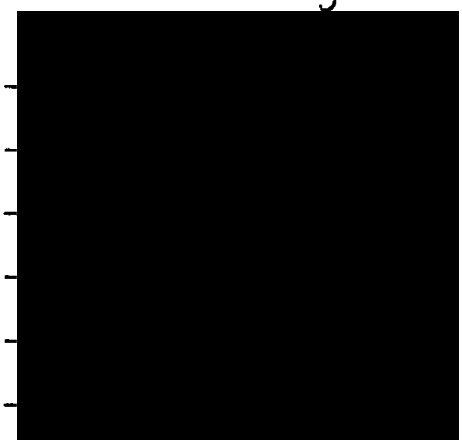

D A L H O U S I E U N I V E R S I T Y

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Loretta Baxter,

and to my brother, Charles Baxter.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation treats fiction which depends on a crisis in the relationship of the protagonist to his or her environment. The forms of dislocation examined vary in type but always involve an awareness of and inability to reconcile disparate yet simultaneous elements of existence. I am concerned with narrative devices used to relate protagonists to their social contexts. While my textual examinations are more formal than polemical in nature, my treatment of narrative methods is grounded in the social and cultural contexts they imply.

Chapter One contrasts D.H. Lawrence's Kangaroo and Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano. Each novel has as its protagonist a man whose self-imposed exile (resulting from his experience of the First World War) reflects a dislocation arising from a fragmented perception of himself, of his personal commitments (especially his marriage) and of global realities.

Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children is the subject of Chapter Two. All three protagonists of this novel experience dislocation within their large yet isolated family, as well as in their unsuccessful attempts to join other social or cultural groups.

Chapter Three examines George Orwell's Coming Up for Air and Evelyn Waugh's Sword of Honour trilogy. For both writers, the Second World War represents the rise of a modern age which threatens traditional sources of meaning. The protagonists' awareness of this development leads to a crisis in perception which precludes genuine integration in the social mainstream.

Chapter Four treats three novels (A Start in Life, Providence and Hotel du Lac) by Anita Brookner, whose explorations of the loneliness of intelligent, apparently successful women form the most intensely personal narratives in my analysis.

ABBREVIATIONS

(Editions identified in chapters and bibliography.)

K	Kangaroo
U	Under the Volcano
M	The Man Who Loved Children
CA	Coming Up for Air
MA	Men at Arms
OG	Officers and Gentlemen
US	Unconditional Surrender
S	A Start in Life
P	Providence
H	Hotel du Lac

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INTRODUCTION

> And yet it remains true, looking at it from experience, that there are certain feelings, certain relationships, certain fusions and as relevantly certain dislocations, which can only be conceived in the novel, which indeed demand the novel....
>
> Raymond Williams, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence[1]

We live in a world in which events of historical consequence coincide with those of personal significance, yet the relation between individuals and events is neither harmonious nor patterned. This dissonance is not new, but the inability to explain it becomes a special problem in literature of the mid-twentieth century. This study is an exploration of narrative methods and social contexts in selected novels of dislocation (published between 1923 and 1984): fiction which depends on a particular sort of crisis in the relationship of the protagonist to his or her environment. For many of these protagonists, the crisis arises from direct or indirect experience of one of the century's World Wars. The environments in which the forms of dislocation examined exist can be social, economic, geographical, cultural or sexual: the protagonists experience exclusion or alienation through rebellion, rejection or self-imposed exile. Yet these protagonists are dislocated, in my definition of the word,

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[1] Raymond Williams, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970) 190.

less because of the pressure of external forces than because of an awareness of fragmentation and an inability to reconcile dissonant elements of existence.

In The Vanishing Hero, Sean O'Faolain argues that by the 1920s, the socially acceptable hero had given way in literature to a character who "like his author-creator....is never able to see any Pattern in life and rarely its Destination."[2] Whether such patterns ever did or did not exist at other times, the predicament O'Faolain suggests is true of the novels I have chosen for my discussion: D.H. Lawrence's Kangaroo (1923), Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano (1947), Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children (1940), George Orwell's Coming Up for Air (1939), Evelyn Waugh's Sword of Honour trilogy (1952-1962), and Anita Brookner's A Start in Life (1981), Providence (1982) and Hotel du Lac (1984). However, the protagonists of these novels are in some way concerned with patterns, with finding a place in a world which can be either their particular set of circumstances or their era. Obviously, these are differing sorts of novels. My concern is to differentiate among the kinds of dislocation they present, and uncover the common element which is the crisis in perception and reconciliation that I have mentioned. Some of the novels are more ambitious, complex

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[2] Sean O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero: studies in novelists of the twenties (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1956) 17.

and wide-ranging than others. For example, the first three texts lend themselves to self-contained discussion; those following seem to demand mention of the author's other work. Yet the experience treated by Orwell, Waugh and Brookner is as significant and is explored as trenchantly as that of the protagonists presented by Lawrence, Lowry and Stead.

Terry Eagleton's analysis of the transition between nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction provides a context for my treatment of the use of focus in the novels I have selected. In Exiles and Emigrés, he contends that a new sort of class consciousness on the part of writers has limited "that interaction between particular commitments and the structure of a whole society [which] was active and vigorous enough, whether as conflict or congruency, for great literature to be possible."[3] He develops from this premise a dichotomy between the localized vision of novelists like Orwell and Waugh and the totalizing perspective only achieved in this century by writers operating from a vantage of cultural detachment, like Eliot, Lawrence and Yeats. Whereas for the latter, "the materials of a directly personal response to the quality of a whole society can be worked and extended into confidently public and representative

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[3] Terry Eagleton, Exiles and Emigrés: Studies in Modern Literature (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970) 11.

terms,"[4] Orwell and Waugh produce fiction "incapable either of embracing, or transcending, the society to which they represented a critical reaction, and yet with which they shared a common basis of assumptions."[5] It would be too simple merely to accept this premise as a means of categorizing the novels I am examining (since Stead's and Brookner's work would both prove problematic). However, Eagleton's differentiation is useful for analyzing protagonistic perspective, and acknowledges the social realities which are the basis of the fiction discussed in this thesis.

I am concerned with the way social realities are implied and presented in these specific novels. This concern at least partly explains my choice of realistic over obviously experimental fiction: these texts are not so much concerned with linguistic originality and virtuosity as with characterization achieved through both internalization and detailed contextualization (Kangaroo is partly an exception).[6] Yet the "real world" beyond the

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[4] Eagleton 223.

[5] Eagleton 14.

[6] According to David Lodge, realism is a limited yet valuable approach, now that art "can no longer compete with life on equal terms, showing the universal in the particular....[We] seek to adjust our lives, individually and communally, to some order or system of values which, however, we know is always at the mercy of chance and contingency. It is this system of reality which realism imitates...." (33-34).
David Lodge, The Novelist at the Crossroads, and

novels is always in them. There is no clearly definable generic model of the "novel of dislocation." While elements of dislocation appear in many and diverse works, not every such novel is a novel of dislocation. Novels of dislocation make as their subject a condition of the protagonist which resembles the state described by Fredric Jameson: a sense of the fragmentation pervading both existence and the individual's perception of it. In Jameson, Althusser, Marx, William Dowling claims that "Jameson's argument will always demand that we hold in a simultaneous focus a world objectively estranged or fragmented and a perception of that world, existing in the mutually estranged faculties and senses of the 'individual mind,' just as powerfully constituted by the alienation of its elements from one another and from the whole."[7] Jameson in his own preface brings the problems of focus to bear on "the all-informing process of narrative, which I

Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971).

As well, Kerry McSweeney argues that "there is a place in serious contemporary fiction for a self-aware realism that combines in constructive and enriching ways the inevitable self-consciousness of the present day with the representative and communicative strengths of the traditional novel" (198).

Kerry McSweeney, Four Contemporary Novelists: Angus Wilson, Brian Moore, John Fowles, V.S. Naipaul (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; London: Scolar Press, 1983).

[7] William C. Dowling, Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to The Political Unconscious (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984) 25.

take to be (here using the shorthand of philosophical idealism) the central function or instance of the human mind."[8] The critical approach which Jameson outlines, in its emphasis on totalization and strategies of containment, provides a basis for the way in which I would like to link the novels I have chosen:[9]

> From this perspective the convenient working distinction between cultural texts that are social and political and those that are not becomes something worse than an error: namely, a symptom and a reinforcement of the reification and privatization of contemporary life. Such a distinction reconfirms that structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and the private, between the social and the psychological, or the political and the poetic, between history or society and the "individual," which -- the tendential law of social life under capitalism -- maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyzes our thinking about time and change just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself.[10]

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[8] Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981) 13.

[9] This basis is more cautious than that offered by Eagleton. Eagleton's definitions of totalization and transcendence are worth citing, for like Jameson, he does not assume that the nineteenth century possessed a truth superior to current available perceptions, but rather a more comprehensive way of organizing the data of existence. He considers the former "not a statically conceived whole, but the act of grasping the elements of a culture in their living and changing interrelations," while the latter is "not a spiritual movement beyond history and culture, but the historical action of projecting oneself beyond the limits and pressure of a particular settlement into a wider perspective" (10n).

[10] Jameson 20.

This unifying premise suggests the argument that opens Mikhail Bakhtin's essay "Discourse in the Novel" (1934-35), which firmly roots literary style in the society producing it and blurs the distinction between formalism and ideology. Bakhtin claims "that the study of verbal art can and must overcome the divorce between an abstract 'formal' approach and an equally abstract 'ideological' approach. Form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon -- social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning."[11] Bakhtin's conception of the novel as a living artistic representation, unified in organization if varied in form and especially in use of voice, points to some obvious characteristics of the novels I shall discuss, and provides a way to understand the function of narrative perspective and the usefulness of realism in fiction of dislocation. Through presenting recognizable characters and contexts, and refusing either authorial omniscience or a consistent, singular and trustworthy protagonistic perspective, these novels incorporate in their structure a sense of the ambiguous relationships between the

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[11] M.M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 259.

protagonist and his or her world, and a sense of the dissonant elements of existence itself. What Bakhtin terms heteroglossia and dialogism are foregrounded structural devices of these works, evoking both the awareness and the limitation of the protagonists. For the sort of analysis which I am undertaking, I find especially useful Bakhtin's explorations of the interaction of fictional perspectives, and of the social function of the novel.

If, as Jameson contends, ideologies serve as strategies of containment,[12] means of making manageable the immensity of existence and of conceiving one's place in society and history, then dislocation implies a questioning of these strategies.[13] The dislocated protagonist has a clearer conception of fragmentation than others in his or her social context: an awareness, if not a full understanding, which is unshared by those who

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[12] Dowling claims that Jameson sees "ideology not as false consciousness but as ideological closure: that is, as the approximation of some truth about the totality that, given the limitations always imposed by the historical process, stands in for the deeper truth it exists to deny" (53).

[13] However, I must, at this point, distance myself from the full implications of Jameson's theory of narrative and political agenda, as well as those of Eagleton and Bakhtin. I am not so much concerned with the validity of the Utopian impulse in the texts I have chosen as with the coexistence of public and private realities. The theories of Jameson, Eagleton and Bakhtin illustrate how this coexistence, and perception of it, is presented in a variety of texts; my interest in these theories is more formal than polemical.

adhere to a confident world view, something which is seldom available without qualification in modern fiction. Orwell, Waugh and Brookner allow their protagonists a more deliberate employment of such strategies of containment than that of the people around them. Bowling's proletarian resiliency, Guy's withdrawal into Catholicism, and the existentialism of Brookner's women permit them ways of maintaining a sense of integrity. Lawrence and Lowry present instead a deep mistrust of all such strategies (except marriage in Kangaroo and, to an extent, political commitment in Under the Volcano). And Stead invests Louisa Pollit with a penetrating, transcendent consciousness of these limited ways of perceiving the world. Lawrence does this with Richard Somers, but is less optimistic about the world perceived.

The thematic or focal difference among the novels I have chosen rests largely with perception of the world as a whole. A sense of "the world" and an explicit historicity are present in all of these works, or their protagonists would not experience what I term dislocation. The difference lies in the sense of relationship to the world evoked through structure and perspective. For example, whereas Kitty Maule in Brookner's Providence feels drawn to French Romanticism because it is something like the war for which she does not feel responsible, Geoffrey Firmin in Under the Volcano and Richard Somers in

Kangaroo are tormented and driven by a deep acknowledgement of their global responsibilities. They are also the only ones presented in actual physical exile, though exile serves less as a source of alienation than as a symbol of the dislocation engendered by each man's experience of the First World War and his subsequent inability to reconcile personal desires and hopes with a world in which such physical and moral devastation can occur. Kitty, like Orwell's George Bowling and Waugh's Guy Crouchback, is much more a passive product of, than consciously engaged by, the major events of twentieth century history. However, Brookner's heroines (like Lawrence's Somers and Stead's Louie) have the courage to "rewrite" given strategies of containment; even if their choices of profession lead to difficulties in social integration, in abandoning the lives of their culturally displaced parents they retain the discipline of their social traditions. They maintain their integrity by making conscious choices and eventually conscious compromises. Guy in his Catholicism seems of all the characters nearest to successful adoption of a totalizing principle, but ultimately, like Brookner's protagonists and his nearer contemporary George Bowling (although these others acknowledge that existence may well be ultimately absurd), he chooses one philosophical fragment over several others available. Hence, he remains incapable of

transcendence: he withdraws from the mainstream of his social class, while Bowling, albeit grudgingly but without apparent alternative, reenters that of his.

In several ways, Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children is the anomaly of the lot in its detachment from concern with British culture. This novel about a family is set in the United States, although written by an Australian who lived in England and Continental Europe as well as in America. The world, in all its fragmentation, becomes in this book the family, enclosing and enriching and alienating and dividing all at once. Louie's inability to reconcile her artistic aspiration and sense of organic link to the world as a whole (her totalizing vision) with the repression experienced within the family represents the condition discussed in all of my chapters. Her parents' individual states of dislocation are largely premised on the discrepancy between what they are and how they see themselves, or between what they believe is their due and what is available to them. Louie somehow grasps all of the possibilities open to her and within her limitations (chiefly of age and experience) weighs them. Her father Sam and his wife Henny see only a few options and so turn to monomania and despair. In his discussion of the limitations of Freudian psychoanalysis, Jameson considers the problems associated with the privatization of experience, which Louie and other members of her

isolated family face: "To return to that new event which was the emergence of psychoanalysis, it should be clear that the autonomization of the family as a private space within the nascent public sphere of bourgeois society, and as the 'specialization' by which childhood and the family situation are qualitatively differentiated from other biographical experiences, are only features of a far more general process of social development, which also includes the autonomization of sexuality."[14] Louie transcends the family because, whether consciously or subconsciously, she recognizes its structural decay and rejects conformity in this set of relationships, although she has greater natural abilities in the familial virtues of communication and nurturing than anyone else in her family. She runs away to see the world -- and Stead implies that she will achieve some level of artistic fulfilment -- but Louie still remains dislocated. She seems unable to reconcile her passionate individuality with her talent for friendship; there is a tension in all of her social connections which precipitates a need to escape.

The chapters of this dissertation are organized in roughly chronological order by year of publication. They move from consideration of a totalizing perspective to discussion of a particularized and private vision. What I propose in these chapters is a way of looking at

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[14] Jameson 64.

protagonists in diverse realistic texts, in terms of their awareness of and inability to reconcile elements of existence. Whether existence is ultimately absurd, divine or subject to inexorable history[15] (and it is not my intention to determine which), the simultaneity of its vastly dissonant elements challenges and impinges upon its human subjects in innumerable ways. I do not want to devalue the self or to deny the reality of the individual. However, the complex network of social and cultural contexts in which every individual exists tends to preclude a purely private conception of existence. Those who lack a comprehensive world view and a confident means of categorizing levels of experience are dislocated, as are those who merely recognize the limitations of those available. The state of dislocation is more lonely and discouraging than the interpretation offered by any all-inclusive world-view, but except in the case of Lowry's Consul (who in his distorted prescience loses his ability to compromise as well as his ability to reconcile), dislocation is not necessarily a state of despair. Rather, it is a more clearsighted view of the highly differentiated elements of living than most members of the

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[15] According to Jameson, "History is what hurts, it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis, which its 'ruses' turn into grisly and ironic reversals of their overt intention. But this History can be apprehended only through its effects, and never directly as some reified force" (102).

society presented hold, and for most of the protagonists I shall examine, the only way of surviving with a reasonable amount of integrity. For Richard Somers and Louisa Pollit, who, like their creators, are artists, dislocation is a means of transcending the social world as it is available to them, and of conceiving it as a whole beyond predefined social structures. Their expansive vision approaches the sort of totalization which Bakhtin endorses:

> Opposed to this little world, a world fated to perish, there is a great but abstract world, where people are out of contact with each other, egoistically sealed-off from each other, greedily practical; where labor is differentiated and mechanized, where objects are alienated from the labor that produced them. It is necessary to constitute this great world on a new basis, to render it familiar, to humanize it. It is necessary to find a new relationship to nature, not to the little nature of one's own corner of the world but to the big nature of the great world, to all the phenomena of the solar system, to the wealth excavated from the earth's core, to a variety of geographical locations and continents. In place of the limited idyllic collective, a new collective must be established capable of embracing all humanity.[16]

However, none of the novels under consideration in this dissertation is oriented towards such a positive view of the future. Those which have prophetic qualities (Under the Volcano, Coming Up for Air and to an extent Kangaroo) are concerned with the possibility of another

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[16] Bakhtin 234.

global war. Dislocation is generally treated as a function of living in the present. In the following chapters, I want to examine that function in different historical contexts, and then to consider briefly the existence of other sorts of fiction of dislocation, in a world in which our personal contingencies of living are currently coinciding with a breathtaking array of consequential events around the world.

CHAPTER ONE: Lawrence and Lowry

After such knowledge, what forgiveness?
T.S. Eliot, "Gerontion"[1]

Introduction

Both D.H. Lawrence's Kangaroo[2] and Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano[3] are set in the context of global upheaval. Lawrence's novel treats the atmosphere of disillusionment following the First World War; Lowry's concern is the ominous period preceding the Second. This upheaval renders the protagonists of both novels acutely aware of, if unable to reconcile, dissonant yet simultaneous elements of public and private existence. While the works differ structurally and thematically, they contain remarkably similar situations. Hence, they merit comparison as novels of dislocation, although I have found no critical discussion of them in conjunction.

In both novels, I intend to explore the use of event (especially in relation to action) as well as perspective. Both the events in the text and the shifting perspectives of the text, define an awareness of dissonance, and hence

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[1] T.S. Eliot, "Gerontion" (1920), Selected Poems (1954; London: Faber and Faber, 1982) 32.

[2] Edition used throughout: D.H. Lawrence, Kangaroo, (1923; Penguin Books, in association with William Heinemann Ltd., 1980).

[3] Edition used throughout: Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano (1947; Penguin Books, in association with Jonathan Cape, 1985).

the dislocation of the protagonist. However, before examining the novels individually, I want to outline some points of comparison. Each novel is written by an English writer in exile about a protagonist, also in exile, whose geographic alienation reflects a deeper dislocation fragmenting his sense of self, his sense of responsibility towards personal and political commitments,[4] and his perception of global realities. Richard Lovat Somers actively seeks, then painfully rationalizes his reasons for rejecting, political involvement during his time in Australia. Geoffrey Firmin, British Consul in Mexico, clings more or less consciously to his sense of damnation, which parallels the fate of a world about to experience devastating horrors.

Lawrence and Lowry both employ narrative structure to reflect states of mind: environmental catalysts enable the dramatic present to embrace both past and current events, as well as various levels of consciousness. Somers is a rational man driven to fury, whose fluctuating thought processes are almost simultaneously engaged and repelled by possibilities of commitment. The Consul, on the other hand, has been rendered irrational by guilt,

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[4] Both Lawrence and Lowry make marriage a social and private metaphor for the dislocation of their protagonists. Somers and the Consul are both Englishmen married to non-English women, the German Harriet and the American Yvonne. Each is thus further distanced from his sense of home.

paranoia and mescal; his are the disjointed reflections of a man who can love only doom now. Ironically, while Somers's motivations are clearly defined, he arrives at no resolution, but although the Consul's shattered mind evades critical clues to the source of his condition, the pattern of the narrative renders his fate decisive and inevitable. Also, while Somers frequently wants to act yet finally pulls back, refusing commitment, the incapacitated Consul, who sometimes seems hopelessly beyond rational desire and choice, ultimately does act.

Both novels emphasize the destruction of a sense of home. Both Somers and Firmin have been traumatized by experiences during the First World War. England and the British Empire come to represent, politically and morally, something failed or malevolent, although England represents home, geographically at least, in the reveries of both. Neither can cast off the burden of memory sufficiently to put down roots in a new place. Neither even contemplates returning: Somers journeys from Australia to America, and Yvonne tries to persuade the Consul to leave Mexico for Canada. The places of exile themselves serve similar purposes, reflecting geographically and culturally both individual states of mind and developing global conditions. These settings become metaphors for both the decay of the British Empire and the ominous rise of fascism. As well, the very

strangeness of place in both works amplifies the dislocation of the protagonists, magnifies their isolation and provides a totalizing perspective -- a consciousness of the whole world -- from the lack of a localized home.

Both men deny themselves the forms of integration offered because of a profound sense of betrayal. Here Lawrence is more general in treatment. Somers feels betrayed by the forces which engendered the mob spirit and violated his integrity in England during the war. Lowry makes Geoffrey Firmin a possible agent as well as a victim of betrayal. However, he stresses the Consul's specific betrayal by his wife's infidelities with his brother and boyhood friend; their offers of help, no matter how sincerely meant or needed, are futile. Like Somers, the Consul has experienced (and has, perhaps, more actively participated in) the collapse of ideals with global ramifications. In Kangaroo, England during the First World War becomes the central historical metaphor, while Under the Volcano includes a broad range of Mexican and European references.

Lawrence emphasizes and values individual integrity more than Lowry does. Through the psychological struggles of one man, Lawrence treats possible models of integration, including marriage, political ideology, community and nationality. Somers tries to define both his attraction to and detachment from them; in his refusal

or failure to reach definitive resolutions, he embodies the book's central relativism.[5] Lowry evokes a sense of tragic fate dependent on moral choices rather than divine will; in the historical context of his narrative, the dissolution of connections vital to human survival seems inexorable. He tends to layer the general and the particular to demonstrate how the actions of individual characters can be extended to the world at large. Lawrence is sensitive to the global ramifications of events during the Somerses' Australian sojourn but gives greater emphasis to the particular struggles within Somers's consciousness. Like Lowry, Lawrence is prophetic and makes use of symbolism, but to different ends and with a different sort of stridency. Lowry makes the Consul's condition and the events leading to his demise symptomatic of greater world problems. Lawrence uses the surface events of his narrative, and the issues they imply, to reflect Somers's internal dilemmas. He stresses the impact of global events on the individual.

The relativism of Kangaroo and the determinism of Under the Volcano indicate the fundamental difference in

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[5] The one constant in the pattern of fluctuation, action and reaction, and change in Kangaroo is Somers's principle of integrity, his sense of self, which would seem to unify and organize his life. Yet what constitutes the integrity of that self is never satisfactorily realized by the reader or by Somers. If Somers's life is indeed governed by a central principle, it is one which engenders profound internal conflicts over definition.

Under the Volcano indicate the fundamental difference in their treatment of dislocation. I doubt either novel could have been written in the year in which the other was published; Lawrence's prophecy is genuine speculation, while Lowry writes with awareness of what follows the end of his narrative. In Kangaroo, the will-to-evolve becomes the key to survival and maintenance of integrity. Somers survives because he can force a sort of detachment from his past, and he remains willing to journey onwards and learn from new situations. Geoffrey Firmin, like the world, cannot escape from the past and so is doomed. In Under the Volcano, the will-to-love becomes the only saving grace. Bonds of love, whether as personal as a true marriage commitment or as general as striving in the service of a noble cause, are necessary to the survival of both the individual and humanity as a whole.

* * * *

> Richard felt himself reaching the volcanic pitch. He had as good as reached it. And he realized that the Russians must have reached it during the war: that the Irish had got there: that the Indians in India were approaching the point: that the whole world was gradually working up to the pitch. The whole world. It was as inevitable as the coming of summer. It might be soon -- it might be slow. But inevitable it was. Or else the alternative, the dead-rock barrenness.
>
> Kangaroo 290.

> Popocatepetl towered through the window, its immense flanks partly hidden by rolling thunderheads; its peaks blocking the sky, it appeared almost right overhead, the barranca, the Farolito, directly beneath it. Under the

> it, the monster Typhoeus, with his hundred heads and -- relatively -- fearful eyes and voices.
> Under the Volcano 340.

Both novels use the volcano as a political metaphor. Somers sees democratic Australia as a dormant volcano, its torpid people awaiting instigation into an eruption of the mob-spirit. The volcanoes beyond Quauhnahuac provide more than a legendary symbol of the Firmins' marriage; the Consul extends volcanic myths to the fate of the world. Lawrence and Lowry see long-dormant volcanoes as omnipresent menaces, awakening and rumbling. If in Under the Volcano the eruption is more imminent, in Kangaroo it is as inevitable. And in both novels, the relationship of this inevitability to the life of the protagonist is at the root of his dislocation.

I. Kangaroo

Kangaroo is an episode in the life of Richard Lovat Somers. D.H. Lawrence deliberately refuses to make it decisive; he emphasizes instead the relativity and continuity of existence, through the experiences of a man profoundly dislocated by memories of war. Somers, a poet and essayist, journeys to Australia with his wife Harriet a few years after the First World War, trying to escape a sense of betrayal and a moribund Europe. His Australian sojourn offers opportunities for social commitment, represented by Kangaroo's militaristic Diggers and Willie

Struthers's Socialists. In rejecting them, Somers confronts irresolvable dilemmas. He arrives and departs in roughly the same state of dislocation, unable to reconcile his tendencies towards involvement and isolation, although he achieves greater awareness and a renewed desire for discovery.

The narrative structure of Kangaroo supports and illuminates its theme of dislocation. Through perspective, metaphor and imagery, Lawrence evokes the problems involved in reconciling the simultaneities of existence: spirit and flesh, conscious and unconscious impulse, mass and individual psychology, social and self responsibility, surface and depth. That the balance between thought-adventuring and surface activity sometimes threatens to collapse underlines the difficulties of reconciliation, and the impossibility of omniscience or absolutism.[6] Lawrence's use of simultaneity differs from that of Malcolm Lowry; Under the Volcano depends on an artifice which would be out of place in Kangaroo, where even if change does not occur, the possibility of change

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[6] Stoll argues that Kangaroo shares with Women in Love an assumption "that the dissociation of sensibility or split in the modern world makes any reconciliation of psychic opposites impossible" (198). I would add that the impossibility extends to a broad spectrum of dissonant yet simultaneous elements of existence, and that the memory of war strengthens this division in the later novel.

John E. Stoll, The Novels of D.H. Lawrence: A Search for Integration (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971).

remains. Michael Wilding discusses Lawrence's innovative technique:

> The complexity of irony, ambiguity, and the multi-lateral is the accepted literary complexity; it is a static model. Lawrence is aiming at a different and a freer complexity. He is not concerned with simultaneous multi-laterality: if it happens, good it happens; he doesn't exclude it, pare things away; but he does not seek it out. His mode is linear, his concern is the flux, the spontaneous rhythmic wave. Lawrence wants flux and change, not a stasis subsuming all possibilities. His is a dynamic aesthetic.[7]

My concern is with how Lawrence's narrative technique uses perspective, landscape and social context, and memory to define Somers's dislocation. I shall also examine the opportunities for commitment offered Somers, and his responses to them.

The structure of Kangaroo progressively internalizes Somers's perspective, thus making his refusals to act or commit himself increasingly comprehensible. There is an authorial voice which at first offers ironic comment on, then gives way to Somers's perspective, which both struggles with this protagonistic perspective and engages in self-reflective debate. Hence, Somers attains centrality but not authority, and Lawrence denies himself the privilege of omniscience. The narration reflects the limits of perspective, the impossibility of either

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[7] Michael Wilding, "Kangaroo: 'a new show'," in Political Fictions (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980) 187.

absolute commitment or withdrawal, and the broad scope of perception available.

Use of both internalization and externalization in characterizing Somers enhances the novel's treatment of dissonant simultaneities: Somers is both a torn soul, and a very specific sort of surface-defined creature. His detachment is evoked both through abstract philosophy and attitudes in fairly quotidian matters. Thus his reactions to Australia are at once an analytical transformation of landscape and society into metaphors for his dislocation, and a mixture of bemusement and annoyance. These two levels of awareness never merge, although they sometimes blur and overlap and contend, as do the authorial and protagonistic perspectives, and the narrative threads of event and thought-adventure. Lawrence overtly demonstrates the duality of artifice in his novel, and its reflection of simultaneities in reality, although Kangaroo is more concerned with dichotomy than harmony.

> To be brief, there was a Harriet, a Kangaroo, a Jack and a Jaz and a Vicky, let alone a number of mere Australians. So what's wrong with Richard's climbing a mental minaret or two in the interim? Of course there isn't any interim. But you know that Harriet is brushing her hair in the sun, and Kangaroo looking at huge sums of money on paper, and Jack fishing, and Vicky flirting and Jaz bargaining, so what more do you want to know? We can't be at a stretch of tension all the time, like the E string on a fiddle. If you don't like the novel, don't read it. If the pudding doesn't please you, leave it, leave it. I don't mind your saucy plate. I know too well that you can

bring an ass to water, etc. (K 312-13)

The relationship of this imperfect dichotomy is introduced early in the novel; the pattern of internalization (unlike Somers's arguments themselves) is progressive, although the structure of the book is roughly cyclical. As Somers moves further into Australian society, getting to know the Callcotts, then Jaz, then Kangaroo, and moving from Sydney to Mullumbimby, his own thoughts and reflections move more and more explicitly to the fore. Authorial commentary gives way to scenes of great immediacy, presented purely from Somers's point of view, as well as deeper and more frequent self-reflective and philosophical passages. A break in this progression occurs at Chapter Twelve, "The Nightmare," which finally places Somers's chosen isolation in the context of his earlier victimization and defines the dislocation which informs the book: the war represents for Somers mass behaviour at its least conscious and most destructive; his experiences render him unable to merge his sense of responsibility to others and his insistence on maintaining individual integrity. According to E.W. Tedlock, here "Lawrence appraises his wartime experience as if to understand the totality of causes of his fear and recoil, so that his final stand will have a fully experiential

foundation."[8] This chapter also strengthens the novel's various narrative devices and allows Somers to welcome his dislocation as a basis for the thought-adventuring which gains prominence in the second part of Kangaroo.

The abstract presentation of Somers's mental anguish is kept from being completely insufferable or boring by a constant awareness of the uneasy coexistence of surface and depth: the uneasy simultaneity of thought and activity, of the momentous and the ordinary, and the necessity (if not the possibility) of doing justice to both. This coexistence and its attendant structural problems are most explicitly featured in Chapter Fourteen, "Bits,"[9] which encompasses meditation and event, narrative play and surface realism. In following "The Nightmare" and "'Revenge!' Timotheus Cries," it acts as the thought-adventure of rejection, lacking the emphasis on

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[8] E.W. Tedlock, Jr., D.H. Lawrence, Artist & Rebel: A Study of Lawrence's Fiction (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1963) 164.

[9] Sabin aptly cites the fragmentation, and reflectiveness of language, in "Bits" as part of her analysis of Kangaroo. However, she finds structural progressiveness and compartmentalization of aspects which I see united by a sense of coexistence. She considers that Somers as a "stoic, humorous observer gives way to the prophet and visionary" and that "the sheer hawking repetitiveness of Lawrence's visionary rhetoric finally breaks down the novel itself, leaving it interesting to read only in 'bits,' in isolated passages and chapters" (145, 146). I think Somers and the novel as a whole imply an often open-ended complexity which "Bits" encapsulates.
Margery Sabin, The Dialect of the Tribe: Speech and Community in Modern Fiction (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

involvement and social responsibility found elsewhere, but asserting again the depth of Somers's dilemma.

Lawrence structures "Bits" as a microcosm of the novel. At the outset, Somers reacts to a surface observation; in this case, he finds the epitome of Australian culture in the laconic, anecdotal contributed items in the Sydney Bulletin. Jokes, cartoons, advice, trivial and sensational news features, the bits are "manly and without trimmings" (K 298), evocative of "the sheer momentaneous life of the continent" (K 300). If Geoffrey Firmin in Under the Volcano finds everything in Peter Rabbit, Richard Somers finds reflected in these bits his sense of Australia: its isolationism and its odd mixture of apathy and opportunism. The tonal similarity and nicknamed anonymity of the contributors evinces as well the matey familiarity which occasionally seduces but ultimately repels Somers in its inherent herd (and potential mob) mentality. The chapter moves outward from the language of the bits themselves to an analysis of this menace, grounded in Somers's limited experience of Australia, and exemplified through the mostly visual detail of a seaside excursion with Harriet. The bits motif underlines a sense of fragmentation ("The sales were on, and prices were 'smashed to bits,' 'Prices Smashed to Bits,' in big labels." K 300) reflected in random cataloguings of people, buildings and objects: "There

were several large but rather scaring brown hotels, with balconies all round: there was a yellow stucco church with a red-painted tin steeple, like a weird toy: there were high roofs and low roofs, all corrugated iron: and you came to an opening, and there, behold, were one or two forlorn bungalows inside their wooden palings, and then the void" (K 300-1). The detachment and simplicity of these descriptive passages indicates the allure Australia holds for Somers, with its "same good-humoured, right-you-are approach from everybody to everybody" (K 304). However, Somers contrasts these observations with intermittent descriptions of the non-human, natural landscape which are informed by an energy, vitality and depth the people and their buildings lack. Somers becomes more present in these descriptions.

> He was looking at his wet legs and chuckling with his inward laughter. Vivid, the blue sky: intensely clear, the dark sea, the yellow sands, the swoop of the bay, the low headlands: clear like a miracle. And the water bubbling in his shoes as he walked rolling up the sands. (K 303)

This contrast is the basis of the thought-adventuring which follows, but the process of internalization becomes complicated; just as Somers seems to reach a logical conclusion, problems of perspective arise. Lawrence deflates lofty pronouncements on the absoluteness of the self with sly commentary on Somers's function in the

narrative, thus enhancing both the role of relativity and the depth of dislocation. As the authorial voice, he adopts the same function as he grants Harriet in the narrative: he serves as a rein on Somers's tendency to conclusiveness and abstraction. Hence, what Somers says seems right, but also subject to the laws of relativity.

> "Now," thought Richard to himself, waving his front paws with gratification: "I must sound the muezzin and summon all men back to their central, isolate selves."
>
> So he drew himself up, when -- urch!! He was sluthering over the brim of the ointment pot into the balm of humanity once more.
>
> "Oh, Lord, I nearly did it again," he thought as he clambered out with a sick heart. "I shall do it once too often. The bulk of mankind haven't got any central selves: haven't got any. They're all bits."
>
> Nothing but his fright would have struck this truth out of him. So he crouched still, like a fly very tired with crawling out of the ointment, to think about it. (K 309)[10]

Besides perspective, "Bits" indicates the extent to which landscape and social context serve as metaphors for the levels of consciousness, the dissonant simultaneities,

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[10] Similarly, Harriet deflates Somers's analysis by recalling his physicality:

> ....he stopped in front of her to remark:
>
> "Of course you can't go on with a soft, oh-so-friendly life like this here. You've got to have an awakening of the old recognition of the aristocratic principle, the innate difference between people."
>
> "Aristocratic principle!" she shrieked on the wind. "You should have seen yourself, flying like a feather into the sea after your hat. Aristocratic principle!" She shrieked with laughter. (K 305)

which Somers cannot reconcile. Margery Sabin discusses the equation of language and motif in this novel,[11] but fails to analyze how Lawrence's drastic tonal shifts represent a recognition of a general lack of cohesion, rather than a structural weakness. Leo Gurko argues that in the composition of Kangaroo, "the country controlled the characters and was indeed the source from which they grew....a kind of anthropomorphosism in reverse;"[12] I find this, like most Kangaroo criticism, limiting and would like to propose another view. According to Gurko, critics misread Kangaroo as "an ideological novel of politics and power."[13] Yet it is such a novel, centred less in Australia itself than in Somers's dislocation engendered by his wartime experiences. Like perspective, natural and social descriptions serve to reflect the irreconcilable simultaneities in Somers's perception of the world.

Perspective itself is responsible for the connotative difference of these sorts of description, which I want to explore, since they indicate the dislocation within

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[11] Sabin considers the language of the Somerses' seaside expedition "more resourceful than the prose of the newspaper as quoted, but the spirit is similar" when describing town life, although the sea itself becomes "an emblem of imagined flight away from the human altogether, as in Lawrence's reading of Melville, where the sea is identified not only with freedom but also with abstraction and rhetorical extravagance...." (144, 145).

[12] Leo Gurko, "Kangaroo: D.H. Lawrence in Transit," Modern Fiction Studies 10.4 (Winter 1964-5) 350.

[13] Gurko 350.

Somers's self, as well as between that self and the world. Passages of natural imagery are internalized, although Somers as a recognizable human individual is submerged in them.[14] They act as generalized metaphors for states of human consciousness and impart to Somers's reflections an elemental quality not specifically related to events. The imagery itself falls into two categories, land and sea, with the former evoking a mysterious allure while the latter represents the quality in Somers which continually bars him from commitment. Australian vegetation, especially that of the bush, is presented through realistic description manifesting ancient, preconscious states. Regarding the "great, dull-green whorls of the tree-ferns," Somers meditates upon "[the] lonely, lonely world that had waited, it seemed, since the coal age. These ancient flat-topped tree-ferns, these tousled palms like mops. What was the good of trying to be an alert conscious man here?" (K 197).

Preconsciousness can suggest either the state motivating the mob-spirit or, as the bush passages make clearer, the state most amenable to communication with the dark gods. Somers's experience of the Australian bush recalls for him his wartime days in Cornwall, where on the moors he felt presences inspired by a defined Celtic

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[14] The externalized description of the bush in daylight at the end of the novel results from the genuine detachment of imminent departure.

mythology. In what he perceives as the strange newness of Australia, the bush evokes a sense of something undefinable but part of the mystical root-knowledge Somers feels men need to safeguard their integrity.

> ....he let himself feel all sorts of things about the bush. It was so phantom-like, so ghostly, with its tall pale trees and many dead tree, like corpses, partly charred by bush fires: and then the foliage so dark, like grey-green iron. And then it was so deathly still. Even the few birds seemed to be swamped in silence. Waiting, waiting -- the bush seemed to be hoarily waiting. And he could not penetrate into its secret. He couldn't get at it. Nobody could get at it. What was it waiting for? (K 18-19)

The most emotionally charged language is reserved for sea imagery, which manifests the extremity of Somers's individualism. This language of rage and violent desire reveals how profoundly Somers rejects, in the name of his isolated integrity, Kangaroo's doctrine of humanity united by love and warmth. It also reveals the mysterious depths of his consciousness, and his inability to deal with his revulsion from love through identification with a non-human existence.

> He liked the sea, the pale sea of green glass that fell in such cold foam. Ice-fiery, fish-burning....To surge with that cold exultance and passion of a sea thing! Now he understood the yearning in the seal-woman's croon, as she went back to the sea, leaving her husband and her children of warm flesh. No more cloying warmth. No more of this horrible stuffy heat of human beings. To be an isolated swift fish in the big seas that are bigger than the earth; fierce with

> cold, cold life, in the watery twilight before sympathy was created to clog us. (K 139-40)

In no other passage using natural imagery is Somers so integrated emotionally and intellectually, and nowhere else is he so detached from humanity. Proximity to the sea brings him to a peace that reinforces both his dislocating relationship with humanity and his belief in his own will. His willingness to submerge himself in the waves proves that he does not fear his own depths. After rejecting Kangaroo, he seeks solace by the ocean, which mirrors his solitude ("the great rhythm and ringing of the breakers obliterated every other feeling in his breast, and his soul was a moonlit hollow with the waves striding home" K 361-62), just as the "dark, old, aboriginal rocks" (K 364) behind him lull him into indifference. Yet the absolutism of this temptation to escape is not permitted Somers; such passages of highly internalized perspective are countered by more detached observations of Australian society, which represents his tendency to social involvement and provides the setting for the novel's dramatic plot.

Although Somers's observations of Australian society frequently lead to abstract speculation about human consciousness and political organization, his perspective never merges with the description as it does in non-human contexts. Often, especially early in the book, the

authorial voice presents his observations from its ironic distance, which prevents Somers's own judgements from gaining too much authority. Most of the detail itself is of the cataloguing sort cited in my discussion of "Bits." Lawrence always presents Australia through the eyes of outsiders, whose perceptions are intensely affected by the burden of experience they bring with them: Richard and Harriet Somers are variously cynical, desirous, enthralled and repulsed, yet always detached. They notice the physical details of a sparse democratic population haphazardly encroaching on a large, strange land. Whether they see "ragged bush loused over with thousands of small promiscuous bungalows, built of everything from patchwork of kerosene tins up to fine red brick and stucco" (K 30-31), or people at the beach on Sunday, or suitcases used for myriad purposes, their listings differ in emotional content from Somers's observations of land and sea.

All the descriptions of Australian people in groups, from Sydney on Sunday to library night in Mullumbimby emphasize the attraction and menace in the empty egalitarianism of postwar Australia.[15] The Australian

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[15] Graham Hough in The Dark Sun cites the ideological and stylistic function of natural and social imagery in his discussion of the reflections on authority and anarchy to which Somers is led by his early experience of Sydney (K 27-28). Also, as Michael Wilding does later, Hough finds a conscious organizational principle in Kangaroo, claiming that for Lawrence, form was "the following out of an authentic process of living growth" (106). Regarding simultaneity, he notes the way Chapter Two, "Neighbours,"

democratic experiment breeds not nobility but mediocrity, and an openness the mutually dislocated Somerses view as an invasion of their privacy. The activity and camaraderie they witness mask a menacing torpor and a fear of solitude. On one level the treatment of nature and society in Kangaroo indicates the simultaneity of surface and depth, something quite different for the Australians (a group) and Somers (an individual), and irreconcilable. Primarily, however, these descriptive passages serve as metaphors for Somers's profound dislocation, his incompatible tendencies to social and self responsibility.

Having examined the presentation of simultaneity and something of Somers's perception of it, I now want to consider how the events of the novel clarify his dislocation, through the forms of commitment he is offered and the intrusion of crucial memories. The levelling superdemocracy of Sydney provides an appropriate political context for the movements in which Somers is invited to participate. However, though both of these political movements involve mass social reorganization, as Michael Wilding points out, their presentation is

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places these half-formed speculations [about authority and anarchy] in the setting of daily living, feels them in the form of the everyday tensions between people" (107).

Graham Hough, The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1956).

individualized,[16] thus stressing Somers's concern with the integrity of the individual in groups. The opportunities for active, personal commitment offered Somers appeal to his beliefs and ultimately challenge his integrity. Foremost is the invitation from Kangaroo, who holds open an unspecified role in his holy crusade. Less is made of the more specific offer made by Willie Struthers, to serve as propagandist for the Socialists. Yet Struthers's philosophy counterbalances the romantic fascist vision of Kangaroo, which Somers then submits to greater scrutiny. Kangaroo and Struthers embody respectively the idealistic and logical (or individual and social) tendencies within Somers's consciousness. The former's vision would find a prosperous and happy Australia willingly gathered in the loving bosom of its protective leader. His actual philosophy is an odd blend of laissez-faire and law-and-order, premised on a passionate belief in his power to govern and in the duty of men to obey.

> "....The secret of all life is in obedience: obedience to the urge that arises in the soul, the urge that is life itself....I offer no

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[16] According to Wilding:

> It is significant that Lawrence should title his political novel by the nickname of a political leader. The concern of the novel is not with political beliefs, social classes, economic forces, party structures. The emphasis is on the personal, on individuals; not only on Kangaroo, but also on the socialist leader Willie Struthers, and, most important of all, on the protagonist, Richard Lovat Somers. (152)

> creed. I offer myself, my heart of wisdom, strange warm cavern where the voice of the oracle streams in from the unknown; I offer my consciousness, which hears the voice; and I offer my mind and my will, for the battle against every obstacle to respond to the voice of life, and to shelter mankind from the madness and the evil of anti-life." (K 126)

He offers no creed (which perhaps most endears him to the Diggers) and does not propose drastic alterations of Australian society, although he feels the levelling of modern society has rendered humanity cold and mechanized, a view similar to Somers's. His vague, exhortatory invitation is much more personal than political. He appeals to Somers as a fulfillment of prophecy.

> "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," he resumed, sing-song, abstracted. "I knew you'd come. Ever since I read your book of poems -- how many years is it ago? -- ten? -- eleven? I knew you'd come...." (K 128)

Contrasted with Kangaroo is the more logical, pragmatic Willie Struthers. Although like Kangaroo he appeals to Somers as an agent of inevitability, he emphasizes the work rather than the leader; he considers the visionary individual an instructor rather than a centre of power.

> "Now, Mr Somers, here's your chance. I'm in a position to ask you, won't you help us to bring out a sincere, <u>constructive</u> Socialist paper, not a grievance airer, but a paper that calls to the constructive spirit in men? Deep calleth to deep. And the trouble with us here is, no one calls to our deeps, they lie there

> stagnant. I can't do it, I'm too grimy. It wants a deep, fresh nature, and I'm too stale...." (K 222)

Struthers's political philosophy is essentially socialism tempered with a strong xenophobia. Unlike Kangaroo, he seeks a permanent form of community; while he concedes the apathy of modern society, he believes a responsive chord can be touched (rather than a following inspired) in humanity. His analysis addresses the substance, not the soul.

If their proposed revolutions are crusades, they have no spiritual basis; their sorts of godhood are very human, one emotional and the other intellectual. Somers considers both men wrong and their movements doomed to failure; as cannily as they appeal to his tendencies to involvement, they cannot win his commitment. According to Michael Wilding, he rejects both for their "disregard of human individuality."[17] Again, use of simultaneity evokes the ambivalence which makes Somers reject these opportunities. For example, juxtapositions made in descriptions of Kangaroo imply contrasting elements which

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[17] Wilding 154.

Wilding also concedes the relativism of Somers's reactions to political opportunities; he considers Somers's thought processes to be fluctuating, rather than proceeding towards some final theory: "He refuses to accept the offered political possibilities as the only possibilities, he is determined to keep his mind open for new possibilities, to look for ways out of the political impasse. He refuses to commit himself to the inadequate, the false, the distorting political immediacies" (172).

never quite negate each other, and which prevent Somers from surrendering to him.[18] On the other hand, despite his obsession with solitude, Somers simultaneously desires involvement.

> "I want to do something with living people, somewhere, somehow, while I live on the earth. I write, but I write alone. And I live alone. Without any connexion whatever with the rest of men." (K 79)

This admission reveals both his sense of destiny and his predicament: in his social life, his marriage and his soul. Kangaroo's social theory is based on principles of leadership, which appeal to Somers, who sees hierarchy as the best means of preserving individuality in relationships (such as his marriage). However, it is also based on a profound belief in the saving grace of love. Kangaroo's concept of love resembles Somers's in its

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[18] Kangaroo's refinement, articulate verbal playfulness and good sense of form are always countered by his physical ugliness -- his kangaroo qualities -- just as his visionary aspects are contrasted by his animal blankness.

> ....when he smiled like that, there came an exceedingly sweet charm into his face, for a moment his face was like a flower. Yet he was quite ugly....And after the smile his face went stupid and kangaroo-like, pendulous, with the eyes close together above the long, drooping nose. But the shape of the head was very beautiful, small, light, and fine. (K 123)

Nowhere is the contrast stronger than when Somers refuses to admit love for the dying Kangaroo, for here Kangaroo's ultimate lack of centrality and fear of his own emptiness is countered by Somers's anguished but confirmed sense of self.

respect for the otherness of lovers: "Man has loved the beloved for the sake of love, so far, but rarely, rarely has he consciously known that he could only love her for her own separate, strange self: forever strange and a joyful mystery to him" (K 149). Nevertheless, the necessity of human bonding, of valuing the group above the self, implied by the primacy Kangaroo gives love appears to Somers as a threat to individual identity. What Somers proposes as the ultimately inspiring force in life is the power of the dark gods, which he partly defines as the phallic, non-spiritual, non-intellectual, mysterious power that motivates and maintains the integrity of the individual will. Somers's insistence on individual integrity approaches an absolute view. It is the source of his dislocation amid so much mass movement in an age when private and global realities seem so dichotomized or dissonant.[19] Yet his absolutism is qualified once more, this time by his inability to articulate his belief

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[19] Clark claims that in Kangaroo, "the true passional state is delineated as one in which the single self is never lost, either to the other being with whom a temporary contact is established or to the great darkness where they meet" (263).

L.D. Clark, The Minoan Distance: The Symbolism of Travel in D.H. Lawrence (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1980).

Jacobson suggests that "if Lawrence was profoundly aware of the 'oneness' of life, it was not at the cost of forgetting that consciousness exists only in individuals" (91).

Dan Jacobson, "D.H. Lawrence and Modern Society," Journal of Contemporary History 2.2 (April 1967).

clearly, even to himself.

> "....Don't love me. Don't want me to love you. Let's be hard, separate men. Let's understand one another deeper than love."
>
> "Two human ants, in short," said Kangaroo, and his face was yellow.
>
> "No, no. Two men. Let us go to the understanding that is deeper than love."
>
> "Is any understanding deeper than love?" asked Kangaroo with a sneer.
>
> "Why, yes, you know it is. At least between men." (K 233)

What Somers fears most between men in groups is the potential for the mob-spirit, since whatever the mob-spirit might accomplish in social revolution, it is anathema to the individual. Ultimately, both Kangaroo and Willie Struthers consider their following a mass or group, rather than a collection of individuals, and a mass risks dehumanization: unconsciousness which can explode in blind vengefulness. His fear informs most of the novel; it permeates natural imagery of volcanoes and geysers, dormant energy awaiting eruption, and is centred in "The Nightmare." This retrospective chapter is significantly positioned between Kangaroo's rejection of Somers and the riot at Canberra Hall, thus making memory current. What Somers experiences now extends the significance of what happened during the war. His fears become grounded in historical context: in global events with personal consequences.

"The Nightmare" historicizes the mob-spirit. In

defining this phenomenon from a blurred authorial-protagonistic perspective, the chapter diagnoses through Somers's experiences a crisis not only in Europe but also in the modern world. The triumph of reason over passion, of spirituality over sensuality, represses and dehumanizes the central self and breeds mindless violence. In this chapter, the process results in "the criminal living spirit which arose in all the stay-at-home bullies who governed the country during those years" (K 235). Unlike the framing plot of Kangaroo, this retrospective makes less use of metaphoric natural imagery and externalized social observation. It emphasizes instead incidents directly involving Somers with a particular time and place, lifting their implications from the abstract realm of reflection and giving them concrete historical placement. Somers's centrality stresses the individual consequences of the mob-spirit. His well-developed sense of self comprises not only his spirit and intellect but also his body in all its unique strengths and limitations. Therefore, the ignominy of the third medical examination rests in its being, besides a stage of military conscription, a violation of physical and moral integrity, soullessly performed by officious doctors before jeering officials. Somers's constant awareness of his own integrity renders him sensitive to the dehumanization of others, who are deprived of all balance between their

civilized and natural selves.

> The big stark-naked collier was being measured: a big, gaunt, naked figure, with a gruesome sort of nudity. "Oh God, oh God," thought Somers, "why do the animals none of them look like this? It doesn't look like life, like a living creature's figure. It is gruesome, with no life-meaning." (K 280)

This annihilation of balance underlines Somers's postwar sense of dislocation, which has invited varying critical responses. Neil Myers, in his article "Lawrence and the War," argues that "The Nightmare" demonstrates both the individual and universal demoralization resulting from the dehumanization Lawrence describes:

> Throughout this chapter, on all levels, a society treats its members as "things." We suddenly face the modern problem of the man judged by his nation or class as somehow unworthy -- stupid, alien, subversive -- and hence inhuman, without identity or rights....Lawrence becomes to the Cornish farmers, the military, and the doctors an "object" whose total personal privacy can be invaded for the public good; his agony, in turn, is played out against the subtler demoralization of the common people, the confused recruits, the wild miners, the desperate, sullen soldiers, the helpless, essentially honest folk like the Cornish policeman or John Thomas, corrupted by their orders or the mood of their world.[20]

I find this a fairer and fuller assessment of the relationship between the individual and the mob presented

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[20] Neil Myers, "Lawrence and the War," Criticism: a quarterly for literature and the arts 4.1 (Winter 1962) 49.

in this chapter than that of critics who only find in Lawrence's emphasis on his isolated self a purely selfish response to wartime events. For example, John Harrison contends that "Lawrence's fine invective....cannot disguise the fact that his hatred of democracy was largely the effect of highly personal and emotional, not intellectual causes...."[21] While these causes do contribute to his hatred, it seems grounded as well in what he sees the mob-spirit do to other men.

> The terrible, terrible war, made so fearful because in every country practically every man lost his head, and lost his own centrality, his own manly isolation in his own integrity, which alone keeps life real. Practically every man being caught away from himself, as in some horrible flood, and swept away with the ghastly masses of other men, utterly unable to speak, or feel for himself, or to stand on his own feet, delivered over and swirling in the current, suffocated for the time being. Some of them to die for ever. Most to come back home victorious in circumstance, but with their inner pride gone: inwardly lost. (K 236)

Even if Somers and a few others can maintain their integrity through detachment, they do so at the price of dislocation from such sources of unity as ideology, nationality and friendship. Others -- officers, conscripted men -- become like colliers Somers sees, who resemble "some tensely packed organism that was hurtling through chaos into oblivion....they were blind, ventral.

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[21] John Harrison, The Reactionaries (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1966) 182.

Once they broke loose heaven knew what it would be" (K 255). Australian geography and people ominously reflect this dormant condition, which fuels the outbreak of the mob-spirit Somers witnesses at Canberra Hall, thus extending the implications of "The Nightmare."

One problem with the abstract theory of the mob-spirit which follows the wartime retrospective is the vague relativity of any alternative. Somers's diagnoses generally propose only abstract notions of leadership and accepting the dark god. This limitation reinforces his perception of and inability to reconcile dissonant simultaneities, especially of social and self responsibility.

> But just as a tree is only perfect in blossom because it has groping roots, so is man only perfected in his individual being by his groping, pulsing union with mankind. The unknown God is within, at the quick. But this quick must send down roots into the great flesh of mankind.
>
> In short, the "spirit" has got a lesson to learn: the lesson of its own limitation. This is for the individual. And the infinite, which is Man writ large, or Humanity, has a still bitterer lesson to learn. It is the individual alone who can save humanity alive. (K 332)

This may be true, but there is no concrete indication of how this saving may be done. The narrative presentation of the mob-spirit in action from Somers's point of view is much more vivid, because of its sense of place and the significance invested in the participants and events by

all that has been revealed through Somers's memories. The riot becomes a microcosm of the world situation, though genuine global upheaval remains less an actuality than a potentiality. As in "The Nightmare," its implications are individualized.

Hence, the strongest impressions made by the riot involve personalities. Somers feels "a bitter, agonized grief for his fellow-men" (K 348) and, more acutely than ever, a simultaneous bond with and revulsion from humanity, and contradictory impulses towards involvement and detachment. Also, Jack embodies the personal expression of mass psychology: he fulfils bloodlust in killing, which he learned to appreciate in the war.

> He reached his face towards Somers with weird, gruesome exultation, and continued in a hoarse, secret voice:
>
> "Cripes, there's nothing bucks you up sometimes like killing a man -- nothing. You feel a perfect angel after it."
>
> Richard felt the same torn feeling in his abdomen, and his eyes watched the other man.
>
> "When it comes over you, you know, there's nothing else like it. I never knew, till the war. And I wouldn't believe it then, not for many a while. But it's there. Cripes, it's there right enough. Having a woman's something, isn't it? But it's a flea-bite, nothing, compared to killing your man when your blood comes up." (K 352)

However, the description of the fight itself implies mass dehumanization: "....the central heap a mass struggling with the Diggers, in real blood-murder passion, a tense mass with long, naked faces gashed with blood, and hair

all wild, and eyes demented, and collars burst, and arms frantically waving over the dense bunch of horrific life...." (K 346). As well, Jack's reference to learning bloodlust in the war historicizes his participation in the riot.

The one form of integration which Somers endorses is not a group movement but a private bond, marriage. His marriage to Harriet reflects the continuity of the novel's structure; this intimate yet tempestuous relationship forces him to confront his dilemma between detachment and commitment in a personal and immediate sense. Moreover, Harriet mediates for her husband between the daily contingencies of living and the fundamental problems of integrity: she keeps him firmly rooted in reality, anchored against the more dangerous drifts of his musings. When Harriet exclaims of Somers, "He'd never be able to get through the world without me" (K 317), she is probably right. Nevertheless, a created mutual self is hardly the goal of marriage in Kangaroo as it is in Under the Volcano. The Somers's union is premised on mutual dislocation. Each is dislocated by disillusionment with and mistrust of other people and larger forms of community; the only permanence they accept is in their marriage. Yet they disagree irresolvably over its centrality in their lives and its balance of power.

The success of the Somerses' marriage depends on

their concurrent fulfilment of and struggle against Lawrence's definition of the ideal marriage: "When a man and woman truly come together, when there is a marriage, then an unconscious, vital connexion is established between them, like a throbbing blood-circuit....A man must strive onward, but from the root of marriage, marriage with God, with wife, with mankind" (K 183-84). Harriet's self-definition is almost wholly based on wifehood; this union has primacy in her life, whereas Somers struggles with abstract theories of integrity, commitment and destiny. For his part, Somers realizes how crucial Harriet's individuality is to his creativity (Harriet is the one other character in Kangaroo permitted any significant degree of internalization), although he believes he must strive beyond her. However, he never really admits that the source of his power and growth is in his connection to her, just as she never admits the acquiescent nature of her role. Their conflicts keep them questioning and moving, and allow each to contribute to the other's freedom and growth. When Somers calls Harriet "Another bird like himself" (K 366), he acknowledges their mutual dislocation, just as she does in conceding the depth of his isolation. Harriet aspires to perfect love, living alone with Somers in peace, while Somers maintains his sense of separateness; their approaches to dislocation differ. Yet even if she reviles the futility of his aims

("he was so silly in refusing to be finally disappointed in his efforts with mankind" K 78), she performs the vital function of drawing him towards human contacts which enable him to test his theories.

Such disappointment would lead to a stasis Kangaroo rejects. During its course, the Somerses are presented in peaceful domesticity and in savage quarreling. That they leave Australia as they arrived -- together -- implies a continuity inherent in the structure of this novel which, if it reaches any conclusion, reaches one of relativity: "Life makes no absolute statement. It is all Call and Answer" (K 295). For Somers, truly understanding both call and answer in all their relative circumstances depends on the courage to experience one's own depths. Meditations on the values of surface and depth find symbols in the rubbish Harriet sees tossed overboard from their departing ship: "The iron sank in the deep, dark water, the wood and straw and cardboard drearily floated" (K 394). On the deck of the boat, Harriet and Somers are isolated, communicating neither with the other passengers nor with each other, together yet alone in their individual thoughts. Somers is caught between unqualified memories of Australia, and his inexorable physical detachment from this country on his irresolvable quest. His pessimism about the world does not deter him from this quest, even if his next destination, America, offers no

specific hope, for he retains a belief in a civilization which is "the deep, self-responsible consciousness in man" (K 383), and as he tells Jaz:

> "You have got to go through the mistakes. You've got to go all round the world, and then half-way round again, till you get back. Go on, go on, the world is round, and it will bring you back. Draw your ring round the world, the ring of your consciousness. Draw it round until it is complete." (K 381)

Dislocation, continuity and relativity are reflected in the final sentence of Kangaroo: "It was only four days to New Zealand, over a cold, dark, inhospitable sea" (K 394). These qualities prove the basic elements of the novel's structure and its protagonist's progress; Somers's dislocation becomes both creative and necessary, given the world he knows. Totalization for him is an ability to see the world whole, in its various simultaneities. If he can find no means of reconciling these dissonant elements, if his life and thought must involve perpetual tension, the scope of his awareness and the courage of his artistry prevent him from opting for withdrawal or despair. Somers resolves only to move onwards, to persist in his life's journey of discovery.

II. Under the Volcano

The tragedy in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano is a fate at once the Consul's and the world's. Begun during the Spanish Civil War and completed after the Second World

War, the novel is at once portentous and retrospective. There is an undercurrent of inevitability in its structure: the first chapter, set a year after the principal events, tells what has happened, so that the horror achieved does not result from suspense. The characters' inner perceptions of destiny, externalized in their choices and the consequences, also contribute to the sense of fate. Lowry often subordinates characterization to th matic and technical virtuosity, so there is a certain balance among the Consul, Hugh and Yvonne. Nevertheless, the Consul's progression towards his doom is clearly central: his suffering, betrayal and guilt are greatest, his vision of the world's horrors is clearest, and his dislocation is most destructive and absolute.

Lowry attempts in this novel a determinism which D.H. Lawrence in Kangaroo rejects in favour of relativity; there is a sense in this novel of universal responsibility, and the Consul is dislocated because he cannot accept his awareness of both personal and global denials of that responsibility towards others. The world, like Quauhnahuac, may be poised on the brink of the abyss, but the inscription on Jacques Laruelle's house, no se puede vivir sin amar, while on one level ironic, is also a fundamental truth of the novel. The only saving grace offered in Under the Volcano is love, which is thwarted both as a general and particular ideal in a dying world.

On a personal level, love is thwarted by the Consul's intense experience of guilt and betrayal. He copes with this experience by reconstructing the world in the image of his guilt: partly by drinking, partly by imagining the sins of others to be greater than his. Hence, although Yvonne, Hugh and Laruelle genuinely want to help him, their very real betrayals of him contribute to his inevitable rejection of them. And his image of the world proves valid. Although the placement of Chapter I implies a possibility of continuity through the acceptance of responsibility, represented (though imprecisely) by Hugh, this prologue also reveals the culmination in war of the symbolic darkening clouds pervading the main narrative.

After Chapter I, the narrative of Under the Volcano is progressive, and its structure remarkably unified despite its complexity; according to Richard Cross, it belongs to "[the] high modernist fusion of symbolism and mimesis".[1] David Markson views Lowry's layering and rich use of literary allusion as a means by which "[time] is bridged, past and present occur in effect simultaneously -- and in this same removal from the ephemeral, the writer gives the lie to our contemporary sense of dissociation."[2]

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[1] Richard K. Cross, Malcolm Lowry: A Preface to His Fiction (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) ix.

[2] David Markson, Malcolm Lowry's Volcano: Myth, Symbol, Meaning (New York: Times Books, 1978) 4.

Yet the novel also strongly evokes fragmentation, and Richard Hauer Costa emphasizes the contemporaneity of the Consul, who, "although endowed with some of the qualities of heroes in Greek and Christian mythology, is above all a man in his own right, a product of our own period, and his dilemma, while undoubtedly allegorical, is also immediate."[3] Lowry merges the general and the particular so that the implications of the novel are at once universal and specific. According to Robert Heilman,

> ....Lowry slowly makes us feel, behind the brilliantly presented facts of the alcoholic life, a set of meanings that make the events profoundly revelatory: drinking as an escape, an evasion of responsibility, a separation from life, a self-worship, a denial of love, a hatred of the living with a faith....the horror of Geoffrey's existence is always at the forefront of our consciousness, as it should be; but in the horror is involved an awareness of the dissolution of the old order....At the end Geoffrey, unable by act of will to seize upon the disinterested aid of two old Mexicans, is the victim of local fascists: fascism preys upon a world that has already tossed away its own soul.[4]

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[3] Richard Hauer Costa, Malcolm Lowry (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1972) 78.
In discussing Chapter V, Costa notes that "Lowry never breaks narrative stride. He gives us the simultaneity of the Consul's world: a complex that can include a cat playing with a trapped insect as well as paranoid impulses that his wife and brother are talking only about him" (78).

[4] Robert B. Heilman, "The Possessed Artist and the Ailing Soul," Canadian Literature 8 (Spring 1961) 14.
Heilman also argues that Under the Volcano, like Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus, "[contemplates] the failures of spirit of which the political disorders are a symptom" (10).

Thus, several lifetimes are relived through the twelve hours of the Day of the Dead, 1938, which form the story. Also, the Consul in his alcoholic despair becomes completely dislocated in space and time, but when he returns to reality in accusing the fascists (and consciously rejoining the world), he sees the world's doom in his own death.[5]

As with Somers, I want to concentrate on the Consul in context: to examine his setting, the possibilities of integration he is offered and his rejection of them, and the implications of his fatal dislocation.

The description of Quauhnahuac which opens the book evokes geographic and symbolic centrality.

> Two mountain chains traverse the republic roughly from north to south, forming between

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[5] Discussing the implications of the Consul's failure to help the wounded Indian, Tom Middlebro' parallels his situation with that of the world:

> As the Consul carries the moral authority of civilized Europe, his failure to aid a wounded and threatened human being represents the failure of will in the civilized when faced with violent, evil reaction. When he finally does choose to fight, after retreating alone and drunk to the Farolita [sic] in Parián and there recognizing as his alter ego the Spanish fascist Jefe de Jardineros, Fructuoso Sanabria, the result can only be tragic. He has deliberately chosen to isolate himself in a hopeless station. Only by a last suffering scream can he reassert his unity with humanity.

Tom Middlebro', "The Political Strand in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano," Studies in Canadian Literature 7.2 (1982) 125.

> them a number of valleys and plateaux. Overlooking one of these valleys, which is dominated by two volcanoes, lies, six thousand feet above sea-level, the town of Quauhnahuac. It is situated well south of the Tropic of Cancer, to be exact, on the nineteenth parallel, in about the same latitude as the Revillagigedo Islands to the west in the Pacific, or very much farther west, the southernmost tip of Hawaii -- and as the part of Tzucox to the east on the Atlantic seaboard of Yucatan near the border of British Honduras, or very much further east, the town of Juggernaut, in India, on the Bay of Bengal. (U 9).

The India of Geoffrey Firmin's birth, the Hawaii of Yvonne's, and the South Pacific of Hugh's early manhood are all drawn together here, in the simultaneity of a fragmented world in a particular place. Although the climax occurs at Parián, Quauhnahuac draws the divergent lives of the three protagonists back together and thus precipitates the tragic resolution of their day. According to Dale Edmonds, "[the] events of the day are more distressing because they bear not upon isolated individuals, but upon a closely interwoven group."[6] Yet Lowry stresses the fragmentation of this group and does

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[6] Dale Edmonds, "Under the Volcano: A Reading of the 'Immediate Level'," Tulane Studies in English 16 (1968) 69.

Edmonds's article gives value to the "immediate," or realistic, level of the novel, and contains useful comments on characterization and perspective. According to Edmonds, the chapters are presented from a perspective of "limited omniscience (or selective omniscience)" and the protagonists "emerge through their own actions, words, and thoughts, and through the actions, words and thoughts of others....[the] method of characterization is dramatic rather than discursive" (66).

not draw us into the indigenous community of Quauhnahuac, which functions instead on numerous symbolic levels. Random references to its barranca, cantinas, streets, advertisements and gardens, reflect states of mind, represent states of life, and point to the narrative's inexorable decline. The Mexican people throughout this novel are generally presented from the completely externalized perspective of expatriates, thus magnifying the detachment of these foreigners. Their lack of organic connection to this or any community intensifies their inadequacies as individuals. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Chapter VIII, when cultural barriers and individual qualms prevent the protagonists from offering sufficient assistance to an Indian who has been wounded and robbed.

The Consul's dislocation is most acute, internally and externally. He is excluded from his social environment by the very nature of his job, a consul representing a country which has no diplomatic relations with Mexico. By the extent of his alcoholism, he is more or less excluded from the expatriate community, although his frequently-stated wish to go and live among the Indians is simply a wish to escape. He is always a stranger, even in the places he seeks like a man in love with doom, like the place Dr. Vigil calls "the church for the bereaved....where is the Virgin for those who have

nobody with" (U 12), or Señora Gregorio's tomblike sanctuary, the Terminal Cantina El Bosque. Ultimately, he is nowhere so dislocated as in the hell he finally chooses, the Farolito, "the lighthouse that invites the storm, and lights it" (U 203).

Nevertheless, although he seeks refuge among others as fallen and alone as he is, the Consul perceives changes in Mexican society which reflect developments in the larger world, despite his professions of neutrality or indifference, which belie his dislocation. Just as he knows the pelado who steals the dying Indian's money has left a fascist bar, he earlier explains to Hugh the presence of the Union Militar.

> " -- Just the same," pursued the Consul, in a slightly lowered tone, as their conversation continued in the next room, "there is this Union Militar, sinarquistas, whatever they're called, if you're interested, I'm not personally --and their headquarters used to be in the policía de Séguridad here, though it isn't any longer, but in Parián somewhere, I heard." (U 186-87)

The source and extent of the Consul's knowledge are never discovered (so the breadth of the implications remains unclear), largely because among the perspectives revealed, there is no clear authorial voice, the Consul's is so fragmented and disturbed, and the others do not share the

extent of his knowledge.[7] Lowry's attempt to produce a unified work out of this fragmentation rests on his own emphasis on responsibility which becomes a unifying sub-text. But such unity as does result from this lietmotiv is merely a structural artifice. In contrast, Lawrence's principle of the self in Kangaroo is presented through such strenuous internal debate that it informs all aspects of the text.

I shall return to the use of perspective, but want

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[7] Edmonds points to this sort of fragmentation and imperfect knowledge in discussing the conversation of Laruelle and Bustamente in Chapter I: "....Lowry deliberately presents this material in a tentative and speculative way, not insisting upon any one interpretation" (79).

Under the Volcano lacks the sense of spontaneous relativism in Kangaroo's structure. However, I agree with M.C. Bradbrook that Lowry's art implies a relativity strengthening its simultaneities:

> The jumble of recollection, prayer and delirium in the Consul's own mind in its zooming flights back and forth produce a syncopated rhythm not unlike that of the main structure....[The interweaving of past and present nowhere sets up unambiguous expectation. The mode which reveals the Consul's disintegration enables a thematic unity to evolve, but differently perhaps for each reader. (56)

M.C. Bradbrook, Malcolm Lowry, His Art & Early Life: A study in transformation (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

Ronald Binns, who provides an excellent reading of the novel's historical context, similarly argues that "Lowry's fictional universe is one of shifting, elusive connotations and unbridgeable contradictions between which lie only hiatuses, voids. But, simultaneously, there is a surplus of signifiers which invite the reader to fill in these voids with all-embracing explanations which yoke together disparate and irreconcilable realities, thereby asserting continuity, meaning" (64).

Ronald Binns, Malcolm Lowry (London and New York: Methuen, 1984).

now to examine how on the novel's most personal level, Lowry makes the Firmins' inherently self-destructive marriage a metaphor for the Consul's dislocation. According to Dale Edmonds, Lowry "sees the inability of man and woman to live together in harmony and love as indicative of the whole modern malaise."[8] The Firmins' marriage mirrors the fragmentation of a world on the brink of catastrophe, and like the Somerses, they are mutually dislocated. Each regards marriage as an escape from memories of loss and betrayal; each is rootless, detached from the present by the weight of the past, although while Yvonne's concerns are personal, the Consul's are universal.

In letters -- hers which reach him too late and his which never reach her -- both define marriage as a creative act. He extends the definition to embrace the necessity of love in the world: "And yet -- do we not owe it ourselves, to that self we created, apart from us, to try again?....Love is the only thing which gives meaning to our poor ways on earth: not precisely a discovery, I am afraid" (U 45). As well, he concedes that only her love can save him from despair.

> ....for God's sake, Yvonne, hear me, my defences are down, at the moment they are down....come back, come back. I will stop drinking, anything. I am dying without you. For Christ

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[8] Edmonds 103.

> Jesus' sake Yvonne come back to me, hear me, it is a cry, come back to me, Yvonne, if only for a day... (U 46)

Yvonne's letters, too, acknowledge that apart from the Consul she is dying. Both view marriage as an ideal, more symbiotic and obsessive perhaps than merely mutually beneficial. Their union is doomed by the resulting insularity; the Consul reflects at one point on the terrifying fear of loss engendered by their obsessive love, and neither views their union as a form of integration with society. Rather, the Consul and Yvonne envision an escape to an outpost in British Columbia, where they can be alone in the immensity of the natural world. Moreover, their obsessions render infidelity unpardonable while making it inevitable: the Consul rejects Yvonne for her betrayals, and in his final act of despair betrays her.

The use of simultaneous connection and separation, recurring on several levels, evokes their mutual dislocation. There is an ambivalence and hesitancy in the Firmins' treatment of each other, a discrepancy between their thoughts and speeches. Misread signals and overstepped limitations result, such as when Yvonne implies that Geoffrey is drunk or, more seriously, when Geoffrey attempts to seduce Yvonne. However, there are moments of tentative, brief, though genuine connection, which render especially poignant the moments when,

regarding the volcanoes, each acknowledges the great unbridgeable chasm between them. In narrating these connections, Lowry can stand back, offering an authorial perspective of the couple which, like the introductory reference to Quauhnahuac, makes their marriage part of a broader landscape.

> Beyond the barranca the plains rolled up to the very foot of the volcanoes into a barrier of murk above which rose the pure cone of old Popo, and spreading to the left of it like a Universal City in the snow the jagged peaks of Ixtaccihuatl, and for a moment they stood on the porch without speaking, not holding hands, but with their hands just meeting, as though not quite sure they weren't dreaming this, each of them separately on their far bereaved cots, their hands but blown fragments of their memories, half afraid to commingle, yet touching over the howling sea at night. (U 72)

Simultaneous connection and separation recur in the shared dream of salvation through escape to the northern wilderness, which the Consul and Yvonne never communicate to each other. In a letter he envisions a life together in imagery closely paralleling that of her extended reverie at the bullthrowing in Tomalin. Yvonne's dream stresses domestic harmony as a component of universal harmony, but the peaceful life she projects is far from humanity. Geoffrey's dream of the north similarly stresses isolation, but in language more like the prayer of a dying man. There is a self-destructive subtext in both visions. Yvonne's reverie is abruptly punctuated by

the image "of a woman having hysterics, jerking like a puppet and banging her fists upon the ground" (U 281), an evocation of frustration and futility magnified at her death by the vision of the house in flames. Similarly, the Consul's vision is interrupted by the ominous turning of fortune's wheel: "And as we stand looking all at once comes the wash of another unseen ship, like a great wheel, the vast spokes of the wheel whirling across the bay -- " (U 43). Yvonne's dying vision of their burning with their house makes his symbol of fate applicable to their particular marriage, while his vision of the burning millions extends it to the world.

The irony and tragedy in the Firmins' personal failure to connect offer a symbolic parallel to the general mood of failed human relations in the book, and the Consul's disorienting awareness of the abdication from responsibility which appears to surround him. Sometimes their hesitant approaches nearly become declarations of love. For instance, in the encounter on Laruelle's parapet, the Consul reflects "'I do love you. Only -- ' 'I can never forgive you deeply enough': was that what was in his mind to add?" (U 201). Finally, there is the furtive connection at the Tomalin arena, when Yvonne and the Consul abandon their masks and confess their love for each other and desire for escape, if not their shared dream. However, a sense of menace persists: Yvonne feels

they talk "like prisoners who do not have much time to talk" (U 279). Their dreams of escape end in dark portents; their tentative connections disintegrate in the Consul's memories of betrayal and Yvonne's fear of loss, in the self-absorption that dislocates each from the world, and from each other.[9]

Political commitment is not offered as a form of integration to these protagonists during this narrative. Only Hugh plans an active political gesture, of solidarity with the doomed Spanish Loyalists, which may indeed represent a saving grace for himself and the world, and which may also be a means of expiating his guilt. More than commitment, Lowry emphasizes an awareness of the world, a recognition of how European events, reflected in Mexico, are shaping the destiny of millions. Yvonne lacks both real awareness and concern; her conception of humanity is individualized, consistently particular. Hugh and Laruelle are both partly aware and concerned but while one ultimately chooses to act, the other cannot make that decision. The Consul's visions, reflections and observations indicate a profound awareness of forces in the world, but he has abandoned hope and so cannot act.

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[9] Terence Wright claims that Yvonne represents "all human love and the possibility of redemption, and we must understand what it is the Consul is throwing away" (71).
Terence Wright, "Under the Volcano: The static art of Malcolm Lowry," Ariel: A Review of International English Literature 1.4 (1970).

His prayer before Cervantes's Virgin (whom he addresses as Vigil's "Virgin for those who have nobody with" U 290) demonstrates that his despair is largely due to a dislocation grounded in his fundamental hatred of the world.

> "Nothing is altered and in spite of God's mercy I am still alone. Though my suffering seems senseless I am still in agony. There is no explanation of my life." Indeed there was not, nor was this what he's meant to convey. "Please let Yvonne have her dream -- dream? -- of a new life with me -- please let me believe that all that is not an abominable self-deception," he tried..."Please let me make her happy, deliver me from this dreadful tyranny of self. I have sunk low. Let me sink lower still, that I may know the truth. Teach me to love again, to love life." That wouldn't do either..."Where is love? Let me truly suffer. Give me back my purity, the knowledge of the Mysteries, that I have betrayed and lost. -- Let me be truly lonely, that I may honestly pray. Let us be happy again somewhere, if it's only together, if it's only out of this terrible world. Destroy the world!" he cried in his heart. (U 290-91)

The ultimate source of this hatred is clouded by the fragmented presentation of the Consul. The structure of the book, for example through use of perspective, isolates him from any context which might lead the reader to a satisfying comprehension of his deeds and motivations. Most of what we learn about his past comes from biased, untrustworthy perspectives of limited knowledge, while his own grasp of reality has been so damaged that he can never fill in the gaps for us or for himself, nor does Lowry step in to do so. Hence, his drunkenness serves as both a

symptom and a cause of his dislocation. The vagueness of his motivations actually intensifies the novel's determinism, making the Consul's fate seem as much due to inexorable external forces as his own flawed choices.[10]

Hugh and Yvonne provide very few useful clues. Their love for the Consul and their desire to help him are genuine, but they are themselves limited, if not as truly dislocated. Unlike the Consul, they are still seekers, although Yvonne ultimately accepts the futility of her quest and despairs. Hugh wants somehow to reconcile his need for atonement with his desire to make some active contribution to the world, despite his propensity for escaping and his privileged distance from the oppressed of the world. Yvonne wants that singular, personal, fulfilling relationship that could compensate for the loss of her parents (especially her father, whom Geoffrey replicates in many ways), her failed marriage, her dead child, and her disconnection from both family and career. Her desire for order in the universe contradicts her failure to achieve order in her life. In these consuming desires, both are intensely self-absorbed, and hence, inevitably distanced from the Consul. Yet they are not

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[10] According to Edmonds, "[the] Consul's murder at the Farolito in Parián is not a trick of fate, but is the outcome of a series of interrelated circumstances, depending upon the Consul's past, his role in Quauhnahuac, and conditions in Mexico during the time of the novel's action" (77). I would add that it also depends on the way those conditions reflect global developments.

detached -- she has been his wife, he is his half-brother -- and they have betrayed the Consul with each other. Even though he has shut them out, they cannot know this, yet each makes serious errors in treatment of him. Their inadequacy isolates the Consul.

Yvonne has returned to Quauhnahuac with specific goals, if ambiguous motives. There is a testing quality to her approach of Geoffrey Firmin, and an ambiguity in her motives. She wants to be at once the saved and the saviour, at one moment wishing the Consul would "see her, when he emerged, waiting there, abandoned and affronted" (U 61), at another reflecting how she had hoped to find Quauhnahuac "with Geoffrey here alone, but now in the flesh, redeemable, wanting her help" (U 68). Common sense tells her that she finds no such thing, yet she tests the Consul, non-committally trying to get him to admit his need:

> " -- Have you really come back? Or have you just come to see me?" the Consul was asking Yvonne gently as he replaced the card.
> "Here I am, aren't I?" Yvonne said merrily, even with a slight note of challenge. (U 76)

Yet her degree of control over this challenge is unclear, for later on their reunion morning, she seems to shut her husband out deliberately, to refuse to deal with their shared pain or to recognize that her infidelities make her accusation of drunkenness an insult. Yvonne, like the

Consul and Hugh, is unable to be both body and soul in one place. She and the Consul never achieve the mutual awareness of situation which would allow them to connect, as is especially apparent when he tries to seduce her: she has hardened her heart against his pathetic reminiscences of the decay of the property after her departure, and his soul swiftly flies to the cantina.

Hugh, like Laruelle, is at least partly concerned for the Consul's welfare because of Yvonne's happiness. However, he has no strong bond with his half-brother and only a surface comprehension of him, so his help is of the practical, first-aid variety: he procures the strychnine and steadies the Consul's head while shaving him. Hugh tends to think of the Consul in terms of the job and country he represents (his snore is to Hugh "ricocheting, agonized, embittered, but controlled, single....the muted voice of England long asleep" U 102), as someone who can be dismissed as obsolete and ineffectual but who retains a fascination in his very incomprehensibility. Hugh provides a remarkably prescient external view of the Consul; in its vagueness, it extends his brother's particular circumstances to his symbolic role in the world. Hugh senses, though he likely does not understand, something quite true about the Consul's inner and outer reality.

> It occurred to Hugh that the poor old chap might

> be, finally, helpless, in the grip of something against which all his remarkable defences could avail him little....But apparently this improbable tiger had no intentions of dying just yet.... Indeed, on the face of it, this man of abnormal strength and constitution and obscure ambition, whom Hugh would never know, could never deliver nor make agreement to God for, but in his way loved and desired to help, had triumphantly succeeded in pulling himself together. (U 187-88)

Of course, Hugh is quite wrong about the Consul's triumph; since he is more aware of what his brother seems than what he is, he does not know how to help him, and his inability to help amplifies the Consul's dislocation. Like Yvonne, he oversteps his boundaries. In forcing Geoffrey in political argument to admit error, Hugh also provokes, with arguments that are too late and come from a betrayer, the Consul's final rejection of both Hugh and Yvonne.

Laruelle, too, is a betrayer, and so his genuine concern for both the Consul and Yvonne is misplaced and, like virtually everything else about him, ineffectual. Like Hugh, he has partial but crucial knowledge. Whereas Hugh inadvertently reveals great truths in his observations of the Consul's appearance, Laruelle recalls, although he does not or cannot interpret, crucial events of the Consul's past. His own interruption of young Geoffrey's tryst with the girl in the Hell Bunker represents a violation of personal integrity, while Commander Firmin's possible involvement in the murder of

the German prisoners aboard the Samaritan is a perversion of collective responsibility. While Laruelle does not see how the first incident reverberates through his boyhood friend's growing paranoia, possessiveness and sexual guilt, he offers some insight into how the latter has contributed to the Consul's alcoholism and has fed his growing sense of general guilt.

> It was only once or twice during those later months when drunk that to M. Laruelle's astonishment he suddenly began proclaiming not only his guilt in the matter but that he'd always suffered horribly on account of it. He went much further. No blame attached to the stokers. No question arose of any order given them. Flexing his muscles he sardonically announced the single-handed accomplishment himself of the deed. But by this time the poor Consul had already lost almost all capacity for telling the truth and his life had become a quixotic oral fiction. Unlike "Jim" he had grown rather careless of his honour and the German officers were merely an excuse to buy another bottle of mescal. (U 39)

Such recollections and explanations are at best incomplete. They provide factual evidence but no deep sense of motivation and consequence, for in the first case Laruelle is an intruder, in the second, a reporter of second- and third-hand news.

It could seem from the inadequacies of the others' perspectives and the broken state of his own that the Consul somehow does not exist in the novel except as some sort of icon. Actually, he is perhaps most convincing and certainly most multifaceted. His perspective (which

operates in five of the twelve chapters) is that of a doomed alcoholic. However, his powers of wit, resourcefulness, courage and observation still frequently and articulately manifest themselves. He has more opportunity for reflection than the others, as he is physically alone more than they are. His thoughts are largely concerned with drinking, as he prides himself on avoidance of temptation or justifies his capitulations. This preoccupation is interrupted, though frequently amplified, by the appearances of his familiars --the hallucinations of delirium tremens -- or by trains of thought, evoked by his surroundings, which draw him towards but always past integration. These trains of thought are drawn from nightmares, mutated memories, fantasies of hope and despair, and twisted manifestations of guilt and betrayal and doom triggered by phrases heard or signs glimpsed; they often grow jumbled and defy decoding. The almost disciplined mental obsession with drink seems a way of blocking memories and knowledge too painful to think of and too horrible to bear.

In a way, the Consul's progress through the novel is towards his discovery that he has already conceded his use of drinking as insulation. The Consul is fully aware that the others are trying to help him, and although he does reject them because they are betrayers, he is more aware than they are of how futile help is, of how little he

wants to be sober. There is a pattern through the narrative of occasions, both in action and reflection, on which he is tempted or drawn towards connection, forgiveness and reintegration. For example, when he sees Mr. Quincey while visiting the tequila bottle hidden in his garden, he feels a desire "to talk to someone....Yet this opportunity to be brilliant was, in turn, more like something else, an opportunity to be admired; even....to be loved" (U 133). Nevertheless, this desire quickly becomes a longing for "nothing less than to drink; to drink, indeed, all day" (U 134), and to end up where he does end up, at the Farolito in Parián. More specifically, twice at Laruelle's he experiences profound tenderness towards and longing for Yvonne, but his approach is arrested by the apparently greater need for alcohol.

The strongest metaphor for the Consul's inevitable failure to connect is his failed seduction of Yvonne. In this seduction, he is simultaneously in three places, one of which inexorably claims him. Despite the clumsy start, her assent is honest and he imagines their intercourse as a sort of mystical transcendence, "like that jewelled gate the desperate neophyte, Yesod-bound, projects for the thousandth time on the heavens to permit passage of his astral body" (U 94). However, this image of spiritual transcendence quickly gives way to one of a cantina, and

the Consul struggles with fear of betrayal, represented by Hugh, and the fact that he would rather be drinking. His struggles render his immediate actions pathetic and futile: "...he was where he was, sweating now, glancing once -- but never ceasing to play the prelude, the little one-fingered introduction to the unclassifiable composition that might still just follow -- out of the window at the drive, fearful himself lest Hugh appear there" (U 94). As if aware of the futility of this enterprise, he grows increasingly detached from his actions, moving in his mind to the cantina and dwelling in detail on its inhabitants and their activities, on "the political exile in the corner discreetly sipping orange crush, the accountant arriving, accounts gloomily surveyed, the iceblock dragged in by a brigand with an iron scorpion, the one bartender slicing lemons, the other, sleep in his eyes, sorting beer bottles" (U 94). Reflection on the Consul's present activity vanishes as his evocation of the cantina, one of the novel's strongest symbols of despair, becomes almost erotic, reaching its climax as the Consul realizes his own impotence with his wife.

> Ah none but he knew how beautiful it all was, the sunlight, sunlight, sunlight flooding the bar of El Puerto del Sol, flooding the watercress and oranges, or falling in a single golden line as if in the act of conceiving a God, falling like a lance straight into a block of ice --

"Sorry, it isn't any good I'm afraid." (U 95)

As in all these instances of desire for connection thwarted by the greater desire for alcohol, the Consul does drink after abandoning the pursuit. And in each successive instant, the decision to drink becomes more dreadful in consequence. After his failure with Yvonne, the Consul entertains delusive hopes of a successful second try, but after Yvonne's attention turns to Hugh at the arena, he turns to mescal, his nemesis, at the Salon Ofélia.

In the Salon Ofélia chapter, the Consul reveals that his moments of striving are aimed at a sort of ultimate truth, beyond forgiveness and reintegration. As he considers his last longing look exchanged with Yvonne, his mind races fairly lucidly through the day's consumption and the inebriation achieved, concluding that "from all this it was not so much necessary to sober up again, as once more to wake, yes, to wake, so much as to -- " (U 295). Later, in his vicious political confrontation with Hugh, he condemns both Hugh and Yvonne, in a general and a brutally particular sense, for the sort of interference that is dooming the world, "all because you haven't got the wisdom and the simplicity and the courage, yes, the courage, to take any of the, to take -- " (U 314). In both cases, a clue seems to lie just beyond his groping,

but is missed.

The structure of the chapter itself negates any hope that the Consul will achieve comprehension and reintegration, or even that the clue leads to anything specific. Many of the events are related in retrospect through the Consul's jumbled reflections in the stone excusado; he is physically separated from the others. As well, his thoughts tend most specifically in this chapter to an inevitable destruction of a world he hates too much to want to save. Finally, the Consul reveals awareness of his own fate, his self-destruction and promotion of disintegration. He seems at last actively to choose disconnection, through his horrifying castigations of Hugh and Yvonne: " -- Was the Consul saying this? Must he say it? -- It seemed he must" (U 314). His declared rejection of them precipitates his option for the Farolito, a choice made from a perspective of increasingly complete detachment, of hallucinatory dislocation in his perception of time as well as space. Hugh and Yvonne all but disappear, just as Yvonne gave way to the cantina during the attempted seduction.

> "I choose --"
>
> He was in a room, and suddenly in this room, matter was disjunct: a doorknob was standing a little way out from the door. A curtain floated in by itself, unfastened, unattached to anything. The idea struck him it had come in to strangle him. An orderly little clock behind the bar called him to his senses, its ticking very loud: Tlax: Tlax: Tlax: Tlax:

> ...Half past five. Was that all? "Hell," he finished absurdly. "Because -- " He produced a twenty-peso note and laid it on the table.
>
> "I like it," he called to them, through the open window, from outside. Cervantes stood behind the bar, with scared eyes, holding the cockerel. "I love hell. I can't wait to get back there. In fact I'm running. I'm almost back there already."
>
> He was running too, in spite of his limp, calling back to them crazily, and the queer thing was, he wasn't quite serious, running toward the forest, which was growing darker and darker, tumultuous above -- a rush of air swept out of it, and the weeping pepper tree roared.
>
> He stopped after a while: all was calm. No one had come after him. Was that good? Yes, it was good, he thought, his heart pounding. And since it was so good he would take the path to Parián, to the Farolito. (U 316)

There seems an absolute horror in the choice of hell over sobriety, yet the presentation provides a partial clue to why the Consul's struggles towards integration end in decisions to drink, and his strivings towards truth end in confusion. He rejects Hugh and Yvonne not only because they have betrayed him, but because he fears connection. His choice of hell is less relevant than his relief at escaping and finding himself alone. This relief prompts him to go to Parián and the Farolito, where his conscious option for mescal and his sexual encounter with María make him the active betrayer of hope, rather than the drink-ridden victim of incomprehensible fate.

Although the narrative decline is maintained, the focus of the novel's treatment of the Consul shifts in this final chapter. His sufferings are gradually

externalized; he becomes in an immediate sense a victim of outside forces: the fascist municipal authorities who represent a growing threat to the world itself. The Farolito becomes a microcosm of the decaying state of the world, the voices of its patrons a cacophony of confused theories and sinister schemes, with only the old fiddler and the woman with the dominoes offering help, albeit powerlessly, to the Consul, who has rejected help. Arriving here draws him both completely into himself and out into the world. Much of what the Consul sees and hears in this place is phantasmagorical, although his familiars more or less desert him. However, when he consciously despairs by betraying Yvonne, he gains a lucidity that intensifies the terror of the scene and the tragedy of his death.

The Consul himself, like the Farolito and the world, embodies dissonant simultaneities. He cannot detach himself from the world in which such sinister men as the Jefe de Jardineros operate.

> He gathered, though, that the respected Chief of Gardens, to whom at this moment he sent a mute appeal for help, might be even "higher" than the Inspector-General himself. The appeal was answered by a blacker look than ever: at the same time the Consul knew where he'd seen him before; the Chief of Gardens might have been the image of himself when, lean, bronzed, serious, beardless, and at the crossroads of his career, he had assumed the Vice-Consulship in Granada. (U 359)

In contemplating Yvonne's letters, the Consul sees his rejection of reintegration as a rejection of identity. Ironically, it is loss of identity which kills him, not so much through his adoption of a false name (that of another would-be escapee, William Blackstone), as through the officials' discovery of Hugh's papers in his pocket and their subsequent condemnation of him as an anarchist spy. Yet this loss of identity is externalized; he realizes who he is. When he acts, striking back literally and figuratively at those arresting him, he accuses them with courage and insight.

> "You poxboxes. You coxcoxes. You killed that Indian. You tried to kill him and make it look like an accident," he roared. "You're all in it. Then more of you came up and took his horse. Give me my papers back." (U 372)

Yet his inability to kill the attacking cock represents his lack of the potency -- or social power -- which the fascist officials possess. The Chief of Gardens in the world now is no longer a benevolent God-figure. If, as the Consul has speculated earlier, sinful Adam was punished not by banishment from Eden but by "having to <u>go on living there</u>, alone," (U 137), he now inhabits a garden whose cautionary warnings against destruction take on a sinister meaning. Nevertheless, the Consul refuses to submit passively to his doom. His freeing the horse mirrors Hugh's and Yvonne's attempts at expiating guilt

through freeing the seagull and the eagle respectively. Richard Costa argues that the horse "is released by the doomed consul at his eleventh hour in the befuddled yet benevolent belief he is doing a last penance to the memory of the dead Indian,"[11] although I feel the implications are more universal. The act is tragically ironic -- the horse, after all, runs into the forest where it tramples Yvonne -- yet is made in good faith, and is the Consul's last before his unheroic death.

The ambiguity of his death allows him a broad range of thoughts while dying. He recognizes the virtues in the strivings of Yvonne and Hugh, as well as his own desire for forgiveness and help, and his need for love. His awareness peaks in a vision of the fate of the world he has just actively reentered.

> It was crumbling too, whatever it was, collapsing, while he was falling, falling into the volcano, he must have climbed it after all, though now there was this noise of foisting lava in his ears, horribly, it was in eruption, yet no, it wasn't the volcano, the world itself was bursting, bursting into black spouts of villages catapulted into space, with himself falling through it all, through the inconceivable pandemonium of a million tanks, through the blazing of ten million burning bodies, falling, into a forest, falling --
> (U 375-6)

This image of war and cataclysm is succeeded by one of pitying trees, as if the natural world (which the

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[11] Costa 99.

Consul and Yvonne sought in their escapist visions) weeps for what humanity has made of its part in it. The image of immolation recalls the novel's great unsolved mystery: the quality and extent of young Commander Firmin's involvement in the affair of the German officers. Simultaneously, it reflects the later fate of so many concentration camp victims. Whether Geoffrey Firmin was a participant or observer is never revealed, and the very uncertainty imparts profound horror to the event. The Consul has witnessed an act which manifested the worst of collective human will, an evil transcending ideology and betraying hope. That evil has grown in the world; the Consul's vision at death presages the awful amplification of such destruction in the days of war to come.

In a singular sense, Geoffrey Firmin's death is degrading, even absurd. Yet in a general sense, his death is horrifying, for in his vision he is reintegrated with a world which is doomed. The final page of Under the Volcano is devoted to the recurring garden sign: "?LE GUSTA ESTE JARDIN? ?QUE ES SUYO? !EVITE QUE SUS HIJOS LO DESTRUYAN!" (U 377).[12] This sign, the sight of which increasingly dislocates Firmin as he sees it, may

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[12] The sign should read "?LE GUSTA ESTE JARDIN QUE ES SUYO? !EVITE QUE SUS HIJOS LO DESTRUYAN!", according to Chris Ackerley and Lawrence J. Clipper, A Companion to Under the Volcano (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984) 446. Apparently an error in the galley proofs led to the inaccuracy in the 1947 British Cape edition, and the Penguin edition which I am using.

represent a nihilistic condemnation, an eviction from the garden, or it may be primarily cautionary, an indication of both universal and personal responsibility for the preservation of the world. David Markson argues that "as the sign in the garden indicates that each man may preserve his Eden -- and by extension the world's --so too can each man destroy it."[13] The ending of the novel seems completely pessimistic, yet the memories of the old man calling the Consul "compañero" and of the Consul's own freeing of the horse remain. Such acts do not impede the tragic progress of Under the Volcano's narrative. However, they imply truth in the ironic inscription on Jacques Laruelle's house, no se puede vivir sin amar, and value in the sort of hope Hugh will take back to Spain.

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[13] Markson 84.

CHAPTER TWO: Christina Stead

> Everyone looked strange. Everyone had an outline, and brilliant, solid colours. Louie was surprised and realized that when you run away, everything is at once very different. Perhaps she would get on well enough. She imagined the hubbub now at Spa House, as they discovered that she was not bursting up the stairs with their morning tea. They would look everywhere and conclude that she had gone for a walk. "So I have," she thought, smiling secretly, "I have gone for a walk round the world."
>
> The Man Who Loved Children 526-27.

None of the novels of dislocation in my study ends as hopefully as Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children (1940).[1] Louisa Pollit, who attains prominence among its three protagonists, chooses a vision embracing the world in totality, like Richard Lovat Somers in Kangaroo. Her "walk round the world" recalls the "ring round the world" (K 381) he intends to draw with his consciousness. Somers's departure of Australia for an uncertain future in America reflects no optimism, only the determination to persist in an irresolvable quest. Louie, on the other hand, not only pursues artistic fulfilment in leaving Spa House, she escapes a claustrophobic prison of deprivation, manipulation, insanity and despair. In escaping, she demonstrates the self-reliance neither her egotistical father Sam nor her doomed stepmother Henrietta can

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[1] Edition used throughout: Christina Stead, The Man Who Loved Children (1940; New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1980).

achieve. If no traditional form of integration -- family, school, or friendship -- will provide her with the encouragement of individual expression that she needs, then she will choose her own path.

Nevertheless, despite its exuberant, courageous tone, the ending of the novel is profoundly ambiguous. After all, Louie is a fourteen-year-old girl without money or rich relations; although her dreams and projects reveal ambition matched by developing genius, they are still those of an adolescent. By social and legal definitions a child, Louie could be returned to her father unless the Bakens or Auntie Jo protect her. Yet Louie's belief in her own potential, and the necessity of her departure are unquestionable. Her escape does not promise happiness so much as opportunity for growth. Yet Louie remains dislocated even in escaping. She remains unable to reconcile her passionate need for self-expression with the forms of social integration available to her, and while she demonstrates an ability to learn from people (rather than make role models of them), her connections never imply an acceptance of the sorts of community these people represent.

Such ambiguity is central to Stead's narrative technique in The Man Who Loved Children. Unlike D.H. Lawrence or Malcolm Lowry, she does not cast any of her three protagonists out into a situation of exile that

mirrors world trends. Instead, she traps Louie physically and psychologically, as a child reaching adolescence within a large yet isolated family, as the dislocated child of dislocated parents.[2] Stead's emphasis is almost always on the enclosed world of the family and the possibilities of alienation within it, to the extent that the world sometimes becomes the Pollit household, furiously living yet frozen in time, detached from currents of social behaviour, political theory and popular culture in a way that Kangaroo and Under the Volcano never are. Yet it is as historicized in more subversive and metaphorical ways, which both Jonathan Arac and Judith Kegan Gardiner explore in their recent work on Stead's refunctioning of cultural images. Gardiner claims that "Sam's fascism, big brotherism, radio personality, and his rise, depression, and further rise suggest that he is in

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[2] Joan Lidoff discusses the permeation of the novel by forms of integration, which I feel Stead employs to emphasize the depth of Louie's precocious sense of dislocation. The family unit is fragmented and Louie must detach herself from it to survive.

> Stead resists the temptation to place her autobiographical heroine alone in the foreground center of a bildungsroman. She firmly perceives the individual as existing within a web of inevitable social influences and interconnections, and the form of her novel mirrors that belief....The form of Stead's novel becomes an embodiment of her central moral tenet. Placing her characters in the shared membership of collective family life mitigates the distortion of vision of the pervasive human egotism she continually combats. (51)

Joan Lidoff, Christina Stead (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982).

tune with the history of Western culture between the wars."[3] Arac contends that Stead shifts the emphasis of her contemporaries towards gender roles in cultural mythmaking, so that "[the] worst trouble with Sam....is patriarchy, his position within a socially established structure of sex and gender domination that even the organized left of the 1930s neglected."[4] Stead furthers the destruction of the family idyll which Mikhail Bakhtin discusses in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" (1937-38).[5] Domestic fragmentation, through Louie's perception, permits organic connection with a much larger world (though her relative ignorance of forms of fragmentation outside the family allows her an optimism

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[3] Judith Kegan Gardiner, Rhys, Stead, Lessing, and the Politics of Empathy (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989) 138.

[4] Jonathan Arac, "The Struggle for the Cultural Heritage: Christina Stead Refunctions Charles Dickens and Mark Twain," Cultural Critique 2 (Winter 1985-86) 183.

[5] According to Bakhtin, the narrative movement of the classic family novel is "out of the great but alien world of random occurrence into the small but secure and stable little world of the family, where nothing is foreign, or accidental or incomprehensible, where authentically human relationships are re-established, where the ancient matrices are re-established on a family base: love, marriage, childbearing, a peaceful old age for the in-laws, shared meals around the family table" (232).
M.M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, ed. Michael Holdquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holdquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

which Somers lacks).[6]

I want to concentrate on Louie in this chapter. Christina Stead's narrative serves as a bridge between the overtly global vision of Lawrence and Lowry, and the more localized perspective of the novelists to be treated in the remaining chapters. Within the domestic context of The Man Who Loved Children, Louie manages to transcend her father's egotism and her stepmother's despair, so I want to examine how Louie is drawn to, repelled by and shaped by each of her parents. As well, I want to consider Stead's presentation of the physical and intellectual aspects of Louie's childhood and genius, as well as of the forms of integration she is offered and her reasons for rejecting them. Finally, I will examine Louie's acceptance of dislocation and the events which precipitate her departure.

Although this narrative is essentially progressive, the multiplicity of perspectives and events, the accumulation of surface detail, and the virtual simultaneity Stead accords the momentous and the quotidian, make Louisa's quest an intimate part of the

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[6] Gardiner argues that "[where] Dickens centripetally reassembles severed families, Stead flings her characters centrifugally out of them" (142). She concedes as well that "[the] story of Louisa's growth as a potential artist slowly emerges from the sticky bed of family interconnections and takes its place as the novel's subject" (134). My emphasis is less on the family itself (except as a context) than on Louie's individuality, artistic growth, and potentially creative dislocation.

fabric of everyday family living. The first sentence entirely about Louie reveals at once her sense of responsibility towards the family, her instinctive love for the younger children, and her growing intellectual detachment: "Strict and anxious when their parents were at home, Louisa when left in sole command was benevolent, liking to hear their shouts from a distance while she lay on her belly, reading, at the top of the orchard, or ambled, woolgathering, about the house" (M 3). Louie's development is presented and her choices are justified as much externally, through her actions and speeches and the responses of others to her, as through internalization of her reactions, plans and dreams.[7] A number of critics point to Stead's convincing evocation of the private life of the family, notably Randall Jarrell and Graham Burns.[8]

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[7] According to Laurie Clancy, Christina Stead achieves objectivity in that "much of her revelation of her characters relies almost entirely on externals, on the characters' actions, and above all on their articulation of their own thoughts and impulses. Stead rarely intervenes in the narrative, to direct our responses or speculate on the inner workings of the characters' minds. Insofar as judgments are made and the book is given a shaping force, it is done largely by means of structure, particularly by implicit juxtaposition and comparison" (6).

Laurie Clancy, Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children and For Love Alone (Melbourne: Shillington House, 1984).

[8] Burns argues that "if the Pollit world is largely a distraught one, there are some moments in which its creation attains a capacity to insinuate from the midst of its discord an authentic sense of the binding intimacies of normal family life" (42).

Graham Burns, "The Moral Design of The Man Who Loved

Yet even if the Pollits invite the shock of recognition in frequent intimations of utter normalcy, they are most striking (especially as a context for Louie's growth) in their utter peculiarity.

Terry Sturm's analysis of Christina Stead's ideological use of realism cites the replacement of the extended family by the nuclear family in Western society as a source of the Pollits' remarkable isolation.

> The isolation of the family unit has two consequences which are central to Christina Stead's analysis. In the first place, it makes the family particularly vulnerable to external pressures, especially economic pressures.... Secondly, the isolation and concentration of the family, as a kind of nerve centre for social life as a whole, exposes internal tensions and stresses which it is increasingly unable to control.[9]

In this context, Henny and Sam serve as a bridge

Children," The Critical Review 14 (1971).

In Jarrell's view, "[when] you begin to read about the Pollits you think with a laugh, 'They're wonderfully plausible.' When you have read fifty or a hundred pages you think with a desperate laugh, or none, that they are wonderfully implausible -- implausible as mothers and fathers and children, in isolation, are implausible. There in that warm, dark, second womb, the bosom of the family, everything is carried far past plausibility: a family's private life is as immoderate and insensate, compared to its public life, as our thoughts are, compared to our speech" (vi).

Randall Jarrell, "An Unread Book," in The Man Who Loved Children (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1980).

[9] Terry Sturm, "Christina Stead's New Realism: The Man Who Loved Children and Cotters' England," in Cunning Exiles: Studies of Modern Prose Writers, ed. Don Anderson and Stephen Knight (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974) 16-17.

between the old extended families, both patrician and proletarian, and the new one-couple households. Both bring to their marriage mercenary expectations which can only be disappointed, although their individual dislocation is as much due to personality as economics. According to Dorothy Green, "[the] inexplicable union of Henrietta Collyer and Sam Pollit resulted in a family of a very unusual kind: the only bond between them is their carnality and this and other characteristics are distributed among their children in surprising ways."[10] Green does not go quite far enough: Sam and Henny are singularly unsuited for a bond of carnality. Brought up and self-trained to mistrust sensuality, each is privately repelled by his or her seemingly unbreakable commitment to a marriage which is both a torment and a powerful source of identity. Their characteristic differences are worth exploring as a prelude to consideration of Louie.

While Sam's dislocation is more dangerous, Henny's is more final: she is the most self-contained character in the novel, and the dislocating discrepancy between desire and reality is for her most tragic. With all her nuances -- in her equally intense vituperation, compassion and despair -- she is consistently a decayed Southern belle, a

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[10] Dorothy Green, "The Man Who Loved Children: storm in a teacup," The Australian Experience: critical essays on Australian novels, ed. W.S. Ransom (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974) 179.

doomed anachronism who "had not been brought up to think that she would succeed because of a mean disposition. She had been nurtured in the idea that she was to be a great lady, like the old-time beauties of the South" (M 59). Her training in watercolour painting, piano and needlepoint, and her physical delicacy do not prepare her for housekeeping, budgeting or (especially) bearing and raising six children and caring for a stepdaughter. However, there is always a discrepancy between her illusions about her background and its actuality. The Collyer fortune derives from mercantilism, not land and inheritance. Small wonder that near the end of the novel, Henny throws away in disgust yet again "the saga of upland Georgian gentility" (M 443; presumably Gone with the Wind); its world no longer exists for her to occupy.

The Pollits' marriage represents a fragmentation of desire and reality; its inherent falseness is perhaps why Louie never evinces a desire to marry. Henny marries Sam to suit her father's misguided schemes; Sam's motives in marrying Henny are less straightforward, just as his character is more complex. At least three motives are implied. To Louie, he confesses his honourable fulfilment of a pledge ("I knew it would be a well-nigh hopeless union, yet so great is a young man's idea of what is honourable and sporting that I could not renege" M 438), with the corollary object of providing a mother for the

child of his idealized first marriage. Regarding Henny in the aftermath of a violent quarrel, his gaze meets her enormous eyes that "had always stirred Sam deeply; and even when he came on her in a mood he detested, when she was sitting, staring into space, communing with her disillusion, his heart would be wrung by their unloving beauty" (M 148). Henny is of the frail, dark-haired breed that most captivates his repressed sensuality, and most opposes the achievement of his professed ideals. Nevertheless, in private reflections, Sam indicates that what was probably his most pressing motive is one which matches Henny's: economic advancement through the propitiation of Old David Collyer. There is a polarity to Sam's character: the idealist convinced of his genius as a naturalist, social planner and father is also a man tormented by memories of a repressed, lonely, impoverished childhood. His marriage and the maintenance of his good name become obsessions with him, bulwarks he builds against reversion to the past.

> He beamed, he bloated with joy, to see how they feared and loved his great house....Once he had paid rent for the small back room in his brother's jerry-built sham-Tudor ribbon dwelling in Dundalk, near the shipyards where his brother was then a painter; and even that was a step up from his father's house. Tohoga House, which this very day he purposed to call Tohoga Place, with a few scrawls of paint, and for which he paid only fifty dollars monthly, with taxes, to his father-in-law, was still all joy to Samuel, so much joy, in fact, that he could forget the black days of his marriage.... (M 47)

Sam genuinely believes in his ideals, which are premised on a vision of the world as an extension of his ego; his schemes all reflect the superiority he accords his intellect, as well as his race, gender and nationality. Hence, within the microcosm of his family he must maintain his ideals through the subjugation of others to his will, which grows increasingly tyrannical as those others prove rebellious subjects. They must -- the children age and reject Sam in their developing self-definition, and Henny ceases to be (as his first wife Rachel would have ceased to be) a frail and sexless girl through repeated experiences of childbirth. As well, Sam's ideals are abstract, while Henny can only live in the brutal, concrete world. According to R.G. Geering, "Sam and Henny provide the contrast on which the book is built. He believes in the perfectibility of man and all the humanist virtues, but his limitations as a human being are crippling....Henny, on the other hand, only too well aware of the insecurity and injustice of existence, seems made for tragedy and this gives a touch of grandeur to her vileness."[11] Louie grows to adolescence on the battleground of these polar opposites and yet is no more skilled at integration (except briefly in the odd

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[11] R.G. Geering, Christina Stead (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969) 97.

schoolgirl world) than either; her talents are transcendent. Her relationship with each (rather than both; Sam and Henny never seem to function as a married couple for her) contributes to her development, although in contradictory ways. She is physically like Sam -- large, blond and indolent -- but actually is the genius he only believes himself to be: she can use creatively a formidable will like his. She learns more from Henny about self-definition, detachment and survival, but Henny ultimately becomes her only real object of responsibility and her last link to the household.

Significantly, Stead begins her open-ended narrative when Louie is roughly eleven-and-a-half, an older child, and ends it when Louie is fully pubescent. Since Louie has no memory of the idealized Rachel, her strongest experience of adult womanhood has been Henny, and mostly the Henny driven to despair by childbirths and poverty. A gradual, mostly inadvertent connection develops between these completely dissimilar females, ultimately founded on their moral antipathy to Sam, for although Henny is acutely aware of her subordination as a woman, her private life is almost entirely among women. Hence, while Henny's life among women is not one Louie will choose to emulate, Henny gives her stepdaughter something which Sam never could: a sense of gender which is firm, unromantic, yet

mysterious.[12]

At first, the connection is premised on a mutual materialism[13] and a common desire for a private life. Louie feels no obligation to love her stepmother and so can respond to her free from guilt or preconditioning.

> Uncritical and without knowledge of other women, or of mother's love, she was able to like Henny's airs, the messes of her linen and clothes closets, her castoff hats and shoes, the strange beautiful things she got secondhand from rich cousins, her gifts, charities, and the fine lies to ladies come to afternoon tea. As for affection, Louie did not miss what she had never

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[12] Joan Lidoff argues that "Stead profoundly understands the way the primary gender division is a metaphor for the strife of otherness, the constant tension caused by the need to live with the existence of other wills and souls than our own" (19).

[13] This materialism is a desire for power based on the possession of objects. This power, which Louie alone really understands, is a private means of self-definition and fulfilment, not a public means of exercising control. When Sam returns from Malaya, he brings her a robe. Her reaction reveals her perception of this treasure's worth and the lack of ego in her sense of possession.

> With a sullen, downcast face, but with a faint flush, she took it. As she went past the ranks of Pollits, they looked curiously, grudgingly at her, or fingered it. She laid it out on the sofa in the long dining room. When alone with it, triumph surged up -- mine, she thought, mine; and grasped one of the stiff folds, mine -- and she laid the other hand flat on it. She went self-consciously and stolidly back, but no one noticed her. (M 273)

Possession is an important source of identity in this novel; Sam, in rejecting materialism, allies himself too closely to the abstract philosophies that fail to reach his children once they acquire a sense of self and alternate means of comprehending natural phenomena. Henny's progress towards despair parallels her loss of personal possessions, those useless yet concrete symbols of her self apart from Sam.

> known. Henny, delicate and anemic, really disliked the powerful, clumsy, healthy child, and avoided contact with her as much as she could. It happened that this solitude was exactly what Louie most craved. (M 33)

Henny's allotment of personal space and occasional small gifts precipitate "a kind of unconscious bond based on sex"[14] between the two. Although neither parent describes for Louie the physiological changes she will undergo (so that the twelve-year-old child of a scientist has no idea how her sixth half-sibling has been born), Henny provides an atmosphere in which Louie can detach herself from the Pollits and learn intuitively what it is to be a woman in the male-structured confines of the family. Thus Henny wins Louie's loyalty from Sam.

> ....this irresistible call of sex seemed now to hang in the air of the house. It was like an invisible animal, which could be nosed, though, lying in wait in one of the corners of this house that was steeped in hidden as well as spoken drama. Sam adored Darwin but was no good at invisible animals. Against him, the intuitions of stepmother and stepdaughter came together and procreated, began to put on carnality, feel blood and form bone, and a heart and brain were coming to the offspring. This creature that was forming against the gay-hearted, generous, eloquent, goodfellow was bristly, foul, a hyena, hate of woman the house-jailed and child-chained against the keycarrier, childnamer and riothaver. (M 36)

Although Henny (like Sam) never concedes or encourages Louie's extraordinary talents, when she gives

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[14] Clancy 13.

her "something that put iron in her soul and made her strong to resist the depraved healthiness and idle jollity of the Pollit clan" (M 258), she is giving her the courage to become self-reliant and to express her genius creatively. Laurie Clancy claims that "Henny has some revenge after all, in that the example of her unsuccessful rebellion against Sam rubs off on Louie," but to read this vengeance as a triumph for "united womanhood"[15] is incomplete. Henny's downfall is tragic, yet only her death can free Louie from Sam; any posthumous victory on her part is largely Pyrrhic. Besides, Louie opts less for any bond with womanhood than for assertion of her own self. Nevertheless, Henny inadvertently teaches Louie to discover the essence of her own femininity, which she can do while rejecting the conventional female roles of integration. Louie never fantasizes about marriage (except to a man like Shelley) or motherhood. However, she has a genuine maternal instinct.[16] This ambiguity manifests itself in her ability to dream or read and to nurse Tommy simultaneously, and especially in her ill-humoured but effective calming of Evie during a parental

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[15] Clancy 14.

[16] In this she differs from her more conventional half-sister Evie. Sam's pet, the dark-haired Evie is ironically Henny's double, unconsciously skilled at artifice and beguilement, obsessed with being "a lady with a baby....a little woman, thin like I am now and not fat in front or in the skirt" (M 120), not a mother. Evie is already doomed to Henny's fate in marriage.

battle.

Louie's real if instinctive comprehension of her womanhood seems the source of the conscious responsibility she feels for Henny. It also precipitates her sense of difference from Sam. Louie's movement towards Henny coincides with her detachment from Sam; both shifts represent her increasing comprehension of her dislocation within her family. Stead's presentation of the detachment differs: whereas in describing the bond between Louie and Henny she emphasizes an inner world given external form through defining possessions, in describing the rift between Sam and Louie, she concentrates on the expressive and manipulative uses of language, significantly in external terms, for Sam and Louie share no inner life.

Critical attention has been accorded the role of language in the novel, usually to contrast Sam and Henny, or Sam and Louie. For example, in Jennifer McDonell's view,

> In The Man Who Loved Children the role of everyday speech and dialogue and the role of fantasy and fairytale are extended to the point where two ersatz worlds represented by Louie and by Sam are examined and eventually polarized. But where the waker's world is celebrated, that is, the imaginative world of the prospective artist who aims to be articulate and transcendent, the other, the perverse world of the Pollit family, the family as romance as seen by Sam, against which the first is measured, is

parodied.[17]

Similarly, Joan Lidoff argues that Louie breaks away from Sam in the course of redefining his values to her own interpretations: "Mastery of language becomes the power which defines values, judgements and actions. The teller of the tale has the ultimate determination of its shape; the story Louie insists on telling is her own."[18] I am not so much concerned here with the qualitative differences between Sam's and Louie's uses of language as with motivation, and representational significance for Louie's dislocation and detachment.[19] Louie is fundamentally honest and generally uncompromising; when she tells Sam "I never lie. Why should I lie? Those who lie are afraid of something" (M 522), she is quite credible; while Stead may intend some ambiguity in our sympathies towards Louie, there is little in our comprehension of her. Hence, Louie's speech is usually articulate and straightforward; when she adopts a higher rhetoric, she reveals no affectation, only the attempt of

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[17] Jennifer McDonell, "Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children," Southerly: A Review of Australian Literature 44.4 (1984) 395.

[18] Lidoff 49.

[19] Jonathan Arac argues that "[following] Bakhtin, [this novel's] play of voices comes closer to Dostoevsky than to Dickens or Twain, in presenting alternative ways of life, embodied ideologies, among which the choice is not obvious" (181).

an aspiring artist to assimilate her literary sources. As well, Louie's conversations with Henny (not Henny's rages against her) are refreshingly appropriate to the ages and relationship of these women. Sam, despite his puritanism and moralism, is essentially duplicitous and consistently egotistical. He manipulates language to wield power: his desire to keep the children dependent and in awe is evident in his constant use of an affected childish dialect with them. This dialect veers in implication from the brashly comical to the savagely cruel, but retains laws of diction that confuse the juvenile audience. Sam also uses language to impress people with his sense of intellectual and moral superiority. Hence, with his colleagues, his much-admired young female naturalists and sometimes with the older Louie, he adopts a declamatory, self-adulatory rhetoric. Only in exercising a sadistic sort of blackmail as expression of his will is he fairly straightforward. When he tells Henny "I have the whiphand now, owing to your own deed" (M 497), or threatens Louie that if she leaves "I would blame your mother as I've never blamed her for anything" (M 365), he is less disgusting than chilling, for Stead reveals instances in which he could be effectual.

Any sense of communication between Sam and Louie is based on his misinterpretation of her silences, or hers of his speech. Louie tries to force Sam into conversation

but he can only orate; in his egotism, he makes every situation some extension of himself, his schemes and sorrows. When Louie in her frustration lashes out loudly enough that he can hear her, he is inevitably angry, insulting or dismissive (or all three); he refuses to let Louie believe he thinks of her as an individual apart from himself.

> "I don't care, I don't care," suddenly cried Louie.
>
> Sam stared at her, "What do you mean, you don't care? You don't care for my thought for you? You don't care for my years of torture and what might well have been mental rot and spiritual death for me? You don't care for what I have been through -- hell is a very temperate word!"
>
> Louie began to snivel, "I heard it too much, I heard it too much!"
>
> Sam said gravely, "I looked forward to your growing up; I was so happy when you were born -- I thought a little girl would be easy to bring up and would have such belief in me."
>
> "Oh, I heard it too often!"
>
> He shrugged away angrily....
>
> "You don't understand, Dad: I am sympathetic, but I heard it too often; I can't stand it any more." (M 438-39)

Despite her inability to communicate with Sam, Louie has received valuable gifts from him. Besides will, he has given her knowledge which in her lack of egotism she can appreciate for itself; Louie perceives the difference in their approaches to knowledge in this reflection on their trips to the Lincoln Memorial: "I learned from him, not from you. You used to say your heart always beat when you were going towards it; my heart used to beat, but you

always thought about yourself" (M 523). As well, he has given her a love of reading, which she has transformed into a passion for literature and philosophy, and of nature, which she makes part of an organic view of existence, a totalizing perspective.[20] (This perspective does not, however, free her from social dislocation. The contingencies of survival, and the forms of community available to her, constantly remind her of the fragmentation of the world.) There are implications early in the novel that Louie has adored her father as much as the smaller children do, and Henny frequently vilifies similarities between them, so Louie's rejection is of some severity. Nevertheless, it is not wholly based on her father's self-centred refusal to make conversation, nor even on the natural detachment of adolescence. It is also, and more crucially, based on his refusal to concede her integrity.

His destructive interference coincides with her adolescence and discovery of genius. Sam is singularly

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[20] Pauline Nestor contends that "the feeling in the book for a wider, more normal world is rooted in its awareness of and respect for the natural world" (77).

Pauline Nestor, "An Impulse to Self-Expression: The Man Who Loved Children," The Critical Review 18 (1976).

Veronica Brady cites the novel's use of metaphor and imagery as crucial to its call for humanity "to restore our lost connections with the rest of creation" (230); she argues that throughout the novel, "Louie is associated with expansive and triumphant natural imagery" (231).

Veronica Brady, "The Man Who Loved Children and the Body of the World," Meanjin 37.2 (July 1978).

unprepared to deal with either development. The few references to his own adolescence indicate his utter ignorance of the implications of puberty. Stead cites "his prim boyhood" (M 329) and has him reminisce about how "with the house full of monstrous brothers and sisters, he, the Benjamin, with an ailing mother, skipped about, peered, pondered on the mysteries of Nature, thinking the long, long thoughts of youth and discovering, by his lonesome, Nature's secrets" (M 293). The self-imposed puritanism of his young adulthood seems unnatural; his attraction to dark, thin, sexless girls seems a means of sublimating repressed sensuality (or, as Gardiner contends, a fear of "mature female sexuality"[21]). Louie physically resembles Sam more than her natural mother Rachel, but she struggles to express rather than repress her confusing passions. When Sam insists (without explanation) that she obtain a medical certificate from any young man with whom she becomes involved, she refuses to do so, retorting "I love, I love, I only know about love" (M 478). As well, Louie is physically precocious, and Sam begins to regard her with a curious prurience and repulsion[22] which may be repressed incestuousness, but also an unacknowledged, negative identification.

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[21] Gardiner 135.

[22] I think too much is made of Sam's adult innocence, and that after Malaya he becomes dementedly manipulative.

> He poked and pried into her life, always with a scientific, moral purpose, stealing into her room when she was absent, noting her mottoes on the wall, By my hope and faith, I conjure ye, throw not away the hero in your soul -- Nietzsche and investigating her linen, shivering with shame when suggestive words came into her mouth. Her speech, according to his genteel ideas, was too wild, too passionate, too suggestive....His nice Louisa, brought up on sawdust excerpts from potted philosophers, intended for the holy life of science, he could see (much as he closed his eyes), was a burning star, new-torn from the smoking flesh of a mother sun, a creature of passion. This was what her years of sullenness had concealed, not a quiet and patient nature, like her mother's, but a stern, selfish, vain nature like her grandfather's, wicked Israel's angry seed. (M 329)

I want to examine how Louie's adolescence, while making her more consciously trapped, also lets her experience forms of community outside her family. She comes to see Harpers Ferry as a sort of promised land, and after an apparently awkward childhood, finds a transitory niche in high school.

The episodes between Sam and Henny's temporary reconciliation and the birth of Charles-Franklin place the protagonists in contexts to which they might seem better suited than the Pollit household. Yet Sam in Malaya (and even among his own family at the reunion) and Henny at Monocacy prove to be as dislocated as ever. Louie at Harpers Ferry (and later in high school) demonstrates how she can use her dislocation creatively. Whereas Henny's

forays reveal that good manners will get her through shops despite the anachronism of charming Southern belles, and Sam's that the best role for him is absurd celebrity among the credulous, Louie's reveal her survival skills.

Louie admires the Bakens' historical progression; unlike Sam, who mistrusts the past and would impose his ego on the future, or Henny, who belongs to a lost world of privilege, these people have "seen the history of the Union as a history of the curtailment and abolition of involuntary servitude" (M 151). They have established a community in which the land is part of the totality of existence, rather than an object of scientific observation, "an antique, fertile, yeoman's country, where, in the shelter of other customs and tribal gods, people believing themselves to be the children of God stuck to their occupations, gave praise, and accompanied their humblest deed with the thunder of mystic song" (M 160). Yet Louie's sojourn here is less significant for the community offered than in its effect on her individually. The visit is a complete removal from the Pollit household and never discussed there, "her own secret Mesopotamia and angel-guarded pleasure" (M 163), where she is left alone to pursue "her dreaming and eternal reading and repeating of verses and scenes to herself" (M 152). Free from reprimand and interference, Louie can cultivate her creative solitude and choose her

companions, such as her cousin Dan, with whom her friendship is honestly pre-adolescent, yet innocent and non-committal.

At Harpers Ferry, Louie's experiences demonstrate that true genius is not egotistical, but can recognize and learn from the genius in others, a lesson echoed in her comparison of Sam's response to Lincoln with her own.[23] Her dying Uncle Reuben introduces her to tales of moral struggle -- Pilgrim's Progress, Paradise Lost, a biography of John Brown -- without insisting on pity for his physical struggle.

> Reuben did not show any suffering; he talked hesitatingly, telling her the story of The Pilgrim's Progress again, his face serious; and occasionally he would pause, the eyes would be fixed on her, and suddenly he would smile with his long dark lips; the face would no longer be the face of a man dying of consumption, with its burning eyes, but the ravishment of love incarnate, speaking through voiceless but not secret signs to the child's nature. (M 155)

As well, she meets the living example of moral struggle, her stern, uncompromising Grandfather Israel Baken, who is denied his role as a prophet and radical in

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[23] Louie also reveals her ability to discern between the genuine and the artificial at the Pollit reunion, where she cannot force an enthusiastic response to Auntie Jo's dreadfully contrived published poem and confesses to Henny, "I think it's rot" (M 257). However, after her grandfather's spirited performance of "The Aged Parent," she exclaims, "Oh, you were very good" (M 260). Louie is more generous to Old Charlie because there is no pretense of higher culture in his antics.

this modern age, but who maintains his principles, choosing to suffer in solitude rather than bend (unlike Sam, who is externally destructive, and deluded). Louie experiences in confronting Israel a recognition stronger than love.

> The old man paused for a moment and looked down at the girl, and she, looking up, and not so alien from him as on the other days, saw his black-streaked hair, the long nose, firm, bitten, mouth and broad square chin, the unequal eyebrows over straight-staring gray eyes, the broad, filled, low forehead, with animal determination constricting the temples and the set of the head -- villainously vain, yes, proud, disappointed but unyielding, on the wiry, stiff shoulders. She felt bashful with most adults, but when she looked at this old man who disliked her and thought her hideous, revolting, Louisa stared coolly, and saw no force in the gray eyes passionate for self.
> (M 156-57)

The old man (who rejects Louie in his disapproval of her atheist father) seems to concede silently the singularity in her. Louie is as principled and in many ways as vengeful, but Stead retains her ambiguity of presentation; Louie is not as much an outcast as Israel. The women of the community are as much unlike Louie as Henny or her Pollit aunts, yet she experiences with them too the intuitive bond of womanhood when Israel's wife Mary laments their nomadic life among rejecting and rejected children: "The poor old woman, crying, said that they were tossed about like a ball and no one wanted them....Beulah cried, and Louie, sitting at the head of

the table, cried too; and the three women, after crying, felt united in a love" (M 158). Nevertheless, Louie remains as dislocated here as Israel, more drawn to eccentrics like her grandfather and Reuben than to the serene uniformity of the other Bakens' lives, and more to the land with its intimations of splendid tradition than to the economically depressed actuality of the community. She is an imposed guest who will not help with the housework, and Stead never indicates that Louie could spend a lifetime here. Her decision at the end of the novel to run away to Harpers Ferry is a realization that here at least she will be allowed the privacy to complete the education needed for her career.

Louie's sojourn among the Bakens contributes more to her ultimate choice of departure than her more entertaining (if more conventional) high school exploits. Not enough critical attention has been paid to the way Louie learns to appreciate real individuality within this ancient community. Her life at high school is, however, important in that it makes her a more conventionally plausible pre-adolescent, less eccentric in some ways than she has seemed at home, and provides her with connections which prove transitory yet hone her writing skills and ambitions. Dorothy Green discusses this departure from the household:

> It is Louisa's going to High School that

> makes the first real breach in the enclosed system of Sam's playground. She is at last able to measure the family's intellect against others. Her adulation of her English teacher, Miss Aiden, accelerates and concentrates her random creativity and the Poet rises to meet the Scientist in a fruitful symbiosis. As well as an idol, she acquires a friend, Clare, and her father characteristically attempts to annex both. His attempt to invade Clare's mind, as well as her own, leads to Louisa's open rebellion.[24]

As well, going to high school casts Louie for the first time among girls who are physically like her and who accept her. There is no previous reference to any friend of Louie's; her only encounters with other girls are the odd conversations with the worldly servant at Old Ellen's, and with the wily, older Olive Burchardt, to whom the lonely Louie is almost masochistically drawn as Olive deliberately torments her. In high school, however, Louie's poverty and physical ineptitude seem less uncommon when she encounters "a flock of girls, half of them looking like a litter of puppies tied inside a sack, tumbling and rolling; and, adding herself quietly to the homely and ill-dressed section and subtracting herself, without even a twinge, from the pretty and smart section, she began to bounce about in her new sphere with stolid self-confidence" (M 335-6). High school, like Harpers Ferry, provides a contrast with and a refuge from the Pollit household, a refuge which increasingly convinces

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[24] Green 203.

Louie she must escape. At Harpers Ferry, Louie finds an object of love in Reuben and a source of identification in Israel; at school, on a much more quotidian level, she finds the former in Miss Aiden and the latter in Clare. Louie's admiring obsessions reveal her naiveté but also her openness to others; unlike Sam, she does not reserve her love for those who openly affirm her greatness.

Oddly enough, although Clare is genuinely kindhearted and a true friend, her failings echo Sam's: she creates elaborate attention-getting games as defence mechanisms. Yet, unlike Sam, she is not outwardly destructive; her self-defence implies a deficiency of ego, the hanging stunt a tendency to despair. Pauline Nestor argues that "Clare has a creative intelligence to satisfy, though not to rival, Louie's and she provides a refreshing source of supportive affection."[25] She is the first character in the novel to complement Louie, and to encourage the spirited, comical side of Louie that can produce elaborate folk-tales for the children or breathtaking exercises in word-play like her extemporaneous circus-wedding piece. Clare also invites Louie's sympathy in a way that never involves guilt; her responsibility for Henny, conversely, is tainted by Sam's blackmail. The wholeness of this friendship respects the differences between the girls -- Louie is an ambitious idealist, Clare essentially an

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[25] Nestor 76.

economic realist -- and demonstrates Louie's fine gifts of perception.

> Then deciding that she was dissatisfied with her overcoat, air or no air, she would shuffle off a few steps, and Louie, who would have been standing, grinning but dissatisfied, sometimes rather stern, at the edge of the crowd, would take her arm and say, "Clare, Clare!"
> "What, Louie?"
> "Clare -- " Louie knew that Clare only behaved like this when her poverty rankled worst; Clare's poverty was no secret to anyone....(M 342)

Clare is physically rather like Sam, "a tall, vigorous, yellow-haired girl with boy's curls and a splendid medallion face" (M 338) and is similarly fond of jokes and word-play, and Louie may be unconsciously drawn to her for the way she manifests these qualities without cruelty or manipulation. Their first connection is presented with wonderful humour and poignancy, and is another of the moments of recognition Louie can experience; the girls reveal a mutual passion for literature, and the superiority of Louie's intellect is subtly established.

> One day Louie received a note in class, sent by desk express,
> "I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject," and there was Clare, giggling and grinning at the far end of the room like a curly mooncalf, bobbing and hawhawing, showing all her strong white teeth, a blue-eyed female Caliban. Louie at once seized her pen and, with a most serious look, wrote back, by the same post,
> "By this good light, this is a very shallow

> monster. I am afeard of him! a very weak monster."
>
> Clare's yell of laughter brought down the house.... (M 339)

Like the whole high school experience, the friendship is transitory; its ending evokes sadness, unlike the inevitable disillusionment with Miss Aiden. Miss Aiden primarily serves two functions. She provides an external focus for Louie's consuming love,[26] which is expressed as a blend of religious devotion and romantic adulation. Since Louie must love Miss Aiden secretly, her form of expression is writing, and so Miss Aiden also unintentionally provides an impetus for Louie to discipline her (chiefly poetic) literary impulses into form and structure, and to define them in terms of specific ambitions, most notably the Aiden Cycle, which "would consist of a poem of every conceivable form and also every conceivable meter in the English language" (M 340). The young teacher unconsciously serves as an inspiring muse or deity and can do so for some time because she is unaware of the depth of Louie's passion, and is physically distanced from her. Yet Miss Aiden does not realize "that all the best gods are made of stone and say nothing" (M 407) and as she is gradually revealed to

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[26] In a letter to Clare, Louie confesses "I am mad with my heart which beats too much in the world and falls in love at every instant with every reflection that glimmers in it" (M 437).

Louie as a human being, through casual remarks on Louie's poetry, and her visit to Spa House, she begins to lose her supernatural charm. Louie never seeks to emulate Miss Aiden; the teacher is a symbol, not a role model, to her.

Stead never ascribes any extraordinary characteristics to Miss Aiden; she is hardly a Miss Jean Brodie. She is merely a strikingly attractive young woman ("tall, limber, with deep gold hair and a fresh, sonorous voice, [who] always wore a red swagger coat" M 336) of affluent background and good education. Her normalcy heightens our awareness of Louie's youth; her visit to the Pollits underlines Stead's remarkable evocation of simultaneity. Sam, Henny and the children, viewed from Aiden's perspective, are clearly themselves yet not so exaggerated as in the intimacy of their own points of view. Nevertheless, the teacher concedes Louie's difference -- there is no reason to doubt her sincerity in telling Louie she will be famous -- and perceives the painful coexistence of Louie's childish ignorance and her observation of too much family strife; she reflects that "it's queer to know everything and know nothing at one and the same time" (M 419).

Aiden the muse (and to an extent the poetry she inspires) serve as reminders that Louie is unusually gifted, but still a child; towards the end of the novel, Louie's awareness of this dichotomy, and the misery it

generates, grow rapidly.

In lashing out against the multiple entrapments of her poverty and her physical ineptitude, however, Louie unconsciously reveals her overpowering sense of difference from others in all social contexts: her consuming need to find some transcendent means of expression and her simultaneous fear of failure, her fear of the apparent endlessness of childhood-becoming-adolescence.

> "I am so miserable and poor and rotten and so vile and melodramatic, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. I can't bear the daily misery. I can't bear the horror of everyday life." She was bawling brokenly on the tablecloth, her shoulders heaving and her long hair, broken loose, plastered over her red face, "No wonder they all laugh at me," she bellowed. "When I walk along the street, everyone looks at me, and whispers about me, because I'm so messy. My elbows are out and I have no shoes and I'm so big and fat and it'll always be the same. I can't help it, I can't help it,".... (M 405)

Adolescence brings Louie to an intolerance of this horror and misery, and an obsession with escape. As a child, Louie "shut drawers on her fingers and doors on her hands, bumped her nose on the wall, and many a time felt like banging her head against the wall in order to reach oblivion and get out of all this strange place in time where she was a square peg in a round hole" (M 58-59). Louie's early realization of her difference and thoughts of escape involve a clear sense of self (she, unlike Sam, does not feel Rachel could have made her anything

different) and an undefined belief in destiny, which helps her bear domestic torments and her own limitations. The plans of her early dislocation are still dreams; however, by the time she rages at Sam about her fear of failure, her concrete need for escape closely precedes her actual plan and effort.

Louie's progression towards her actual escape parallels her artistic development. Laurie Clancy traces Louie's creative development through the uses of art as escape ("in the embryonic works of art she composes, she is retreating into self-protective fantasy"), art as rebellion ("literature (both that she reads as well as that she creates herself) as a way of resisting Sam in a much more practical sense"), and art as interpretation ("she recites poetry to telling effect, and from now on most of what she will write has direct pertinence to either her view of Sam or her ambitions for herself").[27] Although Stead implies that Louie will become a writer of some sort, and although Louie's most impressive expressive achievements are narrative, the girl's only stated artistic ambition (other than completion of the essentially transitory Aiden Cycle) is to be an actress. Diana Brydon, in her recent feminist analysis, ascribes this goal to Louie's conditioning: "For Louisa has been sufficiently influenced by the values of her world to

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[27] Clancy 20-21.

imagine herself a theatrical star like Eleanora Duse rather than a writer like Shelley."[28] However, Louie's dramatic tendencies reflect her development of a totalizing vision; she wishes to express herself physically as well as verbally. As well, she seems unafraid of the patriarchal hierarchy of literature -- she adopts mottoes from Nietzsche, finds inspiration in Shelley and, according to Gardiner, can "wrest the patriarchal literary canon to her subversive, antipaternal purposes"[29] -- so her acting dreams are not based on a need for female role models. What she will become Stead deliberately leaves unclear; nevertheless, her most obvious gifts are those of the storyteller.

Her emulative artistic efforts are all in some way part of her conscious struggle against Sam. Her three variations on a poem after Confucius, which she creates after the distribution of gifts at the Pollit reunion, are a declaration of her new appreciation of the power of possession: "A yellow plum was given me and in return a topaz fair I gave,/ No mere return for courtesy but that our friendship might outlast the grave" (M 275). Sam's reaction is a mocking parody which represents one of his few moments of real fear in the novel; even in his

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[28] Diana Brydon, Christina Stead (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987) 71.

[29] Gardiner 136.

unliterary soul he concedes the singularity of "this tall, powerful girl with stern, hangdog face" (M 276), who is neither Rachel nor him. He is powerless, unaided even by verbal cleverness, before her deliberately vengeful Herpes Rom, or The Snake Man, in which, according to Graham Burns, "we can discern the fulfilment of Louie's desire to possess a language-medium over which she, and she alone, has full control."[30] Even the Aiden Cycle is a rejection of Sam in that it represents a disciplined and creative outlet for passion and loyalty accorded someone other than himself. Exposed to both works, Sam eschews parody for anger and sadistic contempt.

The folktales Louie tells the younger children are more impressive in that they reflect a greater creative independence and a clearer sense of growth. Unlike the emulative projects, however necessary they are to her development of artistic discipline, these tales demonstrate greater artistic detachment and, as Jennifer McDonell contends, reflect the root-motives of folklore.

> The few stories Louie tells in the novel belong to a sphere of the imaginative life the children have away from the adults, one which is to some extent universally shared and to some extent remains highly individual, peculiar to the Pollits. When the stories are juxtaposed with the adult world, the act of story-telling itself becomes a commentary on events, but not in the strict sense of there being equivalences

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[30] Burns 57.

between events in the tales and events in the novel.[31]

The first presentation of Louie's storytelling is a fragment, a hurried ending improvised as Sam snatches her away from the children for a talk: "When they came to the inn, he who had the pig's heart could not sit down to table, but went to snuffle in a dish in the corner" (M 130). This is redolent, even in its diction, of many folktales but already defines Louie's natural sense of audience, which complements her acting ambitions. "The Korinchi-Man" and "Hawkins, the North Wind," her two fully-related tales, are more individualistic and translate internal and external experience into imaginative language more clearly. The former does so more obviously and so is less confident and self-contained; Louie seems to be trying consciously to allay the children's fears about Sam's absence with a tale in which their father is courageous and resourceful. The story's thematic roots, however, are in the nature of fear; its telling is notable for Louie's resourcefulness in making her replies to the children's interruptions consistent with her tale, and for her sense of suspenseful timing. "Hawkins" is completely self-contained and brilliant. It follows the conventions of an oral tradition in its emphasis on atmosphere rather than

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[31] McDonell 407.

elaborate characterization, and in its formulaic dialogue and action; moreover, it serves as a broadly accessible metaphor for the hardship of life outdoors at the coming of winter.

> ....the moaning and crying went on and it rose always higher till suddenly it ended in a shriek.
>
> "'Hawkins is calling,' cried the woman from the window.
>
> "'Hawkins is calling,' cried the man from the potato patch. Then he took the hipbone in one hand and hurried to the porch and ran in the door and flung it shut, and the window went down with a bang, and the animals ran into the wood, and Ambrose sat there in the dark, in the new cold air that was beginning to blow. His horse was gone, and he had to get down to the river that night. He ran and knocked at the door and listened. But there was no sound at all...." (M 431-32)

Yet "Hawkins" also unites narrator, narrative and audience in its evocation of specific events in the children's lives: their parents' marital warfare has reached an irresolvable crisis, and storms are brewing as cold and fierce as the approaching North Wind. Yet this evocation is subliminal and thus oddly reassuring for the younger Pollits, or at least not immediately threatening. Nevertheless, for Louie the creation of this tale closely precedes her decision to murder Sam and Henny as a means of escape. Perhaps the image of Ambrose shut out in the cold weighs too heavily upon her: her desire for privacy and freedom of expression is not a love of loneliness. Even in her conscious dislocation, Louie is attracted by

(although she cannot achieve integration within) sources of tradition and community.

The murder scheme reflects Louie's conflicting impulses of ego, compassion and responsibility.

> She had brought so little to fruit in her life: she sometimes thought she had dementia praecox, and at other times thought she was a terrifying genius, and at other times again thought she was one of those pitiful sham-talents which glitter in youth and dance in maturity and are malicious apes, sometimes suicides later on in the dread arctic of age, around forty.
>
> Now she thought of these three possibilities and turned from one to the other like a weathercock; but it was only because she doubted her ability to do the deed and fool people afterwards. She never once doubted that the right thing to do was to use cyanide tomorrow morning, or that she must liberate the children: it fell to her, no one else would do it or understand the causes as she did. Then she would at once be free herself. (M 503)

This simultaneity of doubt and certainty, of oddly selfish motives and genuine compassion for the children, presages the ambiguity of the final decision this precocious genius child makes: to run away from home. The scene of Henny's death underlines Louie's incapability of acting from purely egotistical motives: "At this moment she heard her father thumping cheerfully downstairs and talking to Evie. 'I can never do it,' thought Louie and turned round, to back up against the table on which the cup stood" (M 506). Henny's death or removal from Spa House is necessary for Louie's departure, although the murder scheme and Henny's suicide, while dramatically

effective, are essentially contrived. In her attempt to warn off Henny, Louie loses possession of speech and will, as if larger forces of fate govern Henny's suicide, as inadvertent as it seems, or as if Louie is exonerated from her sense of responsibility for this despairing woman.

In planning the murder, Louie speculates that she could go to Harpers Ferry, Auntie Jo's or Miss Aiden's to finish her education. Her choice of Harpers Ferry indicates a mature acceptance of her dislocation: a realization that she needs tolerance and space in which to grow, not specific role models. Her decision to obtain money first from Jo Pollit before rejoining the Bakens implies a recognition between these different yet singularly independent women, not any permanent bond. Louie does not opt for any sort of permanence; her adventurous risk finally divides her from Clare, whose daring is more superficial and who assumes that Louie is simply removing herself from one place to another.

> Louie lingered, "I'll write you a letter when I get there."
>
> "You send me your address, and I'll write to you."
>
> It was this that was final: Louie's last hope went then. "Well," said Louie, going out of the gate, "I won't see Miss Aiden any more, will I?"
>
> "What will she say?" asked Clare. "Well, anyhow, I suppose, you'll come back for school."
>
> "Will I?" cried Louie, awaking from a doleful mood, "will I? No, I won't. I'll never come back." (M 526)

Various critics point to the totalizing implications of Louie's decision to take a walk around the world. For example, Veronica Brady argues that Louie is an explorer, and also finds thematic similarities between The Man Who Loved Children and Kangaroo, particularly regarding Lawrence's theory of the will-to-evolve: "Above all, she is about to live in freedom because she is at last in tune with the truth, acknowledging herself as part of the living body of the universe but confident of her power to master the part she has to play within it. In its conclusion, therefore, The Man Who Loved Children endorses the ancient, organic sense of the world, and its prophetic quality depends upon this."[32] Stead's description of her

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[32] Brady 238.

In Diana Brydon's analysis, "Louisa is on her way to discovering means of relating to the world beyond those prescribed by the nuclear family;" Louie should become the "strong artist [who] rejoices in all aspects of life, recording and questioning what she sees but leaving final judgement to her readers" (78-79).

Graham Burns concedes that Louie's murder scheme is ambiguous in effect, but argues that while "the end of the book is troubling....it also summons our deepest sympathies for her as she joins the many figures of literature who embark, literally and metaphorically self-imposed exiles, on their own personal 'walk around the world'" (60-61).

According to Jennifer McDonell,

> Louie's initially undramatic decision to run away from home is given the endorsement of the creative imagination when this quite ordinary act becomes her "walk around the world". The strong lyricism and brightness associated with her throughout the novel accompanies her here....beneficent imagery which asserts a hopefulness and beauty accessible to the young woman, against the general darkness of the final scenes. Louie's vague goal to wander the world

actual detachment from Spa House again achieves simultaneity, only without irony. Louie is at once a desperate adolescent, her growing body perpetually hungry, an excited child seeing her world freshly, and an aspiring artist discovering new sources of inspiration.

> She expertly got downstairs and to the kitchen with her satchel. Once there, she banged the kettle about to sound as if she were making the tea, and heard Evie's grumble, "Looloo's making it," and taking some food out of the icebox (she was always hungry), she ran out of the house and in no time was screened by the trees and bushes of the avenue. She smiled, felt light as a dolphin undulating through the waves, one of those beautiful, large, sleek marine mammals that plunged and wallowed, with their clever eyes. As she crossed the bridge (looking back and seeing none of the Navel Academy as yet on their little beach, or scrambling down the sodden bluff), she heaved a great breath. How different everything looked, like the morning of the world, that hour before all other hours which Thoreau speaks of, that most matinal hour. "Why didn't I run away before?" she wondered. She wondered why everyone didn't run away. Things certainly looked different: they were no longer part of herself but objects that she could freely consider without prejudice. (M 525)

Stead leaves Louie's means of survival and her eventual artistic choices open questions, yet Louie's

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> is consistent with the wandering and rootlessness that is thematically central to much of Stead's work. And the wanderers are related to the adventurers (wakers?) whose role in European and American literature has been to poke holes in the walled city. Louie is going on a trip, not into the shadier regions of her own mind but into the open spaces, in the literal sense of the adventure myth, out into the world. (413)

maturing comprehension of her dislocation is positive in its appreciation of integrity in everyone's "outline, and brilliant, solid colours" (M 526). This appreciation arises from her own passionate sense of integrity, which necessitates her rejection of Sam and Spa House, and her option for self-reliance. Nevertheless, the novel as a whole implies that not everyone shares her comprehension of integrity. Like Richard Lovat Somers, and even Geoffrey Firmin, Louisa Pollit becomes a journeyer, less tormented by the weight of world events yet consciously belonging as much to that wider world. Significantly, she undertakes her journey alone -- the quest is exclusively hers -- but her capacity for love implies that her totalizing vision includes a great ability to communicate with and learn from others. Even if Louie finds no conventional source of community or personal integration of any permanence, she will make valuable connections, and translate them through her genius into singular forms of expression.

CHAPTER THREE: Orwell and Waugh

Introduction

> I'd come to Lower Binfield with a question in my mind. What's ahead of us? Is the game really up? Can we get back to the life we used to live, or is it gone for ever?
>
> George Orwell, Coming Up for Air 223.

> His name, just legible still, was Roger of Waybroke, Knight, an Englishman....a man with a great journey still all before him and a great vow unfulfilled....All his life, Guy had felt an especial kinship with "il Santo Inglese." Now, on his last day, he made straight for the tomb and ran his finger, as the fishermen did, along the knight's sword. "Sir Roger, pray for me," he said, "and for our endangered kingdom."
>
> Evelyn Waugh, Men at Arms 13.

For George Bowling and Guy Crouchback, the Second World War represents the ascendancy of a modern age which threatens cherished traditional sources of meaning. These protagonists of George Orwell's Coming Up for Air (1939)[1] and Evelyn Waugh's Sword of Honour trilogy (1952-62)[2] attempt to maintain their integrity in this age. They become, in effect, questing knights of quite different orders, and their quests bring them to resolutions neither man quite expects. Although they seem so unlike each other, the dislocation of these two men is similarly

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[1] Edition used throughout: George Orwell, Coming Up for Air (1939; Penguin Books, in association with Martin Secker and Warburg, 1984).

[2] Editions used throughout: Evelyn Waugh, Men at Arms (1952; Penguin Books, 1982) Officers and Gentlemen (1955; Penguin Books, 1980) Unconditional Surrender (1962; Penguin Books, 1982).

motivated. Each believes that a valuable way of life (Bowling's village upbringing, Guy's Catholicism and heroic ethic) faces destruction amid the excesses of twentieth-century progress. Each has trouble reconciling this awareness, which is partly illusory, with the contingencies of everyday living and the pressing demands of his social context.

Disillusionment characterizes both Orwell's novel and Waugh's trilogy. In the former, it is part of the fear of an apparently predictable future; in the latter, it grows as events deflate notions of honour and heroism. That these works were published (respectively) before and after but not during the war itself may contribute to their vehement devaluation of war service as a means of discovering positive forms of social integration. Waugh is writing in the period during which Guy would make his final withdrawal to Broome, Orwell in the disillusioning aftermath of his volunteer service during the Spanish Civil War. Thus these novels differ in theme and tone from earlier works by both writers. For instance, in Homage to Catalonia, Orwell upholds the value of camaraderie despite his cynical analysis of factionalism; he claims his experience left him "with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings"[3] and even found

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[3] George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia and "Looking Back on the Spanish War" (1938; 1943; Penguin Books, 1984) 220.

among members of the socialist militia "a community where hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism."[4] By 1938, the dream of a world reshaped by socialism rather than fascism seems far more remote than in the immediacy of the Spanish reminiscences. As well, in Waugh's Put Out More Flags (1942), Angela Lyne says (with no obvious ironic qualification), "But you see one can't expect anything to be perfect now. In the old days if there was one thing wrong it spoiled everything; from now on for all our lives, if there's one thing right the day is made."[5] Both of these earlier works characterize commitment by a sense of community and momentousness.

Perhaps this immediate sense of shared purpose on the part of the writer influences the value he accords integration. Certainly Homage to Catalonia has an obvious Utopian impulse of the sort posited by Fredric Jameson. In The Political Unconscious, Jameson argues that "the achieved collectivity or organic group of whatever kind -- oppressors fully as much as oppressed -- is Utopian not in itself, but only insofar as all such collectivities are themselves figures for the ultimate concrete collective

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[4] Orwell, Homage to Catalonia 102.

[5] Evelyn Waugh, Put Out More Flags (1942; Penguin Books, 1983) 218.

life of an achieved Utopian or classless society."[6] Orwell in Spain still concedes the possibility of achieving such a positive collectivity. Waugh's earlier novel is less concerned with the possibilities in community than with its immediate existence and value, and thus is characteristic of literature produced during a certain phase of the Second World War.

In two essays on wartime writing, Rowland Smith treats differences in theme and tone among various works according to when they were written. For example, in discussing Graham Greene's wartime output, Smith contends that "the aura of the age in those pieces is quite different from the alienated ethos of the era that immediately preceded the heady mood of 1940-41 or the wary cynicism of the period that followed it."[7] This analysis indicates both the prewar anxieties informing Coming Up

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[6] Jameson 291.

Jameson also refers to his critical approach as one "in which a functional method for describing cultural texts is articulated with an anticipatory one" (296).

[7] Rowland Smith, "A People's War in Greeneland: Heroic Virtue and Communal Effort in the Wartime Tales," in Graham Greene: A Revaluation, ed. Jeffrey Meyers (London: Macmillan, 1990) 112.

Smith (111-2) provides this definition of the time when the sense of community was strongest: "Once war became a patriotic affair in Britain (after the fall of Chamberlain, followed almost at once by the invasion of the Low Countries, the fall of France and the threat of invasion), sentiment flooded English life. An excess of sentiment is normal during war, but what made 1940-41 different in Britain was that the sentiment was generally shared even by those normally cynical about such emotion."

for Air and the postwar weariness and detachment informing the Sword of Honour novels. However, unlike Greene in novels written after the war, such as The Heart of the Matter (1948) or The End of the Affair (1951), Waugh in his trilogy does not create geographical or historical distance from the war except in the epilogue.

Elsewhere, in examining a broader range of texts, Smith treats the wartime mood with which Coming Up for Air and the Sword of Honour novels can be contrasted. He refers to "the all-intrusiveness of sharing"[8] yet also indicates why the literature of this period, despite its sense of common purpose, is not explicitly anticipatory in the way that Spanish Civil War writing can be:

> But [writers] also found themselves -- after 1940 -- in a team effort that became more centralised, more efficient, and more rhetorically self-righteous. Although they could associate themselves with the war itself, they could not associate themselves with its trappings. In fact, the very group mentality which helped win the war was threatening to writers' values. As a result the best writing of the war does not express outrage or protest. It captures the inward response of the moment; the emotions and truths of the individual and the unadorned reality of his often minutely

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[8] Rowland Smith, "Writing, War, and Hans Robert Jauss's Horizon of Expectations: British Writers and their Community, 1939-45," in Historical and Cultural Contexts of Linguistic and Literary Phenomena: Proceedings of the Seventeenth Triennial Congress of the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes, ed. G.D. Killam (Guelph, Ontario: The University of Guelph Press, 1989) 39.

self-centred world.[9]

This value accorded private experience, despite a genuine if momentary acceptance of community, makes such experience vulnerable to external threat. Hence, threatened privacy can become a source of anxiety or disillusionment in times of greater moral uncertainty, such as those in which the novels I want to examine were published.

Dislocation in these works is more localized than in any other novels I have examined so far. On the surface, Bowling and Guy experience no strong connection to the world at large, even if they are aware of some of the forces at work in it. They seem to belong more than the other protagonists discussed to particular social classes, and to be defined by their behavioural codes. Richard Somers, Geoffrey Firmin and Louisa Pollit transcend or defy such class distinctions. Hence, no matter how isolated Bowling and Guy may be, and despite Guy's ultimate withdrawal from the social mainstream, these protagonists are never exiles. Their world remains a very specific place and time in England.[10]

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[9] Smith, "Writing, War, and Hans Robert Jauss's Horizon of Expectations" 47.

[10] However, Orwell wrote his very English novel of social entrapment from a perspective of cultural detachment, while recuperating from tuberculosis in Morocco. According to George Woodcock, this period produced, beyond one essay, "no experience that Orwell

I want to examine the questing motif, implicit in Orwell and explicit in Waugh (Guy undertakes his journey, ironically, in emulation of an unsuccessful crusading knight), as a means of presenting localized dislocation. In both works, dislocation has both negative and positive connotations. Bowling and Guy are detached in ways which make integration in the social mainstream impossible, and so are constantly threatened by a devastating loneliness. Nevertheless, they see cultural developments which others ignore. They lose their illusions, yet do not despair. While Bowling returns from his rural odyssey to the deadening routines of lower-middle-class suburbia, his resiliency and vitality demonstrate the individual courage of a survivor. Guy must withdraw to survive, but finds happiness in acts of personal, mostly familial charity. In tracing their quests across a modern wasteland, I want to consider the role of delusion and the use of narrative perspective in the characterization of these two quite different travellers.

I. George Orwell

> Down here it was still the England I had known in my childhood: the railway-cuttings smothered in wild flowers, the deep meadows where the great shining horses browse and meditate, the

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later used in his writing, and I cannot remember more than two or three passing references in his conversation...." (142).

George Woodcock, The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell (1967; Penguin Books, 1970).

> slow-moving streams bordered by willows, the green bosoms of the elms, the larkspurs in the cottage gardens; and then the huge peaceful wilderness of outer London, the barges on the miry river, the familiar streets, the posters telling of cricket matches and Royal weddings, the men in bowler hats, the pigeons in Trafalgar Square, the red buses, the blue policemen -- all sleeping the deep, deep sleep of England, from which I sometimes fear that we shall never wake till we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs.
>
> George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia[11]

Cheap-suited, vulgar George "Tubby" Bowling is an unlikely questing knight. Nevertheless, George Orwell sends the protagonist of Coming Up for Air (1939) on a search for meaning in an ominous time. The object of his quest proves intangible, his experience leads to no personal growth (beyond, perhaps, a greater awareness of his entrapment), and ultimately he is drawn back, body and soul, to West Bletchley. Bowling remains a man of strenuously affirmed ordinariness. However, this insurance salesman who sees the bombs about to fall has woken up long enough to recognize something his sleeping countrymen ignore. He is dislocated by a temporary though genuine crisis in perception.

According to George Woodcock, in this novel "Orwell explores this whole territory of past versus present, or archaistic nostalgia versus a realistic acceptance of a

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[11] George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia 220-21.

world one does not particularly like;"[12] the tone of Coming Up for Air results both from its historicism and Orwell's achievement of uneasy simultaneity. Both the exhilaration and disillusionment of the Spanish Civil War behind him, Orwell returns in Coming Up for Air to realistic social fiction. However, he does so with neither the more private localization of earlier novels nor the purer polemic of his last political fables. Bowling's world is one in which grocery bills and school fees are as important as the coming war, with no way to reconcile the two realities. One is either integrated in a world of mindless routine, or dislocated by a hopeless fear of the future which engenders a futile nostalgia for the past. Nowhere is a qualitative differentiation made between the two sorts of life. Even if Bowling's story has a sense of urgency and fear motivated by the certainty of war and the rise of fascism, he only manages to deal with these horrors by acquiescing to another sort of fear: the oppressive, stultifying, persistent insecurity of middle-class survival. His limited stab at transcendence is futile.

> If I spent a week explaining to Hilda why I'd been to Lower Binfield, she'd never understand. And who would understand, here in Ellesmere Road? Gosh! did I even understand myself? The whole thing seemed to be fading out of my mind. Why had I gone to Lower Binfield? Had I gone

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[12] Woodcock 142.

> there? In this atmosphere it just seemed meaningless. Nothing's real in Ellesmere Road except gas-bills, school-fees, boiled cabbage, and the office on Monday. (CA 231)

So what sort of man is Bowling, that he should narrate his decision to undertake a quest for continuous truths in his childhood home of Lower Binfield? Mark Connelly in The Diminished Self considers him a man "alienated from his society because he senses a coming disaster and finds no one else willing to share his vision," who "wants to find something to replace the dreaded emptiness he feels inside himself."[13] He is also "a fat middle-aged bloke with false teeth and a red face" (CA 35). In considering him, I want to explore the individual nuances which both dislocate him and inexorably draw him back to his old routines, and the historicity of his clearly-drawn social contexts.

In letting Bowling narrate his reminiscences and adventures, Orwell allows him to seek identification with his implied audience, as well as with a broad section of society. Bowling continually stresses his normalcy: in appearance and manners, in occupation and social position, even in thought and attitude. This emphasized ordinariness deflates any heroism that might be attached to his quest, from the first sentence ("The idea really

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[13] Mark Connelly, The Diminished Self: Orwell and the Loss of Freedom (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987) 84, 85.

came to me the day I got my new false teeth" CA 7) onwards. His descriptions of himself often go out of their way to match him to some type or model. He is apparently marked by nothing so much as a sense of belonging, or at least of "fitting in":

> A chap like me is incapable of looking like a gentleman. Even if you saw me at two hundred yards' distance you'd know immediately -- not, perhaps, that I was in the insurance business, but that I was some kind of tout or salesman. The clothes I was wearing were practically the uniform of the tribe. Grey herring-bone suit, a bit the worse for wear, blue overcoat costing fifty shillings, bowler hat, and no gloves...."Five to ten quid a week", you'd say as soon as you saw me. Economically and socially I'm about at the average level of Ellesmere Road. (CA 13-14)

Robert J. Van Dellen claims that Bowling "recognizes his own ordinariness, and he identifies with common people."[14] Indeed, he seems almost afraid of failing to do so. In his insistence on the identification of his implied audience with his reminiscences, and in his ambivalent treatment of his sources of difference (whether his obesity or his fears or even his autodidacticism), he seems anxious to define himself as part of a group. This anxiety is especially apparent in his assumption that the minds of his fellow Londoners may not be as slumberous as he suspects:

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[14] Robert J. Van Dellen, "George Orwell's Coming Up for Air: The Politics of Powerlessness," Modern Fiction Studies 21.1 (Spring 1975) 66.

> ....this kind of prophetic feeling that keeps coming over me nowadays, the feeling that war's just around the corner and that war's the end of all things, isn't peculiar to me. We've all got it, more or less. I suppose even among the people passing at that moment there must have been chaps who were seeing mental pictures of the shellbursts and the mud. Whatever thought you think there's always a million people thinking it at the same moment. But that was how I felt. We're all on the burning deck and nobody knows it except me. (CA 28-29)

Similarly, even though Bowling cites his fatness for denying him the expression of emotions available to thinner men, he takes pains to remind us that there is "no kind of company, from bookies to bishops, where a fat man doesn't fit in and feel at home" (CA 23). Yet Bowling seems at home nowhere. What dislocates a man so insistent upon his normalcy? Like every other protagonist I am examining, his dislocation arises from a breakdown in his ability to reconcile simultaneous elements of existence. However, Bowling desperately wants belonging and continuity: his detachment is qualified by his deluded belief that these things are ever available to him. Virtually every event in the novel reinforces his loneliness. If, as he argues, his prophetic awareness is common, it is common in an uncommunicated, individualized way. Even his quest, therefore, is partly deluded, though none the less valid.

Nothing supports any of Bowling's sources of identification in any internalized way. Never is the

good-humoured camaraderie accorded fat men offered to our reluctant hero. If a million people indeed share his thoughts, no one articulates these fears with anything like Bowling's perception: his decent but stagnating classicist friend Porteous dismisses Hitler as "this German person" (CA 156), refusing to acknowledge any immediate threat.

Those who concede the imminence of falling bombs, like the Left Book Club speaker, the Communists in the audience, and the more zealous ARP organizers, feed the sorts of fears that depend on hatred and could perpetuate fascism in the aftermath of war. As well, Bowling claims an identification with his implied audience based on shared memories: "Is it gone for ever? I'm not certain. But I tell you it was a good world to live in. I belong to it. So do you" (CA 34). This begs the question of who constitutes this implied audience, for no one in any of the novel's contexts supports this identification. The other characters are too young or of different backgrounds.

The discrepancy between what Bowling claims to believe and the circumstances he reveals in his narration has two major effects. First, Bowling becomes an unreliable narrator, dislocated even from his audience, and second, the fragmentation of a society fuelled by two levels of fear is heightened. I want to consider the

distinct anxieties that plague Bowling, who seems to heighten our sense of dislocation through his own, and to compare them with those of Dorothy Hare in A Clergyman's Daughter (1935), whose spiritual crisis has largely been assimilated in his world, but whose discovery of emptiness informs his fears.

Bowling, like those lower-middle-class people with whom he identifies, suffers two types of fear available to him, though the implication is that he divides those fears differently. When he witnesses a manager abusing a salesgirl, he meditates upon the various levels of anxiety in modern life.

> Fear! We swim in it. It's our element. Everyone that isn't scared stiff of losing his job is scared stiff of war, or Fascism, or Communism, or something. Jews sweating when they think of Hitler. It crossed my mind that that little bastard with the spiky moustache was probably a damn sight more scared for his job than the girl was. (CA 19)

Part of Bowling's separation from his fellow human beings seems premised on his ability to approach a full comprehension of the general and particular terrors of his age and society. This is not totalization, however; his concerns are not with mankind in general nor with the ages, but with a very specific time and place, even a particular class. And although he qualifies his discussion of one type of fear with allusions to the other, he never manages to transcend the dichotomy that is

gradually established from this early meditation onwards. Each fear is equally real to him (one as a concrete annoyance, the other as an abstract dread), but he cannot manage to make them simultaneous concerns. They tend to exist alternately for him, even though he always realizes that what war and fascism threaten most is his cherished normalcy: "Some quiet morning, when the clerks are streaming across London Bridge, and the canary's singing, and the old woman's pegging the bloomers on the line -- zoom, whizz, plonk! Houses going up into the air, bloomers soaked with blood, canary singing on above the corpses" (CA 24). Significantly, his only other moment of near-totalization coincides with his actual decision to return to Lower Binfield in search of the peace and continuity he associates with his past there. He envisions a whole litany of embodied fears, both local and global, representing the various forces inimical to recovery of peace and security.

> Hilda was in front, of course, with the kids tagging after her....And Sir Herbert Crum and the higher-ups of the Flying Salamander in their Rolls-Royces and Hispano-Suizas. And all the chaps at the office, and all the poor down-trodden pen-pushers from Ellesmere Road and from all such other roads....And all the soul-savers and Nosey Parkers, the people whom you've never seen but who rule your destiny all the same, the Home Secretary, Scotland Yard, the Temperance League, the Bank of England, Lord Beaverbrook, Hitler and Stalin on a tandem bicycle, the bench of bishops, Mussolini, the Pope -- they were all of them after me. I could almost hear them shouting:

> "There's a chap who thinks he's going to escape! There's a chap who says he won't be streamlined! He's going back to Lower Binfield! After him! Stop him!" (CA 173-74)

Hence Bowling recognizes what he should transcend, even though he cannot do so. The specifically lower-middle-class part of him is too strong and limiting; he always belongs (chiefly through financial necessity) to Ellesmere Road and its code of propriety and perpetual debt, where "in every one of those little stucco boxes there's some poor bastard who's never free except when he's fast asleep and dreaming that he's got the boss down the bottom of a well and is bunging lumps of coal at him" (CA 14). Nevertheless, his apprehension of the future is genuinely perceptive, and not out of character for an intellectually curious protagonist whose adulthood has been disjointed by the cataclysm of war and the disillusionment of subsequent experience. Through synthesizing his vision of what is happening politically and culturally, he not only sees the coming Second World War, but predicts an aftermath both shocking and plausible.

> But it isn't the war that matters, it's the after-war. The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and detectives watching you while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they

> deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke. (CA 149)

Again, in his occasional realization that rent-and-job anxieties and the ominous terrors of fascism are equally real, Bowling is essentially alone. No one else shares his breadth of awareness: the other characters tend to some form of extremism. His wife Hilda mires herself in purely quotidian worries about household expenses and behavioural propriety, and even though her origins are more lower-upper class than the lower middle class she and George Bowling inhabit, she seems more representative of it in her constant insecurity. Bowling claims to have "more the prole's attitude towards money. Life's here to be lived, and if we're going to be in the soup next week -- well, next week's a long way off" (CA 137). This proletarian fatalism, combined with a distinctive sense of privacy, mark Bowling for survival much more than his middle-class normalcy, especially if one considers the function given the proles in Nineteen Eighty-Four, to which I shall return. Of the others in the novel's dramatic present, the ideologues at the Left Book Club meeting represent the opposite extreme. Their concerns with smashing fascism are purely abstract; they alienate the local interests of the old Labour Party men, and their "dog-fight" after the talk is "full of a lot of stuff that nobody else understood, such as dialectical

materialism and the destiny of the proletariat and what Lenin said in 1918" (CA 150). (Indeed, much of the novel's sense of fragmentation arises from Orwell's presentation of class and ideological enclaves, each with its language and code that exclude all others.) Bowling's imperfect sense of simultaneity therefore makes him, for all his conformity, the one person in the novel capable of undertaking his journey to the past.

Although Orwell grants Bowling a grail-vision of sorts in the red embers he sees among the primroses and budding hedges, the actual catalyst of his quest is far less romantic and much more predictive of its outcome. It is a sausage in a milk-bar. Bowling reacts to a fear and hatred engendered by the modernity encompassing both fascism and Ellesmere Road.

> I remembered a bit I'd read in the paper somewhere about these food-factories in Germany where everything's made out of something else. Ersatz, they call it. I remembered reading that they were making sausages out of fish, and fish, no doubt, out of something different. It gave me the feeling that I'd bitten into the modern world and discovered what it was really made of. That's the way we're going nowadays. Everything slick and streamlined, everything made out of something else....Rotten fish in a rubber skin. Bombs of filth bursting inside your mouth. (CA 27)

Mark Connelly claims that "Bowling finds the modern world appalling even to his middle-brow tastes. It is a world of phoniness, of image and no substance, of

billboards and pop tunes that make genuine thought and independent action impossible."[15] Hence, Bowling is also alone in that his tastes do not embrace the culture designed for him. However, his search for meaning in the past proves his most dislocating delusion. The past for Bowling, though he does not quite understand this, operates on two levels: the specific past of his childhood in prewar rural England, and a mythic, edenic past. While he seems realistic in his refusal to sentimentalize the former and to get to the essence of what it represents, the latter is his real object of desire and an impossible vision. This poignant delusion he shares with both his predecessor Dorothy Hare and his descendant Winston Smith. In his analysis of the psychological elements in Orwell's fiction, Richard Smyer argues that in Coming Up for Air,

> What Orwell is questioning is the Edwardian myth of the autonomous self, the individual largely unconditioned by social and personal determinants and therefore free to unfold and fulfill himself. In other words, what Orwell is criticizing is the assumption that man's essential humanity, his progressive development as a human being, exists apart from history, apart from social, economic, and political factors.[16]

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[15] Connelly 76-77.

[16] Richard I. Smyer, Primal Dream and Primal Crime: Orwell's Development as a Psychological Novelist (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1979) 90.

However, Bowling in his memories of fishing, like Dorothy in her moments of nature-worship and Winston in his dreams of the Golden Country, is unaware of these inexorable bonds. Therefore, despite his reasonably perceptive and unsentimental portrait of his childhood, and the actual value of the time it represents, he is in search of something beyond that value and is defeated by the determinism he has failed to acknowledge fully. Also, he fails to recognize the elements in the old life which prevented its virtues from translating themselves into present sources of strength.

The specific aspects of the past valued by Bowling are conformity and security; he mildly berates his brother Joe for running away "because he couldn't stand a decent respectable life in a little country town and wanted a life of loafing, fights and women" (CA 100). As in his descriptions of the present, he seems anxious to make his behaviour normal, and in his recollections of childhood adventures he almost achieves a sense of solidarity with other boys. Although his incipient bookishness sets him apart, he is no academic rebel and acquiesces willingly to his father's decision to make a shopkeeper of him. So Bowling is not deluded in his memories of conformity or, more significantly, security, for he qualifies his insistence that "it was a good time to be alive" (CA 102) with incidences of bigotry, suffering, class division and

financial ruin, which are almost beside the point:

> The houses had no bathrooms, you broke the ice in your basin on winter mornings, the back streets stank like the devil in hot weather, and the churchyard was bang in the middle of the town, so that you never went a day without remembering how you'd got to end. And yet what was it that people had in those days? A feeling of security, even when they weren't secure. More exactly, it was a feeling of continuity. All of them knew they'd got to die, and I suppose a few of them knew they were going to go bankrupt, but what they didn't know was that the order of things could change. (CA 107)

Orwell provides several narrative clues through Bowling's selective memory to prove that these aspects of the past are not the source of his final delusion. First, Bowling always concedes the transformative power of the war, for as Michael Carter argues in his existentialist analysis of Orwell's fiction, the First World War is one strong element of this novel's historicity (the inevitability of the next is, I would add, another):

> The Great War....effects an ontological violation by destroying the traditional division between the inner "I" and the outer "They," and creates the Copernican understanding that one's place in the world is not at its centre. Temporality and relativity have arrived; suddenly man's place is nowhere, and time leads him implacably towards the Nothing. And additionally, the War, annihilating at random, penetrates life with a contingency never before imagined.[17]

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[17] Michael Carter, George Orwell and the Problem of Authentic Existence (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985) 141.

Yet if the War could have this effect on individual actuality, Bowling in describing its effects achieves genuine solidarity with a generation: one, of course, of dislocated individuals. He describes the War as "an enormous machine that had got hold of you. You'd no sense of acting of your own free will, and at the same time no notion of trying to resist" (CA 112); his experiences (both of action in France and inaction at Twelve Mile Dump) leave him "with a feeling of disbelief in everything" (CA 123). In the aftermath of the War, he sees life become "an everlasting, frantic struggle to sell things. With most people it takes the form of selling themselves -- that's to say, getting a job and keeping it" (CA 128). However, the context of Bowling's memories reveals an awareness that in transforming life from something relatively secure to a vicious competition for survival, the War was not so much the prime mover as a particularly efficient accelerator. He concedes the shifts which had begun before the War: the rise of chain stores like Sarazin's and the technological development represented by the automobile. Hence, on the surface, what Bowling finds in Lower Binfield upon his return should not shock him; he has offered several narrative clues to the rural version of modernity.

What ultimately dislocates Bowling is the centrality he accords fishing, and particularly the mythologized pool

behind Binfield House, in his memories. The descriptions of fishing at first seem part of the reminiscent catalogue of private experience for young George: whereas reading ultimately feeds his intellectual curiosity and skepticism, fishing feeds a desire for spirituality, for a non-civilized essence of existence, for Eden. (Winston Smith experiences this watching Julia cast off her Party overall in the secluded clearing.) Significantly, the grounds of Binfield House are deserted and degenerating: "All the fences were green and rotting, the park was a mass of nettles, the plantations were like a jungle, and even the gardens had gone back to meadow, with only a few old gnarled rose-bushes to show you where the beds had been" (CA 76). Here, George Bowling finds an enjoyable sense of utter solitude despite his proximity to the road, Reading and even London. He also finds the first intimation of the grail-vision that will lure a disillusioned middle-aged insurance salesman back.

The discovery of the pool represents Bowling's acquisition of singular knowledge about something ancient and mysterious:

> It was a small pool not more than twenty yards wide, and rather dark because of the boughs that overhung it. But it was very clear water and immensely deep. And then I saw something that made me jump out of my skin.
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> It was an enormous fish. I don't exaggerate when I say it was enormous. It was almost the length of my arm. It glided across the pool, deep under water, and then became a

> shadow and disappeared into the darker water on the other side. I felt as if a sword had gone through me. (CA 78)[18]

That the revelation is imperfect indicates its special allure for Bowling, especially in retrospect, for despite his loving descriptions of the technical aspects of fishing and excursions with friends, the tantalizing, elusive giant carp gain primacy. They represent his need for faith, just as Dorothy's is manifested in sunlit leaves which seem "as though some jewel of unimaginable splendour had flashed for an instant, filling the doorway with green light,"[19] and Winston Smith's in his dream of "a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees."[20] By the time the adult Bowling plucks primroses and sees in the tramp's fire "a red ember [which] looks more alive, gives you more of a feeling of life, than any living thing" (CA 163), his need for a deeper reality has intensified, but his reflections still lead to a pool and the mystery of life at its depths.

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[18] He later recalls Thames water as "a kind of luminous green that you could see deep into" (CA 210); this clarity and greenness are motifs associated with his edenic illusions.

[19] George Orwell, A Clergyman's Daughter (1935; Penguin Books, 1984) 14.

[20] George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949; Penguin Books, 1982) 28.

> Why don't people, instead of the idiocies they do spend their time on, just walk round looking at things? That pool, for instance -- all the stuff that's in it. Newts, water-snails, water-beetles, caddis-flies, leeches, and God knows how many other things that you can only see with a microscope. The mystery of their lives, down there under water. You could spend a lifetime watching them, ten lifetimes, and still you wouldn't have got to the end even of that one pool. And all the while the sort of feeling of wonder, the peculiar flame inside you. It's the only thing worth having, and we don't want it. (CA 164)

Structurally, this episode is interesting not only because it specifically precipitates Bowling's return to Lower Binfield, but because it encapsulates all of the problems in simultaneity which dislocate him. Here, Bowling is at once the solitary prophet of war and its aftermath, and a man who will pretend to be doing up his trousers rather than let occupants of a passing car think he has been picking flowers.[21] In his contemplation of the pool and ember, and in his reflexive concern over his

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[21] Christopher Small, in The Road to Miniluv, an examination of the absence of religious impulse in Orwell's fiction, cites the obscenity accorded "the display of emotion itself, and especially of emotion connected with love or loss" (90); he also claims that the childhood reminiscences reveal "no warmth in the Bowling family, nor any word of affection" (84). This seems valid; Bowling's approach to life is partly instinctive and (within his limits) intellectual. And although I think Small stretches his case a little in the interests of an essentially polemical argument, these observations underline the strength of the private sense of revelation as the primary motivator of Bowling's return to Lower Binfield.

Christopher Small, The Road to Miniluv: George Orwell, the State, and God (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1975).

public image, Bowling reveals the real reason behind his quest, and its inevitable failure.

Bowling's perceived need for a larger vision, his tendency towards edenic illusions, reflects Dorothy Hare·s predicament in A Clergyman's Daughter. George Woodcock claims that this novel is about "the viability of ancient traditions in a modern world."[22] Dorothy does not so much lose her faith as discover that life is meaningless, which in her heart she has long suspected. Nevertheless, her quest brings her back to her father's house and her established routine of parish work. She does not despair because to an extent she can order her universe through an undeluded approach to her work: "if one gets on with the job that lies to hand, the ultimate purpose of the job fades into insignificance....faith and no faith are very much the same provided that one is doing what is customary, useful and acceptable."[23] Dorothy's loss of faith is not in the least surprising. Her amnesia allows her to reconstruct her identity, freed from her illusions or any memory of how others perceive her, and to understand and accept her dislocation, for her travels never lead her to a viable source of integration. Terry Eagleton points to the social implications of her fall from grace:

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[22] Woodcock 107.

[23] Orwell, A Clergyman's Daughter 261.

> Dorothy is acutely aware that what she has lost, in abandoning Christian faith, is a 'totalisation': a whole structure which can render experience intelligible, linking its smallest parochial details to a general understanding. Once this has broken under the weight of experience, no other totalisation is conceivable....She is left, simply, with the amorphous chaos of experience, which is both inferior to such totalisation in that it is meaningless, but superior in that it is 'real'.[24]

Such awareness is unavailable to Bowling: he never has faith to lose; but he does have an inherent need for a larger vision which invests life with meaning, and this, much more than memories of security, sends him back to Lower Binfield. Dorothy's future seems grim, and by Coming Up for Air, the situation of this plain yet sensitive girl is caricatured in the situation of Hilda's friend, the pathetic Miss Minns. Yet the stoic compromise at the end of her quest is somehow not as dreadful as George Bowling's defeat, for he loses the desire for a totalizing vision and the belief in things worth preserving in the face of war.

In Outside the Whale, David Kubal asks, "if Bowling is so aware of conditions, why is he so thoroughly disillusioned on his return to the country? I suspect that the entire plot structure is an elaborate device to illustrate the reason behind society's disintegration and

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[24] Eagleton 89.

to delineate the kind of character which will survive."[25] To this analysis, I would add that Bowling's early social criticism is mostly presented in urban, quotidian terms; Lower Binfield is for him mythologized. Kubal's second point may explain why Bowling's narrative function in the episode of return is the opposite of that in his recollections of the past. Then, despite the lack of passion or even a strong sense of community, young George seemed to belong, to operate with neither a sense of alienation nor a wish to escape or alter the patterns of time. In both sections of the novel he is essentially passive, but in the quest passage, he is continuously displaced: an invisible man, despite his loud blue suit.

Just as Bowling's protestations of normalcy in the West Bletchley and London episodes are belied by the experiences he describes, his desire for reconnection in Lower Binfield is consistently thwarted. Nevertheless, Bowling reveals on his quest a capacity for optimism which is both surprising and poignant. Even though he frequently feels like a ghost, "not actually groaning and rattling a chain, but sometimes feeling that I'd like to" (CA 199), he retains up to the accidental bombing the hope that he can have "a bit of a holiday" (CA 217), a peaceful escape if not a rediscovery. Ironically, what he wants to

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[25] David L. Kubal, Outside the Whale: George Orwell's Art and Politics (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972) 120.

escape is all around him, vestiges of the Lower Binfield he knew being rare and mostly metamorphosed. The world of milk bars, radios, artificial food and sham culture operates here as in London.

> Houses, shops, cinemas, chapels, football grounds -- new, all new....Do you know the look of these new towns that have suddenly swelled up like balloons in the last few years, Hayes, Slough, Dagenham, and so forth? The kind of chilliness, the bright red brick everywhere, the temporary-looking shop-windows full of cut-price chocolates and radio parts. (CA 180)

The people he encounters are either newcomers with no sense of Lower Binfield's tradition and history, or intimations of mortality like the sexton or Elsie, who fails to recognize the fat middle-aged version of her old lover George Bowling.

The bombing, and the discovery that his cherished pool has become the rubbish dump of a pretentious experimental community, reinforce the reality of both sorts of fear that drove Bowling into nostalgia. The latter represents the ascendancy of a streamlined, artificial modern culture, the former the inevitability of war, and for a moment in his departure, after witnessing the blood in the bombed-out house "beginning to get mixed up with the marmalade" (CA 221), Bowling seems to realize the simultaneity of these aspects of life.

As in other situations when his perceptions approach a sort of totalization, he is conscious of his aloneness

and of his feeling of detachment from the routines of life.

> The old life's finished, and to go about looking for it is just waste of time. There's no way back to Lower Binfield, you can't put Jonah back into the whale. I knew, though I don't expect you to follow my train of thought. And it was a queer thing I'd done by coming here. All those years Lower Binfield had been tucked away somewhere or other in my mind, a sort of quiet corner that I could step back into when I felt like it, and finally I'd stepped back into it and found that it didn't exist. I'd chucked a pine-apple into my dreams, and lest there should be any mistake the Royal Air Force had followed up with five hundred pounds of T.N.T. (CA 223)

Yet once back in West Bletchley, Bowling demonstrates the limitations in the face of tyrannical normalcy; "the effect of environment" draws him back into "the ordinary habits of thought" (CA 225), and the immediate concerns of employment and debt and Hilda's accusations overpower him. He succumbs to the demands of the present and lacks the will or imagination to make anything of his vision. However, the consequence for him is not so much clearsighted resignation as renewed fragmentation.

> The smell of old mackintoshes was very strong. Why had I run away like that? Why had I bothered about the future and the past, seeing that the future and the past don't matter? Whatever motives I might have had, I could hardly remember them now. The old life in Lower Binfield, the war and the afterwar, Hitler, Stalin, bombs, machine-guns, food-queues, rubber truncheons -- it was fading out, all fading out. Nothing remained except a vulgar low-down row in a smell of old mackintoshes. (CA 232)

What then is the validity of Bowling's quest and his role as narrator of it? According to Terry Eagleton, this narrative voice permits Orwell a realistic form of social criticism, with the victim interpreting the situation:

> Bowling, an "ordinary, middling chap," fits in with his environment: but neither so thoroughly that he cannot achieve a reflectively critical standpoint towards it, nor so loosely that he can analyse it as a whole and imagine an alternative ....The point of this is both to affirm and to qualify his greater perceptiveness: to allow him a partial transcendence of his environment without the deceptions of disengagement.[26]

Actually, Bowling's delusions more than his perceptions inspire his quest. He may lack the ability to take a more imaginative approach to his life and see the world beyond West Bletchley in a consistent and integrated way; he seems doomed to an emotionally restricted existence. However, the way in which he comes to terms with his discovery of delusion demonstrates, if not heroism or genius, a resiliency and capacity for survival.[27] He has something of the essential toughness

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[26] Eagleton 101.

[27] George Woodcock refers to the value of Bowling's resiliency:

> Left without illusions about the past or hopes for the future, George Bowling seems to retreat into the narrow present, where we can assume that, as he has persistently told us, he will keep alive longer than most other people. Perhaps it is this central toughness which we sense in George Bowling that provides the

of the proles, and their ability to live in the present without middle-class insecurity or ideological terror. Perhaps, despite his cynicism, he also has the capacity for private emotion which Winston Smith comes to admire in them, and which eventually replaces edenic illusions as the essence of existence which makes life worth living, singly and in community.

II. Evelyn Waugh

> "Something quite remote from anything the builders intended, has come out of their work, and out of the fierce little human tragedy in which I played; something none of us thought about at the time; a small red flame -- a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle; the flame which the old knights saw from their tombs, which they saw put out; that flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem. It could not have been lit but for the builders and the tragedians, and there I found it this morning, burning anew among the old stones."
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> Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited[28]

Charles Ryder, kneeling in the Art Deco chapel of Brideshead, realizes that his dislocation in facing middle

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> equation mark in the Orwellian contradiction which Coming Up for Air shows more strikingly than most of his books, manifest in the contrast between its extraordinary vitality of manner and its moral which implies the defeat of life. Life is always defeated, because death exists. But it is always there to pose the challenge anew. (149-50)

[28] Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder (1945, revised 1960; Penguin Books, 1982) 395.

age results both from circumstance and will. Social prominence and wartime service have disillusioned him. Nevertheless, he finds a source of hope in his adopted Catholicism: in the persistence of faith and grace amid conflict and tragedy. Also a soldier of the Second World War, Guy Crouchback proves the continuity of faith and grace in his journey through the wasteland of mid-twentieth century Europe; Evelyn Waugh traces his fortunes in the Sword of Honour trilogy: Men at Arms (1952), Officers and Gentlemen (1955) and Unconditional Surrender (1961). His journey is less positive than Charles Ryder's affirmation might imply, but he is much more like a questing knight and his growth is more profound. Although he fails to find a place in the world, he is ultimately (albeit ambiguously) rewarded.

References to Acre and Jerusalem create a Crusade motif which Waugh magnifies and deflates in the more cynical war trilogy. Guy's first stated motivation for returning to England from Italian exile and seeking active service certainly defines an infidel: "But now, splendidly, everything had become clear. The enemy at last was plain in view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome, there was a place for him in that battle" (MA 12). Although the war is global and Guy's sense of a Modern Enemy suggests a comprehensive view of culture and

society, his adventures are increasingly personal in implication.[29] I want to concentrate on the individualized nature of his quest, on his personal transformation through experience, and on Waugh's narrative treatment of hazards which force Guy to confront progressively more crucial choices. These choices lead him to a greater maturity, but also amplify his dislocation. He discovers that he cannot reconcile his own sources of value with the ethics of the world, and so can find no means of social integration. I also want to examine the ambivalence of the resolution.

Guy Crouchback seems a likelier questing knight than George Bowling: he is a cultured, solitary man of internally rather than externally imposed routines, a man with an overly dogmatic and immature yet real faith in divine will.[30] However, he is as deluded. However,

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[29] Andrew Rutherford examines the individualization of Guy's experiences, contending that his Crusade becomes "a pilgrimage of painful discovery, of humble expiation." As well, according to Rutherford, Waugh deliberately detaches Guy from one attractive source of integration, the Halberdiers: "In this world of evil, treachery and cowardice, the Halberdiers' is the life of Do Wel, and it is a malignity of Fate that prevents Guy three times over from accompanying them into battle, so that he is left to face other, deeper crises in which their virtues are of no avail" (125, 127).

Andrew Rutherford, The Literature of War: Five Studies in Heroic Virtue (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978).

[30] His faith does not, however, ultimately provide him with the totalizing vision which, according to Terry Eagleton (cf. note 24), Dorothy Hare's does before she leaves home. It is presented as something positive but essentially private, and seems at all times to lack the

unlike Orwell's protagonist, he achieves genuine transformation in shedding his delusions, and he engages sympathy in a more complex way. Like Orwell, Waugh presents his protagonist's dislocation through irony, but emphasizes depth rather than fragmentation of characterization. James F. Carens, in his introduction to a recent collection of essays on Waugh, discusses the "distance between the detached narrative voice of the Crouchback novels and the consciousness of Guy as protagonist....Guy is constantly being shown as others see him and in dramatic and ironic relation to the complex motifs and themes of the three books."[31]

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[31] James F. Carens, "Introduction," in Critical Essays on Evelyn Waugh, ed. James F. Carens (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1987) 19.

In his earlier book on satire in Waugh's work, Carens argues that the war trilogy employs "burlesque and a particularly low-keyed ironic realism. The satirist's command of these two modes, exercised by means of a masterfully handled 'counterpoint' technique, permits him successfully to achieve a satire with both positive and negative poles" (157).

James F. Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1966).

Realism and irony are important aspects of the balancing of sympathy and detachment William Cook finds in Waugh's third-person narration; his comments apply specifically to Men at Arms yet are echoed in his discussions of the other two books:

> First, in narrative Waugh has wrought to a high degree of perfection a unique kind of third-person narrative featuring an omniscient yet personable narrator who is allowed full knowledge of the character and the national and

The sort of detailed analysis of the trilogy offered by William Cook in Masks, Modes and Morals or Jeffrey Heath in The Picturesque Prison is beyond the scope of this chapter, and I feel both are overly optimistic about the ending. There is a fundamental discrepancy between Guy's individual nature as it develops and the ascendant social mainstream; the dilemmas posed by Guy's relationship with the world cannot be resolved except through compromise and withdrawal. In tracing Guy's progress, I want to examine the development of his narrative treatment through three climactic events: the raid at Dakar, the surrender at Crete, and the affair of the Kanyis in Yugoslavia. Guy's participation in these episodes gradually destroys the deluded ideals which precipitated his quest for a place in the battle, and the world. Belonging as they do in the broad social and political realm of existence, they parallel the evolution of Guy's personal, private values, which culminates in his unselfish decision to remarry his former wife Virginia and adopt her illegitimate child, and his attempt to assist Jewish refugees he encounters in Yugoslavia. The

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> international circumstances surrounding him, who is separated from the character by time, space, and person, and yet who, by disposition and narrative process, seems very closely identified with the hero himself. (244)

William J. Cook, Jr., Masks, Modes and Morals: The Art of Evelyn Waugh (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971).

narrative style of each event reflects Guy's transformation through experience: as his awareness, disillusionment, and capacity for genuine if private chivalry grow, irony and comedy give way to often horrifying realism, and even to pathos.

Like George Bowling, Guy Crouchback is unable to reconcile the values of a past that stressed individualism with the communal trends of the present, yet Waugh's treatment of this dislocating dichotomy differs in emphasis. While Bowling is unstinting in his harangues against plastic modernity, and relatively unsentimental about his secure if unremarkable boyhood, Guy recalls without irony the "wholly happy childhood" of a "merry little boy" (US 67). Guy's fundamental delusion about integration in his early war experiences lies in his translation of these experiences through the mythologies of that childhood. Both Jeffrey Heath and Ian Littlewood point to the schoolboy allusions and parallels which underline the anachronism of the Halberdiers, Guy's first unit.[32] References to the routines of schoolboy life are

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[32] Jeffrey Heath devalues Guy's quest and emphasizes his early fraudulence rather more stridently than Waugh does, but aptly cites the childish fantasy behind the Halberdiers: Guy "and his fellow continue to play at being soldiers. Waugh pokes fun at their little fraud by alluding to them as schoolboys" (222).

Jeffrey Heath, The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and His Writing (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982).

Similarly, according to Ian Littlewood in his discussion of nostalgia in Waugh's fiction, "it is to the

matched by those to schoolboy literature: the enemy, modernity, motivates Guy less than the adventure-story heroism he found as a boy in the morally explicit tales of Captain Truslove.

> That was during the first World War but the story came from an earlier chapter of military history. Pathans were Captain Truslove's business. Troy, Agincourt and Zululand were more real to Guy in those days than the world of mud and wire and gas where Gervase fell. Pathans for Truslove; paynims for Sir Robert (sic) de Waybroke; for Gervase, Bernard Partridge's flamboyant, guilty Emperor, top-booted, eagle-crowned. For Guy at the age of twelve there were few enemies. They, in their hordes, came later. (MA 166)

A rift develops between the way such associations inform Guy's perceptions of the Halberdiers in general and such individuals as the fraudulent Apthorpe and the anachronistic Ritchie-Hook, and the way events confirm the awkward isolation of his adulthood, when security gave way to profound social disabilities. This development has two sources: a characteristic reticence which risks becoming the paranoia which destroyed his brother Ivo, and the absence of the shared goals and moral imperatives which governed Truslove and his comrades. Guy experiences a sense of belonging listening to Ritchie-Hook:

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schoolroom that Guy himself returns during his period of training in the army. That his hero should be a soldier of the stamp of Ritchie-Hook is altogether fitting...." (121).

Ian Littlewood, The Writings of Evelyn Waugh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

> At those words Guy's shame left him and pride flowed back. He ceased for the time being to be the lonely and ineffective man -- the man he so often thought he saw in himself, past his first youth, cuckold, wastrel, prig -- who had washed and shaved and dressed at Claridge's, lunched at Bellamy's and caught the afternoon train; he was one with his regiment, with all their historic feats of arms behind him, with great opportunities to come. He felt from head to foot a physical tingling and bristling as though charged with galvanic current. (MA 136)

This sense of belonging is characterized by such adventurous impulses in its latter stages, and earlier by a familial, even marital love ("meanwhile it was sweet to wake and lie on in bed; the spirit of the Corps lay beside him: to ring the bell; it was in the service of his unseen bride" MA 78). What this idealism lacks at any point is immediacy and a clear sense of purpose in the actual war. Guy's ecstatic reveries are countered by incidents which underline his ineptitude at genuine camaraderie and his inadequacy at practical soldiering. According to his Italian neighbours, Guy "was not simpatico" (MA 15); his detachment has grown from an inability to allow people to participate emotionally in his life, largely because his views are dogmatic rather than emotional: "But Guy had no wish to persuade or convince or to share his opinions with anyone. Even in his religion he felt no brotherhood. Often he wished that he lived in penal times when Broome had been a solitary outpost of the Faith, surrounded by aliens" (MA 16). This

detachment makes Guy awkward with friendly gestures that suggest genuine connection, so that he cannot say "here's how" to Major Tickeridge or make peace between Glass and the Goanese steward. Most significantly, Guy's self-absorption leads to the damaging lapses in form which result in his attempted seduction of Virginia and his drunken menacing of Trimmer. Guy's occasional remorse over his military and personal failings makes his eventual disillusionment plausible and his character sympathetic, though this awareness is still tempered by heroic idealism. After threatening the unsoldierly Trimmer, the antithesis of all that he idealizes, Guy reflects on his disgrace:

> Quite slowly Guy's rage subsided and touched ground; self-satisfaction sank with it, rather more slowly but at last that too was on the common level.
>
> Just such a drama, he reflected, must have been enacted term by term at Kut-al-Imara House, when worms turned and suddenly revealed themselves as pythons; when nasty, teasing little boys were put to flight. But the champions of the upper fourth needed no rum to embolden them.
>
> Was it for this that the bugles sounded across the barrack square and the strings sang over the hushed dinner table of the Copper Heels? Was this the triumph for which Roger de Waybroke took the cross; that he should exult in putting down Trimmer?
>
> In shame and sorrow Guy stood last in the queue for boiling water, leaning on his fouled weapon. (MA 104-5)

Despite the heightened tone of such utterances, this examination of conscience is crucial to Guy's growth; his

self-awareness allows him to perform acts of genuine courtesy later. The deluded acts which close Men at Arms serve two functions. They reveal the invalidity of storybook heroism in a modern age which is not so much an external enemy as part of the army in which Guy serves. As well, they deflate two figures who have served as objects of admiration and ironic foils for Guy, Apthorpe and Ritchie-Hook.[33] In the raid, which is successful yet technically improper, Guy's adulation of Ritchie-Hook reaches a troubled apotheosis. The legendary Brigadier may recall Richard the Lion-Hearted decapitating Saracens, but his unauthorized participation in the raid is the act of a man of "the wrong age. You can be an enfant terrible or you can be a national figure no one dares touch. But the Brig's neither of those things" (MA 231). As for Guy himself, the raid promises to merge his schoolboy fantasies of the Halberdiers with real action:

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[33] Carens points to this use of ironic counterpoint; he argues that "in each of the three novels, exploring discrepancies between reality and illusion, Waugh created a vivid series of characters who either represent Guy's ideal of action or else mock, parody, or ironically betray that ideal" (19).

Carens, "Introduction," Critical Essays on Evelyn Waugh.

As well, in her recent study, Jacqueline McDonnell contends that "[each] of the three books has a major character who is of dubious origin and suspect morals; each is an antithesis to Guy's old-fashioned and gentlemanly values; and each becomes much too interesting, both to Waugh and the reader" (134).

Jacqueline McDonnell, Evelyn Waugh (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

> "We tossed up between the companies. Yours won. Can you find a dozen good men for a reconnaissance patrol?"
> "Yes, sir."
> "And a suitable officer to lead them?"
> "Can I go myself, sir?" he said to Colonel Tickeridge.
> This was true Truslove-style. (MA 222)

Guy's response to the aftermath of this foray reveals a quality which will in his disillusioned maturity both tempt him to despair and offer him a means of survival. His initial exhilaration gives way to the experience of genuine danger and the realization that this is "a preposterous way in which to get oneself killed" (MA 226); he reprimands rather than encourages the Brigadier's bold initiative. Yet the reprimands he himself receives do not provoke guilt -- since this business still does not engage him morally -- so much as a sense of crumbling order. Guy, like many other characters in the trilogy, suffers from a tendency to despair which is part of the shifting age: a death-wish born of a dislocation in time. His loneliness is both his greatest peril, and the quality which permits him to experience grace in withdrawal: he grows aware of how much he is externally controlled.

This revelation marks a development in Guy's personality and a shift in his narrative treatment. In Officers and Gentlemen the honesty and modesty that endeared him to people ahead of the apparently more soldierly Apthorpe become the qualities of a less

idealistic but more sociable man, and a more efficient officer. The romanticism he retains is more individualized; his friendships are more matters of personal choice than idealistic emulation. In his more clear-eyed appraisal of the nature of this war, he cannot merely opt to be Truslove; he must confront an option that leads him "to resign an immeasurable piece of his manhood" (OG 221).

In this novel, Guy is still limited by a deluded belief in a romantic sort of social honour, a vestige of the boy's-adventure code he applied to the Halberdiers and a refusal to admit fully their anachronism. This belief is translated into a figure of defiant, patrician, poetic singularity: Ivor Claire.

> Ivor Claire was another pair of boots entirely, salty, withdrawn, incorrigible. Guy remembered Claire as he first saw him in the Roman spring in the afternoon sunlight amid the embosoming cypresses of the Borghese Gardens, putting his horse faultlessly over the jumps, concentrated as a man in prayer. Ivor Claire, Guy thought, was the fine flower of them all. He was quintessential England, the man Hitler had not taken into account, Guy thought. (OG 114)

I want in treating Officers and Gentlemen to concentrate on the surrender at Crete, which is the core of Guy's military activity in wartime. Besides, the discovery of Claire's contemporary brand of cowardice and abuse of privilege follows two episodes which reflect in structure Guy's role as a questing knight: he encounters

signs which he must interpret. Both episodes deal with honour, which Guy and Claire debate the night before the surrender; to Claire, as to the world, honour is "a thing that changes" (OG 221). Also, both incidents emphasize Guy's aloneness, indicate the value of activity over passivity, and demonstrate the inadequacy of situational ethics.

In the first, when Guy is led by a village girl to the body of a young English soldier in Crete, motifs of frustration appear in the nightmarish landscape of the retreat. Guy is prevented from quenching his thirst because of a broken well-rope, a jar "full of bees and a residue of honey" (OG 205), and his inability to communicate with a blind, deaf woman. Similarly, hard ground and a lack of tools prevent him from burying the soldier. Like a knight errant, he is called upon to perform an action, and as in many other instances on his journey through the war, he is prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond his control. Nevertheless, here he acts as honourably as he can, in both a spiritual[34] and an official sense.

> ....[She] drew him resolutely towards a small yard on the edge of the village, which had once

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[34] Littlewood, in discussing the Christian elements of the episode, claims that the mention of Sir Roger, "though he may be a reminder of the gulf between political realities and religious ideals, is also a reminder that those ideals do exist" (194).

> held live-stock but was now deserted except by a second, similar girl, a sister perhaps, and a young English soldier who lay on a stretcher motionless. The girls pointed helplessly towards this figure. Guy could not help. The young man was dead, undamaged it seemed. He lay as though at rest. The few corpses which Guy had seen in Crete had sprawled awkwardly. This soldier lay like an effigy on a tomb -- like Sir Roger in his shadowy shrine at Santa Dulcina. Only the bluebottles that clustered round his lips and eyes proclaimed that he was flesh. Why was he lying here? Who were these girls? Had a weary stretcher-party left him in their care and had they watched him die? Guy would never know. It remained one of the countless unexplained incidents of war. Meanwhile, lacking words the three of them stood by the body, stiff and mute as figures in a sculptured Deposition....
>
> Guy knelt and took the disc from the cold breast. He read a number, a name, a designation, RC. "May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, in the mercy of God, rest in peace."
>
> Guy stood. The bluebottles returned to the peaceful young face. Guy saluted and passed on. (OG 206)

The circumstances of honourable yet thwarted intention prefigure both Julia Stitch's disposal of this soldier's identity disc and the arrest of the Jewish couple he befriends in Yugoslavia. In both cases, Guy's increasingly individual sense of chivalry conflicts with a broad social and military context. There being no congruence between his values and those of the majority, his aims are subverted, not so much deliberately as inadvertantly. His signals are misread: Julia believes the disc contains information harmful to Ivor Claire; the partisans believe the Kanyis are spies and Mme. Kanyi is Guy's mistress. As well, the episode of the young soldier

closely precedes another episode of peril, which reveals that passivity can be a form of despair for Guy. He performs a limited yet decisive service for the dead soldier; when he is deprived of any specific military function other than surrendering, he reflects that:

> ....all the deep sense of desolation which he had sought to cure, which from time to time seemed to be cured, overwhelmed him as of old. His heart sank. It seemed to him as though literally an organ of his body were displaced, subsiding, falling heavily like a feather in a vacuum jar; Philocletes set apart from his fellows by an old festering wound; Philocletes without his bow. Sir Roger without his sword. (OG 210)

This irreconcilable discrepancy between desire and reality leads to his ultimate longing for "the wide welcome of the open sea, of the satisfaction of finding someone else to take control of things" (OG 225). This temptation to passivity is posed by the pragmatic existentialist Ludovic, whose reappearance among the men on the nightmarish morning of surrender is like that of a spectre. Significantly, Guy encounters him in a moment of exultant solitude.

> They strolled through and came to a little cove, a rocky foreshore, deep clear water. Guy stripped and dived and swam out in a sudden access of euphoria; he turned on his back and floated, his eyes closed to the sun, his ears sealed to every sound, oblivious of everything except physical ease, solitary and exultant. He turned and swam and floated again and swam; then he struck out for the shore, making for the opposite side. The cliffs here ran down into

> deep water. He stretched up and found a handhold in a shelf of rock. It was already warm with the sun. He pulled up, rested luxuriously on his forearms with his legs dangling knee deep in water, paused, for he was feebler than a week ago, then raised his head and found himself staring straight into the eyes of another, a man who was seated above him on the black ledge and gazing down at him; a strangely clean and sleek man for Creforce; his eyes in the brilliant sunshine were the colour of oysters. (OG 223)

That Ludovic "stood and stooped and drew Guy out of the sea" (OG 223) emphasizes Guy's passivity and vulnerability, the characteristics that lead him to leave his men and (albeit legitimately) choose a chance for escape which resembles the means of departure which Ludovic made a topic of ethical debate: "Would moralists hold it was suicide if one were just to swim out to sea, sir, in the fanciful hope of reaching Egypt?" (OG 224). Actually, Ludovic only boards the boat when he realizes that to stay ashore means capture or bombardment; for Guy, the act destroys much of his sense of personal or military honour. In his withdrawal after his rescue, he fears speech, which would force him to "re-enter their world; he would be back in the picture" (OG 228); when recovered, he realizes that he is "back after less than two years' pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old ambiguous world, where priests were spies and gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour" (OG 240). By Unconditional Surrender, his only

remaining battle is against his death-wish.

The shift in narrative focus on Guy's quest in the third novel parallels the evolution of his Catholicism from a rigid dependence on dogma to a private source of charity. As in Officers and Gentlemen, his maturity and growing detachment from the business of war enhance rather than diminish his personal and professional courtesy; he remains respected even if he grows more ineffectual as a soldier. Only one delusion remains, perhaps the most important: his belief that the personal acts of charity he learns to perform will of necessity be beneficial. Nevertheless, he finds at last a worthy source of inspiration and emulation in a world in which, according to Jacqueline McDonnell, "traditional heroes fail and are found wanting, and baser men are seen to thrive."[35] Through his father, Guy learns the necessity of active rather than passive service, and the virtue of compassion.

The reward Guy finally and deservedly achieves is not the reintegration several critics would like to term it, nor is it a perfect hope for continuance of the line. The grace in limited dislocation which returns the Crouchbacks to Broome depends in quality on the consequences of Guy's crucial choices in Unconditional Surrender (and the trilogy as a whole): his decision to marry Virginia, and later to help the Kanyis. Both acts mark a shift in Guy's

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[35] McDonnell 135.

perception of his quest, a shift precipitated by the death of his father, "the best man, the only entirely good man, he had ever known" (US 65). Recalling the letter in which his father chided him for his dogmatic approach to faith, claiming that "quantitative judgements don't apply" (US 17), Guy realizes that he must actively seek to be useful to God, and charitable to other people. When he confesses to Virginia "I don't love any more" (US 146), yet decides to remarry her and adopt little Trimmer, he explains this new sort of chivalry to the skeptical Kerstie Kilbannock.

> "Knights errant," he said, "used to go out looking for noble deeds. I don't think I've ever in my life done a single, positively unselfish action. I certainly haven't gone out of my way to find opportunities. Here was something most unwelcome, put into my hands....
> "It was made my business by being offered." (US 151)

Through the three novels, Guy's choices become progressively more viable. His intercession on behalf of the Kanyis and the other displaced Jews in Yugoslavia both represents modernity and destroys his last social ideals.[36] It confirms his dislocation, yet drives him

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[36] Jeffrey Heath discusses Guy's two climactic acts of charity:

> In the face of the quantitative world's defeatism, Guy recalls his father's letter and asserts the value of the individual soul. He accepts sacrifice and loses face in the eyes of the world in order to carry out the charitable act which he alone can perform. His act marks the end of his apathy. Now Guy is about to discover a vocation more suitable than that of

from the possibility of despair. An element of the death-wish remains in his remarriage of Virginia, who can find no contemporary place for her sort of femininity and literally predicts her death, while Guy confesses that he wants to die "almost all the time" (US 170), such is the feeling of futility engendered by his war service. Neither expresses any hope of making a life together after the war, although she contributes to his eventual achievement of the courage to live in the present. In assisting the displaced Jews, he moves beyond accepting the opportunity to act, and realizes the nature of his despair.

The symbolic frustrations surrounding his discovery in Crete of the soldier's body become in Yugoslavia the larger frustrations of bureaucracy. Ultimately, his innocent communication with Mme. Kanyi, spokeswoman for the Jewish community, leads to her arrest. According to James Carens, she "enunciates the central insight to which the Crouchback novels lead."[37] She also forces Guy to

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> modern crusader....
>
> ....Before Guy can triumph over his despair, he must perceive that his desire to emulate Sir Roger is in fact a death-wish: in the modern world as in Sir Roger's day, knight-errantry issues in failure -- not because it is bad, but because it is ineffective in a world so twisted by Fortune. Guy must abandon all notions of public honour and move farther along the road toward private compassion. (248-50)

[37] Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh 168.

admit his final delusion.

> Is there any place that is free from evil? It is too simple to say that only the Nazis wanted war. These communists wanted it too. It was the only way in which they could come to power. Many of my people wanted it, to be revenged on the Germans, to hasten the creation of the national state. It seems to me there was a will to war, a death wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. They could assert their manhood by killing and being killed. They would accept hardships in recompense for having been selfish and lazy. Danger justified privilege. I knew Italians -- not very many perhaps -- who felt this. Were there none in England?"
>
> "God forgive me," said Guy. "I was one of them." (US 232)

Yet even though Guy realizes that "the stamping of the barrack square and the biffing of imaginary strongholds were finding their consummation in one frustrated act of mercy" (US 232), the act itself is never devalued. It is thwarted by social and political forces shaping modern history; they allow Guy no source of integration, and render his act futile despite his genuine compassion. His only postwar acts revealed in the narrative are personal: his return to Broome, his marriage of the agriculturally-minded Domenica Plessington, and his adoption of little Trimmer. These acts of compromise and withdrawal affirm a dislocation which is essentially positive. Guy cannot reconcile his private values with any social mainstream; in fact, the narration of the epilogue, which is situated in an urban milieu, abandons his perspective.

Nevertheless, Jeffrey Heath considers the trilogy "a celebration of the family which, being at once private and communal, provides Guy Crouchback with a mature form of solitude,"[38] and an opportunity to perpetuate his father's values.

However, his reward is ambiguous, whichever of Waugh's endings one considers authoritative. Waugh's preferred ending (that of the one-volume revision published in 1965), which makes Guy and Domenica childless, could imply that Gervase "little Trimmer" Crouchback will grow up in a world more amenable to his Trimmer heritage than his Crouchback upbringing, although it could also imply an even greater unselfishness in Guy's decision to help Virginia. Even in the first version, which gives them two sons, Guy's legal heir will be, ironically, Trimmer's child. However, as the heir's eponymous grandfather would say, quantitative judgements don't apply. The epilogue stresses Guy's detachment from London society; the friendships he maintains are based on shared experience rather than social obligation. Perhaps his situation represents a renaissance. True, his surname is the name applied to Richard III, the last English king to die in battle, whose defeat permitted the ascendancy of the Tudors and the eventual end of Roman Catholicism as England's state faith. Nevertheless, Guy and Domenica and

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[38] Heath 214.

little Gervase, in opting to run Broome as a farm from the agent's house rather than the manor, are rediscovering the agrarian roots their ancestors may have known before Bosworth Field. The evolution of the Crouchbacks in the mainstream of the upper class has really reached "fin de ligne." However, Guy's father and Guy himself have achieved a formula for the family's continuity, as individuals of perception and compassion, rather than as crusading knights and public figures.

CHAPTER FOUR: Anita Brookner

> "One can live in the shadow of an idea without grasping it. Nothing is really unthinkable, really you do know that. But the more one thinks, the less there's any outside reality -- at least, that's so with a woman: we have no scale."
>
> Elizabeth Bowen, The Heat of the Day[1]

> Circumstances count for little, character is everything; it is useless to break with things and persons, if you cannot break with yourself. You change the situation; but you carry into every new one the torment from which you hoped to be delivered; and since you never change yourself by changing scene, you find you have only added remorse to regret and sin to suffering.
>
> Benjamin Constant, Adolphe[2]

> "I am not good-looking enough for him!"
> This was Eugénie's humble thought, a thought fertile in suffering. The poor child was unjust to herself; but humility, or rather a fear of being unworthy, is one of the first-awakened attributes of love.
>
> Honoré de Balzac, Eugénie Grandet[3]

Anita Brookner's explorations of the loneliness of intelligent, apparently successful women are the most intensely personal and internalized narratives in my study. Although they analyze a contemporary dislocation embracing gender, nationality and the relationship of

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[1] Elizabeth Bowen, The Heat of the Day (1948; Penguin Books, 1986) 192.

[2] Benjamin Constant, Adolphe, translated by John Middleton Murry (1806; London and New York: Peter Nevill Limited, 1951) 121.

[3] Honoré de Balzac, Eugénie Grandet, trans. Marion Ayton Crawford (1833; translation, 1955; Penguin Books, 1985) 94.

literature and life, they are more concerned with daily contingencies than with events of global consequence, and their vision seems more particular than universal. Nevertheless, the individualized plight of her protagonists can be extended to general questions of belief and morality, as well as the dislocation arising from the conflict of moral and social codes, and from simultaneous impulses towards personal romantic fulfilment and social integration.[4]

No criticism of any substance has yet appeared on Anita Brookner's fiction, which began to appear in 1981. Her novels, which according to Randall Stevenson examine the "disparity between sensitive inner life and intractable social reality,"[5] clearly merit inclusion in my analysis. I want to concentrate on three quite similar early works: A Start in Life (1981), Providence (1982)

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[4] In this chapter alone, I am using interviews with the author of the novels discussed, simply because there is so little critical material available on Anita Brookner. Although knowledge of Brookner's life is not essential to analysis of her novels, the lives of several of her protagonists clearly resemble her own. The interviews from which I shall be quoting reveal that she is London-born, of Polish-Jewish ancestry, had a successful academic career as an art historian before becoming a novelist, and has remained unmarried and childless.

[5] Randall Stevenson, The British Novel since the Thirties: an Introduction (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986) 151.

and Hotel du Lac (1984)[6]. (I am leaving out Look at Me (1983), which is unusually morbid for Brookner, whose treatment of melancholy tends to be more poignant; this novel also lacks the successful-career motif of the other works.) The way Brookner treats the dislocating relationship of life and art, and her balance of her own narrative organization with the point of view of her protagonists, deserve special attention, as does her use of external detail to suggest internal life. Before examining the novels themselves, I want to consider briefly the relationship of Brookner's treatment of dislocation to some aspects of feminist literary theory.

Anita Brookner is admittedly more interested in femininity than feminism. The loneliness experienced by her protagonists does not depend on gender only, although their singular notions of femininity and honour displace them as much as their cultural backgrounds. Despite the apparent passivity of her heroines, she is less concerned with power struggles than with an idealized romanticism that finds its microcosm in domestic love. According to Gerda Charles, her theme "is one which hardly any woman writer since Charlotte Bronte has had the courage to express: the plight of the clever, feeling woman of great

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[6] Editions used throughout: Anita Brookner, A Start in Life (1981; London: Triad Grafton Books, 1985), Providence (1982; London: Grafton Books, 1983), Hotel du Lac (1984; London: Triad/Panther Books, 1985).

sensibility who longs all too humanly for love and companionship with a man of particular quality but has neither the beauty to attract him nor the coarseness of temperament to grab for him. A secondary, but important theme is revealed as a progress from belief in the triumph of the good and the decent to the painful discovery that virtue is useless."[7]

However, Brookner remains attracted to what she perceives as a natural order in which romance ends in domesticity[8] (despite her realization that the world she writes about tends to belie the existence of such an order). She contends that feminine wiles motivate most female social success, and that "a complete woman is probably not a very admirable creature. She is manipulative, uses other people to get her own way, and works within whatever system she is in. The ideal woman, on the other hand, is quite different; she lives according to a set of principles and is somehow very rare and always has been."[9] Hence, Rosalind Miles's brief critique of Hotel du Lac is inherently ironic. She claims that Edith's rejection of Mr. Neville is "not unlike Nora's

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[7] Gerda Charles, Contemporary Novelists, ed. D.L. Kirkpatrick, 4th ed. (London and Chicago: St. James Press, 1986) 142.

[8] John Haffenden, Novelists in Interview (London and New York: Methuen, 1985) 71.

[9] Shusha Guppy, "The Art of Fiction XCVIII: Anita Brookner," The Paris Review 29.104 (Fall 1987) 162.

slamming of the door in The Doll's House....Edith is one of a large band of women characters in the last twenty years or so, who, their creators decided, should put their own interests as free women above the social imperative to bond with men."[10] Miles misreads the conclusion of Hotel du Lac; Edith's resolution is more ambiguous, and Brookner seems less interested in writing prescriptive fiction than in trenchant analysis of the social options currently available to intelligent, independent women. Moreover, problems of gender are for Brookner's protagonists symptoms of a greater fear and source of dislocation. As she explains in her more recent novel Latecomers, they face a potentially absurd universe, and move towards "[the] abyss that waits for all of us, when all our actions seem futile, when the ability to fill the day seems stalled, and the waiting takes on an edge of dread."[11] Through their principles, however ineffectual in the social spheres in which they move, they seek to impose order on that universe.

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[10] Rosalind Miles, The Female Form: Women Writers and the Conquest of the Novel (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) 147.

Miles's comment occurs in a chapter called "Man the Enemy." Despite the limitations of many of her male characters, Brookner, like Edith, professes to prefer male company: "I prefer the company of men because they teach me things I don't know....It is the otherness that fascinates me" (Guppy 161).

[11] Anita Brookner, Latecomers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1988) 114-5.

Nevertheless, Brookner's fiction reflects aspects of Sydney Janet Kaplan's discussion of the development of modern feminine consciousness. Kaplan argues that, like male modernists, women writers "found it necessary to break with tradition by shifting their focus from the outer world to the inner, from the confident omniscient narrator to the limited point of view, from plot to patterning, and from action to thinking and dreaming. But these women....[also] felt the need to consider consciousness not only as a means of organizing a novel but as a method for analyzing the minds of women...."[12] This is precisely what Brookner does in treating the creation of identity and the dislocating discrepancies arising between social and personal codes of behaviour, between a chosen present context and the weight of familial tradition. Her protagonists suffer from an upbringing influenced by cultural displacement, which

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[12] Sydney Janet Kaplan, Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel (Urbana, Chicago and London: The University of Illinois Press, 1975) 1-2.

Kaplan contends in her conclusion that concern with the dissonant simultaneities of existence may be a feminine predilection: "To defend their position -- and it must be remembered that the feminine consciousness is itself a defensive construction -- these women insist that the thought processes of women are different from those of men. [Dorothy Richardson's] Miriam, recognizing women's ability to perceive the diversity of reality simultaneously (an apprehension not time-centered), believes men are so caught up in the processes of 'becoming' that they are only able to keep one thing in their minds at a time, thus explaining their predilection for categorizing 'life' and ordering it into hierarchies" (175-6).

renders them incapable of becoming what their parents would have wished or what they want to escape into being. Ruth Weiss, Kitty Maule and Edith Hope are dislocated by their inability to reconcile an inadequate yet influential upbringing with the desires encountered in lives for which they are well-suited intellectually and temperamentally but ill-equipped socially. (Ruth and Kitty are academics; Edith writes popular romantic fiction.) Despite their maturity in age (only Ruth is really young; Kitty is thirty and Edith thirty-nine), they seem childlike in their lack of cynicism and their eager desire to please.

Their objectives concerning men resemble those Nadine Gordimer ascribes to the preternaturally innocent Hillela in A Sport of Nature:

> She would be smouldering over some piece of injustice meted out to her at school and seeing herself -- where? -- anywhere she has never been, some apartment in a city never seen, Los Angeles or Paris....with good-time friends (but not like the friends she makes do with now) or just one person, a man older than herself who adores her and makes love to her and takes her all over the world. Or perhaps with a boy her age....with whom she would play the guitar and grow vegetables, make love and have babies the way ordinary people....did.[13]

However, despite her innocence, Hillela already concedes (and does not try to reconcile) a dichotomy between romance and domesticity which Brookner's protagonists

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[13] Nadine Gordimer, A Sport of Nature (1987; Penguin Books Ltd., 1988) 73.

never recognize. Also, she is freely receptive to experience, unhindered by an externally imposed moral code, and thus can grow to genuine individual and political maturity. She does not so much rebel against conditioning as achieve fulfilment. Childlike as they are, the Brookner women have never known innocence or freedom; they have had to dwell in the shadows of and be responsible for culturally alienated, immature parents. They are burdened by the discipline if not the substance of belief: an artificially imposed systemic morality which has more to do with books than experience. Brookner claims the "moral rectitude" of her characters "comes from a grounding in nineteenth-century novels and nineteenth-century behaviour."[14] This deliberate lack of contemporaneity -- even of naturalness -- robs all three of effective manipulative skills.

The dislocation (if not the social condition) of Ruth, Kitty and Edith resembles that of the protagonists of Jean Rhys's novels;[15] Rhys's women are caught between a powerful impulse towards self-expression and the class and economic restrictions they experience in their bids for independence. Brookner and Rhys share a mistrust of narrative closure; both recognize that the dislocation of

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[14] Haffenden 65.

[15] According to Anita Brookner, "I admire Jean Rhys, especially The Wide Sargasso Sea, but she is too limited by her pathology" (Guppy 160).

their protagonists cannot be reduced easily. The former's protagonists are not as brutalized or hardened or even as pathetic as the latter's, because they are never financially dependent upon men and so never reduced to genuine squalor. Yet the methods of presentation are similar. Both Rhys and Brookner employ a structure which fluctuates between internalized observation and external detail, revealing both the protagonist's bruised yet acute awareness and her exclusion from the forms of society she encounters.[16] Discussing women's fiction in the 1930s,

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[16] For example, when Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark meditates on her surroundings or her appearance, she deliberately reveals her sharp external perceptions, but reveals as well both her internal trauma and (inadvertantly) her inevitable inappropriateness to the men who use her:

> I dressed very carefully. I didn't think of anything while I dressed. I put on my black velvet dress and made up a bit with rather more rouge than usual and when I looked in the glass I thought, "He won't be able to, he won't be able to." There was a lump in my throat. I kept swallowing it, but it came back again....
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> Then the taxi came; and the houses on either side of the street were small and dark and then they were big and dark but all exactly alike. And I saw that all my life I had known that this was going to happen, and that I'd been afraid for a long time, I'd been afraid for a long time. There's fear, of course, with everybody. But now it had grown, it had grown gigantic; it filled me and it filled the whole world....
>
> Then the taxi got into Marylebone Road and I remembered that once I had been to a flat in Marylebone Road and there were three flights of stairs and then a small room and it smelt musty. The room had smelt musty and through the glass of a window that wouldn't open you saw dark trees. (82-83)

Jean Rhys, Voyage in the Dark (1934; Penguin Books,

Elaine Showalter claims that "[a] bittersweet resignation to women's lot of unhappiness and insecurity pervades these novels, in which all the men seem to be hearty, married and rich, while all the women are aging, single and poor."[17] Brookner carries on this tradition of resignation which Rhys exemplifies, although Rhys never tries as Brookner does to make a virtue of it.[18] Both writers produce novels depending on gender contrast, although Brookner's are not so much class-based as grounded in the difference between naturalness and artifice, or plausibility and principle (and for both writers, these forms of contrast can exist among women as well as between the sexes).

The sense of continuity resulting from the avoidance of closure provides a much more chilling prospect for both Julia Martin in After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie and Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark than for any of Brookner's women. The aging, abandoned mistress and the drifting chorus girl both achieve the sort of despondent

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1984).

[17] Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977) 299.

[18] Resignation for both writers characterizes their protagonists' acceptance of dislocation. While for Rhys's women this is a horrifying realization that their lives will maintain the same pattern of pain and loss, for Brookner's it can imply acceptance of a way of life which is dignified and emotionally honest, if not socially successful.

resignation accompanying a view of life as a progression of similarly devastating disillusionments, a corroding game of survival. Each lacks the emotional moorings which remain available to Brookner's protagonists: a sense of tradition, financial independence, and a belief in romantic love which is both a means to downfall and (especially for Edith) a saving grace. Like Rhys's women, Brookner's have directed their lives through an essentially romantic impulse: an attempt to establish a singular identity rather than one dictated by their upbringing.[19] For Anna and Julia, that choice inevitably renders them outcasts; each is rejected by her family. Their poverty leads them to dependence on men whose worlds they can never fully enter. Brookner's Ruth, Kitty and Edith are less reckless; their successful careers imply a need for alternative shelter as much as for escape, although they may also imply a more constructive approach to escape, or the possibilities of a more enlightened age. Also, for them, love always embodies a domestic impulse which renders their dreams both more and less absurd.

I want to turn now to the novels themselves.

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[19] When Julia tries to explain her departure of England to Mr. Horsfield, she says, "I wanted to go away with just the same feeling a boy has when he wants to run away to sea -- at least, that I imagine a boy has. Only, in my adventure, men were mixed up, because of course they had to be. You understand, don't you? Do you understand that a girl might have that feeling?" (39-40)
Jean Rhys, After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie (1930; Penguin Books, 1981).

Brookner mainly employs three devices to define her protagonists' dislocation: physical detail (especially choice of apparel), internalized perceptions and delusions regarding men, and the use of texts by other writers as guides both by the protagonists and the author herself. Despite her internal awareness, each protagonist reveals her sense of self-definition and her capacity for self-delusion in her choice of clothes, men and books.

I am especially interested, for the purposes of my discussion, in Hotel du Lac. Despite the ambiguity of its ending, this later work accords Edith a greater achievement of maturity and awareness than that given Ruth or Kitty. Her struggles with passion and reason are more purely designed than Kitty's with belief and absurdity, or Ruth's with virtue and vice. The earlier novels are more explicitly related to the bildungsroman tradition, tracing the progress of Kitty and Ruth from childhood to the informing disillusionment of young adulthood (the surrounding material about Ruth's life as a forty-year-old academic serves mostly to parallel her situation with Brookner's own). Hotel du Lac has a more compressed dramatic present; the retrospective passages are more impressionistic than progressive, and as much concerned with her affair with David as with her childhood. Edith therefore is more mature than the other protagonists, and more conscious of her dislocation, yet her growth in

awareness actually offers little more hope than is offered to Ruth and Kitty at the ends of their stories.

Much of the narration is presented from Edith's perspective, which Brookner gradually reveals to be both honest and unreliable. Although Brookner's style is much more internalized and impressionistic than George Orwell's, she characterizes Edith Hope in a way similar to his treatment of George Bowling. She organizes information to reveal Edith's capacity for self-delusion, while making Edith's perspective the central point of view in the novel. On one level, Edith's self-awareness is acute; she confesses to Mr. Neville, "Most of my life seems to go on at a subterranean level" (H 92) and later admits she feels "out of phase with the world" (H 93). In private recollections, she provides reasons for these pronouncements, but the circumstances of their verbalization affect perception of them. They take place in a hillside restaurant from which "the lake mists were no longer imaginable: half-tones and ambiguous gradations, gentle appreciations of mildness and warmth, were banished, relegated to invalid status, by the uncompromising clarity of this higher air. Up here the weather was both hot and cold, bright and dark...." (H 90). This clarity makes various possibilities separately apparent, and invites choice rather than reconciliation. For Edith, it proves more illusory and dangerous than the

state reflected earlier in the novel; arrival at this restaurant involves detachment from the hotel, which offers this view:

> From the window all that could be seen was a receding area of grey. It was to be supposed that beyond the grey garden....lay the vast grey lake, spreading like an anaesthetic towards the invisible further shore, and beyond that, in imagination only, yet verified by the brochure, the peak of the Dent d'Oche, on which snow might already be slightly and silently falling. For it was late September, out of season; the tourists had gone, the rates were reduced, and there were few inducements for visitors in this small town at the water's edge, whose inhabitants, uncommunicative to begin with, were frequently rendered taciturn by the dense cloud that descended for days at a time and then vanished without warning to reveal a new landscape, full of colour and incident....[T]his was a land of prudently harvested plenty, a land which had conquered human accidents, leaving only the weather distressingly beyond control. (H 7-8)

Such fluctuation and ambiguity are more characteristic of Edith's life than hard-edged clarity; the hotel setting amplifies the environment of dislocation in which she dwells. Both descriptions are narrated from Edith's perspective; the contrast underlines her cognizance of the difficulties she faces in everyday living. Her predicament resembles what Kitty Maule more explicitly articulates in contrasting her work with the rest of her life:

> I function well in one sphere only, but all the others must be thought through, every day. Perhaps I will graft myself on to something

> native here, make a unity somehow. I can learn. I can understand. I can even criticize. What I cannot do is reconcile. I must work on that. (P 55)

This rift between work and private life is a symptom, though not the source, of the dislocation of these women, for whom work represents an attempt to impose order on a life constantly threatening to collapse into absurdity.[20] Although each is genuinely talented in her field, none pursues her career with a sense of vocation. Kitty explains that her academic life lets her leave "her onerous daily self behind, and with it all problems of nationality, religion, identity, her place in the world, what to cook for dinner, all thoughts of eventual loneliness and illness and death" (P 52). The younger Ruth is more equivocal; she concedes the hazards and benefits of the dichotomy between work and "real life" with less resignation: "She knew that she was capable of being alone and doing her work -- that that might in fact be her true path in life, or perhaps the one for which she was best fitted -- but was she not allowed to have a little more? Must she only do one thing and do it all the

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[20] Ruth Weiss is the most passively dislocated of the three, but then, the dramatic present of A Start in Life depicts her as a woman in her early twenties. Her outcome seems the most externally manipulated. Nevertheless, she argues at one point that work "is a paradox: it is the sort of thing people do out of sheer inability to do anything else. Work is the chosen avocation of those who have no other calls on their time" (S 67).

time? Or was the random factor, the chance disposition, so often enjoyed by Balzac, nearer to reality? She was aware that writing her dissertation on vice and virtue was an easier proposition than working it out in real life" (S 136). Edith seems more engaged by her work and involved in the routine of its production; she writes popular romances and declares, at what she feels is the end of her career, "I believed every word I wrote" (H 181). Nevertheless, she is conscious of the way this labour serves as a necessary discipline ("No wonder I feel depressed. I need to get down to some work" H 149), and confesses to herself upon seeing a copy of her best novel in a shop window that "the prospect of doing it all over again, for the rest of my life, strikes a chill into my heart" (H 150).[21] Why is this practical, detached aspect of work so emphasized? Brookner sees her own writing as "a form of editing experience -- getting it out in terms

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[21] Brookner provides a clue to this emphasis on work as a detachable rather than integral part of life in interviews. To Shusha Guppy, she confesses, "If I were happy, married with six children, I wouldn't be writing" (151). When John Haffenden refers to her success as a novelist and academic, she rejoins, "Those two activities that you've mentioned are outside the natural order. I only ever wanted children, six sons....I wanted to get away from my own family and to be absorbed in another, more regular set-up, instead of being this grown-up orphan with what you call success" (62-63). Brookner's concept of the natural order as excluding non-domestic work appears anti-feminist, but her later fiction extends it to men, especially in Latecomers. Work is a means to such important ends as apparent social integration, but only family life leads to genuine reconciliation and fulfilment.

of form, because it is form that's going to save us all, I think, and the sooner we realize it the better."[22] For all three, work imposes order on the chaos of existence, without providing an alternative philosophy, which either Mr. Neville's ruthless pragmatism or genuine integration in the natural order would provide. Yet Edith also recognizes the positive value of her work: it allows her to express deeply cherished passions, and part of Edith's greater maturity lies in her capacity for genuine, fully realized passion.

The fragmentation of Edith's everyday universe is more subtly drawn than that of either Ruth or Kitty, but is similarly motivated by upbringing and literary myth. Most of Hotel du Lac treats a relatively compressed and recent period in Edith's life, while both A Start in Life and Providence treat events before the births of their protagonists in some detail. Yet all three treatments of family background have cultural displacement in common, as well as unsuitable flamboyancy contrasted with ordered tradition. (The parents and grandparents are the only other characters in these novels whose perspectives Brookner presents in any depth.) Edith's perception of her parents is the most forgiving and the most cognizant of their adulthood, perhaps because they are both dead and she has assimilated their memories into a greater

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[22] Haffenden 74.

accumulation of adult experience. The exaggerated childishness of the Weisses or the Maules becomes in the Hopes a concurrent interdependence and incompatibility of people who are dissimilar yet both displaced, inadequate and too self-absorbed to nurture a child.[23] In all three cases, cultural displacement means a sense of lost order, of ways of living and behaving which have become anachronistic, and in each case Brookner evokes this sense through an associative detail. This detail is translated through the protagonist into her preoccupation with appropriateness, her misplaced trust in literary texts, and her at least subconscious obsession with Englishness. The detail characterizes the memories each protagonist has of her family, especially for Ruth, the serious child who becomes associated with her grandmother's dining room.

> To the child it seemed as if all dining rooms must be dark, as if sodden with a miasma of gravy and tears. She imagined, across the

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[23] Kitty's parents are almost literally children: a fragile eighteen-year-old girl who knows little of life beyond her parents' tailor shop, and a twenty-one-year-old soldier killed shortly after a honeymoon in which they "walked endlessly, hand in hand, talking about their respective childhoods. They were in fact like two children who have elected each other as best friend. At night they slept soundly in each other's arms and woke in the morning with the ease of youth" (P 10). George and Helen Weiss, on the other hand, are childish rather than childlike and so more manipulative. His mother recognizes that her unambitious yet hedonistic son and his aging actress wife "each needed the protection of the other, that neither had grown up or would be able to grow old, and that their ardent and facile love-play would damage the child" (S 15).

> unknown land, silent grandmothers, purple flocked wallpaper, thunderous seascapes, heavy meats eaten at speed. Velvet curtains, the damask cloth laid over only half the table, the intricate siege architecture of the chair legs and cross bars. Nurse cheerful, English, unimpressed by anything except the quality of the food. the doleful atmosphere at mealtimes the child assumed to be universal, as if the faintly sour flavours of the buttermilk, rye bread, caraway seeds, cucumbers, had something penitential about them. She was named for her grandmother: Ruth. They got on well, each as silent as the other, brooding, obsessed with absent families, one real, the other between the covers of the same unending book. (S 12-3)

This sort of definition through external detail links and characterizes the protagonists' uneasy relationship with both past and present. In Kitty Maule's story, Brookner modifies her treatment so that the link is less obvious: there is nothing as forced as George Weiss's presentation of his mother's cutlery to his daughter Ruth when she sets up her first flat. Although Kitty clearly resembles her fragile mother Marie-Thérèse, and asserts her adopted Englishness through a rejection of her grandparents' attitude towards food, the real link between past and present for her is established through clothes, and represented by her grandmother Louise's anachronism due to changing fashions:

> But she went on, producing the crinoline ball dresses for which she became famous in the 1950s. She derived a contemptuous satisfaction from subduing the noisy exuberant debutantes who bought her dresses for their first season into some semblance of demureness. Only the advent of the miniskirt seriously disturbed her.

> London was suddenly filled with young and outrageous girls, like the rue Saint-Denis of her youth. The bales of satin, taffeta, and organza, the buckram for the hip padding and the whalebones for the strapless bodices of the ball dresses were suddenly obsolete. (P 11-2)

Each protagonist's fragmented adult identity results from the way she assimilates these anachronistic elements of her ancestors' lives. Ruth accepts the cutlery, takes over the dining room after her grandmother dies, and ultimately adopts the older Mrs. Weiss's role as caregiver; Kitty allows her grandparents to dress her and so can never present herself with the naturalness of Jane Fairchild or Pauline, or the gaudy manipulativeness of her neighbour Caroline. For Edith, the assimilation of the past is again more subtle. Her mother's obsolescence is defined more through behaviour than physical detail (though all three novels emphasize cluttered, airless rooms):

> Her strange mother, Rosa, that harsh disappointed woman, that former beauty who raged so unsuccessfully against her fate, deliberately, wilfully letting herself go, slatternly and scornful, mocking her pale silent daughter who slipped so modestly in and out of her aromatic bedroom, bringing the cups of coffee which her mother deliberately spilled. And shouting, "Too weak! Too weak! All of you, too weak!" Sighing for Vienna, which had known her young and brilliant, and not fat and slovenly, as she was now. And weeping for her dead sister, Anna.
> (H 48)

Edith is at least partly aware that she dresses herself

through an attempt to reimagine her life, and is conscious of her mother's influence on her work and her attitude towards men. Edith analyzes her relationship with her mother objectively and honestly in her unmailed letters to her lover David and her conversations with her friend Monica. In this novel, Brookner develops more fully and subtly the link between disappointed dreams and choice of fictions: Edith is more assertive than her thwarted mother in that she writes the romantic novels such women read.[24]

One of the most striking evocations of Edith's personality is a description which is partly detached from her perspective: "Dressed for dinner, in her Liberty silk smock, her long narrow feet tamed into plain kid pumps, Edith sought for ways of delaying the moment at which she would be forced to descend into the dining room and take her first meal in public" (H 24). Unlike Ruth or Kitty, Edith is not so consciously preoccupied with clothes, yet she defines herself and is defined through them: they represent her awkwardness and misplaced obsessions. The Liberty silk dress and the plain kid pumps do not signify

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[24] This use of romantic fiction is partly developed in the earlier novels. Ruth's mother repeatedly reads novels about "maidens in the nineteenth century, taking posts as governesses and losing their hearts to the rakish son who was also the black sheep of the family" (S 111), while Marie-Thérèse Maule moves "slowly about the little flat, watering her plants, reading the romantic novels to which she was addicted and which Kitty sometimes borrowed" (P 13).

the artlessness implied by Monica's "crèpe de Chine blouse hanging rather gauntly from her long neck and narrow shoulders" (H 31), the unconscious correctness of Madame de Bonneuil's plain gowns, or the manipulativeness behind the elaborate, assertive attire of the Puseys or Penelope Milne. All of these other people represent a level of confidence Edith only partly admires and never achieves. Their attitudes towards clothes are analogous to those of Hugh and Jill, Anthea, and even Helen in A Start in Life, but the contrast between such people and the protagonist informs Providence more explicitly; the delicate and scrupulously well-dressed Kitty feels inadequate beside the unaffected, inherently sexual charm of Maurice Bishop and Jane Fairchild, the undeluded disregard for fashion of her colleague Pauline, and the deliberate flamboyance of her neighbour Caroline.[25] Pauline says of Kitty that "she gives the impression of someone not quite at home here" (P 155), an assessment which could apply to the appearance of all three protagonists. They lack the sense of security

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[25] It could be argued that Jane Fairchild's obtrusive body language is a form of manipulation, or simply that it is out of place in the atmosphere of the seminar room. Her form of beauty, with its emphasis on wild hair and ample bosom, implies a sort of power echoed in the girls Kitty meets while travelling to France: an innate sensuality not dependent on the artifice of fashion. This instinctive skill manifests itself in Hotel du Lac's Jennifer; although she combines it with a consciousness of presentation, her blonde fleshiness is as much a part of her allure as her clothes, whereas the power of Mrs. Pusey lies entirely in materiality.

which would allow them to dress with greater ease, and the cunning which would allow them to attire themselves with obvious purpose. Consequently, like Edith in her Liberty silk dress, they are clothed through external influence (advice of others or choice of role models), and are simultaneously impeccably appropriate and clearly uncomfortable.[26] All three do experiment with deliberate dressing, yet Brookner carefully makes her descriptions of their altered appearance qualify whatever success they attain. In one instance, Edith seems to do battle with a singular ferocity.

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[26] In Latecomers, Brookner achieves an even more ironic distance from such a situation, and provides some hope for eventual integration. From the perspective of the parents, she describes a sheltered young woman's dissonance with her generation:

> However, Marianne could not stay at home doing nothing, although Hartmann secretly hoped that she might be allowed to. Carefully dressed in primrose yellow cashmere and grey flannel, she entered London University to read English and to become assimilated, as they thought, into her own age group. But she found her own age group attired in combat gear and engaged in protest against the teaching body. When she refused to join in or to listen to the heated propaganda that was being dispensed all around her she was regarded as something of a class enemy and left severely alone. After a few months she was so unhappy that she asked her father if she might leave. After all, she had no desire for a career: she was out of phase even in that. (98)

Unlike Ruth, Kitty or Edith, Marianne lacks the intellectual ability to carve a career for herself, but also lacks a real sense of dislocation. She marries a dull but reliable man, bears two children, and adopts a sort of earthy maternalism.

> Back in her room, she ran a bath until the bathroom was dense with steam. She brushed her hair furiously and left it hanging loose on her shoulders. She studied her crimson face in the glass, then walked to the wardrobe and took out the new blue silk dress that Monica had made her buy and which she had never worn. She disappeared into the bathroom with a bottle of scent, and poured the entire contents into the water. Heat and rebellion and extravagance served her appearance well. An altogether different creature sat down at her writing table and uncapped her pen. (H 155)

Significantly, this behaviour is a prelude not to some bold venture, but to Edith's habitual writing and dinner. The reactions of the Puseys indicate the apparent success of her attempt: Jennifer's approbation is the recognition of feminine wiles; Mrs. Pusey's disapproval concedes the threat these wiles imply. However, Brookner qualifies the attire chosen through the indication that Monica has suggested this more glamorous dress, and by revealing that once attired, Edith "paced up and down in her room, unwilling to exchange her silence for the pleasantries of the evening" (H 155). Silence, insularity and passivity are all characteristic of these women, and are exemplified by their attitudes towards clothing; even when most assertive, they dress not so much to be noticed as to be accepted while retaining their privacy.

This desire for acceptance is part of a more general desire for normality, for that application of order to chaos (or to the fragmentation influenced by their own background), which is represented by idealizations of

family life and Englishness. Such idealization finds its strongest expression in the role of romantic love in these novels. Ruth's relationships with men -- with the egotistical activist Richard Hirst, with her older, married lover Professor Duplessis, even with her short-lived husband Roddy -- enact her desire to abandon the fractured world of her parents and their housekeeper, Mrs. Cutler, in their apartment where life "was lived on the periphery; the main rooms no longer had any function" (S 39). Although occasionally intrigued by the faded glamour of this life, she longs for order and purpose, which is partly granted by her studies, yet she remains alone. Hence, she mostly expresses love when given the opportunity to do so through performing the conventionally wifely function of cooking.

All three protagonists display little interest in food unless they are feeding a man: Brookner makes the preparation of food an informing motif of their relations, much more than she does sexual attraction and activity. The man tends to consume while the woman watches; eating never becomes the shared activity a genuine ideal of domesticity would imply. Even Edith, whose relationship with David is primarily sexual, reflects after the crisis that drives her to the Hotel du Lac:

> Her own appetite was gone, quite gone. It hardly mattered what she ate these days, since she no longer mattered to herself. But those

> lovely meals that she had cooked for David, those heroic fry-ups, those blow-outs that he always seemed to require when they eventually got out of bed, at such awkward times, after midnight, sometimes, leaving it till the last minute before he raced back to Holland Park through the silent streets. "I never get this stuff at home," he would say lovingly, spearing a chip and inserting it into the yolk of a fried egg. Anxious, in her nightgown, she would watch him, a saucepan of baked beans to hand. Judging the state of his appetite with the eye of an expert, she would take another dish and ladle on to his plate a quivering mound of egg custard. (H 29)

This option of subservience becomes more comprehensible in the context of what these men represent. In A Start in Life and Providence, Brookner is quite explicit: Richard Hirst and Maurice Bishop stand for socially integrated, traditional values represented by an idealized faith in God which reflects the security of their position, while the atheism or agnosticism of the women reflects their fragmented existence. (Richard is the most self-absorbed and unsympathetic of the three and actually occupies little of the narrative, but serves a vital function: in Ruth's struggles with vice and virtue, he represents the latter to her, just as for a while, in an absurd reversal, Duplessis represents vice, or the man won through her externally imposed, more assertive persona. Ironically, Richard is selfish, while Duplessis insists on giving.) The security and integration such men represent indicate why the protagonists insist on domestic elements in their relationships, and why they cannot play the games women

like Anthea or Caroline suggest. Through Kitty's occasionally didactic perspective, Brookner defines the possibilities of reconciliation, of ordering existence, and of social acceptability which a man can represent:

> I do not want to be good at pleasing everybody. I do not even want to be such a good cook, she thought, turning the tap with full force on to a bowl rusted with the stains of her fresh tomato soup. I want to be totally unreasonable, totally unfair, very demanding, and very beautiful. I want to be part of a real family. I want my father to be there and to shoot things. I do not want my grandmother to tell me what to wear. I want to wear jeans and old sweaters belonging to my brother whom of course I do not have. I do not want to spend my life in this rotten little flat. I want wedding presents. I want to be half of a recognized couple. I want a future away from this place. I want Maurice. (P 62-3)

The contrast between Kitty and Maurice informs his appeal for her. This appeal is manifested through appearance: Kitty is "artfully put together," a passive qualification, while Maurice is "ineffably natural," an innate quality (P 23-4); he lacks her self-consciousness and artifice. However, his Englishness is the core of both his allure and his impermeability. In her fluctuating reflections on her life and desires, Kitty realizes that she rejects her French heritage and makes a photograph of her dead father "her image of England just as she had made Maurice her ideal of England" (P 164), yet elsewhere she admits that his smile "closed her out, while closing in something highly significant, something that

she did not know, something foreign to her" (P 27). In discussing the contrast between Englishness and foreignness in her novels, Brookner claims to differentiate "between damaged people and those who are undamaged,"[27] but says in another context, "I think my parents' lives were blighted -- and in some sense mine is too -- largely by this fact of being outside the natural order, being strangers in England, not quite understanding what was happening and being done to them."[28]

The allure of English stability becomes part of the dichotomy Edith confronts in Hotel du Lac. Edith is involved with rather than in pursuit of David, who is contrasted not so much with her as with Philip Neville. The attraction of both rests at least partly in the qualities implied by their situations and appearances: conventional qualities of Englishness. Though suggesting different periods, each represents a pragmatic approach to life (this replaces the Christianity of the earlier love objects) and, again, a stable, predictable existence. The contrast is largely in the approach to involvement each offers Edith; the men themselves are of similar social position and reflect not so much the unifying sort of tradition which Kitty sees in Maurice as the financial success ethic of the Thatcher era. Although her

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[27] Guppy 150.

[28] Haffenden 60-1.

philosophical concerns are not so explicitly outlined as in the earlier novels, Brookner's sense of social contemporaneity is strongest in Hotel du Lac. The self-absorbed mercantilism and materialism of her English characters, especially Mr. Neville and the Puseys, belong very much to the 1980s.[29] These qualities are contrasted with those of people who have both "old money" -- Monica and Madame de Bonneuil -- and cultural tradition. David's vapidity and childishness are indicated by the vagueness of his physical description (he is only "a tall, lean, foxy man" with "a long nose;" H 59), but he and his wife embody for Edith an English form of adulthood:

> ....a world of, among other things, investments, roof repairs, visitors for the weekend. And shall we take your car or mine? That was one of the remarks that she had overheard David make to his wife, and it had come to possess an almost totemic significance. Behind it she had glimpsed a series of assumptions with which they had both, equally, grown up. Launched young into adult enjoyment, fearless, privileged, spoilt, they retained a similar impatience with anything serious or disheartening, were quick, charming, enthusiastic, and forgetful. Depths were not easily reached with them and their

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[29] Patricia Waugh writes of Brookner's protagonists that "[their] moral strengths function as weakness in the patriarchal, consumerist, and acquisitive world of the post-1960s, and they themselves internalize this disparaging view of their qualities, resulting in a perpetually low self-esteem" (126). I would add that this perceived social inferiority always coincides and conflicts with a strong sense of identity and desire which contributes to their dislocation.

Patricia Waugh, Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern (London: Routledge, 1989).

kind. (H 174)[30]

On the other hand, Mr. Neville is a man of principle, and since Edith is never romantically attracted to him (although she admits the faultless logic of his pragmatic analyses) she can observe him more objectively.

> I suppose Mr. Neville is what was once called a man of quality. He conducts himself altogether gracefully. He is well turned out, she thought, surveying the panama hat and the linen jacket. He is even good-looking: an eighteenth-century face, fine, reticent, full-lipped, with a faint bluish gleam of beard just visible beneath the healthy skin. A heartless man, I think. Furiously intelligent. Suitable. Oh David, David. (H 97)

Edith's desire for integration and stability is complicated by the dilemma these men present. Like Ruth and Kitty, her life is also complicated by her perceptive yet ultimately ineffectual application of literature to life. Ruth and Kitty fail to realize that the lives of

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[30] Brookner contends "that the English are never serious -- they are flippant, complacent, ineffable, but never serious -- and this is maddening. The English think they're ineffable, so they are: it's self-referential, all the time" (Haffenden 61).

She is not alone in treating attraction based on a desire for reconstruction of identity and integration in another culture. For example, Pamela Chamcha in The Satanic Verses concedes that her husband Saladin is "not in love with her at all, but with that voice stinking of Yorkshire pudding and hearts of oak, that hearty, rubicund voice of ye olde dream-England which he so desperately wanted to inhabit. It had been a marriage of crossed purposes, each of them rushing towards the very thing from which the other was in flight" (180).

Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses (London: Viking, 1988).

the fictional heroines with whom they are intrigued have been ordered by an intelligence and related through a perspective quite different from their own, and quite different from Brookner's, although she never permits her protagonists her own level of awareness of this situation. Ruth comes closest to making the connection, through her various attempts to relate Balzac's novels to the course of her life, but when Kitty confesses "I lacked the information" (P 189), she could be speaking for herself and Edith. Both live by illusions because they lack the assertiveness to find things out or to assume readily that other people's definitions do not coincide with their own. Hence, Kitty cannot read the signals of Maurice's involvement with Jane Fairchild, and Edith misjudges virtually everything she impulsively interprets, from Monica's social position to the Puseys' ages.

Brookner amplifies the distance between her own awareness and her protagonists' ignorance through the contrast between her own approach to structure with that of her informing text. This differentiation is explicit in both earlier novels, although more carefully integrated in A Start in Life. The outcome of Eugénie's experience in Honoré de Balzac's Eugénie Grandet parallels Ruth's (and Brookner's[31]) but Brookner's organizing vision is not

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[31] Eugénie tries to order her disappointed life through traditional disciplines and religious devotion; Balzac's summarizing comments on her reflect the lot of

Balzac's, and Eugénie is not dislocated in the way Ruth is, as a comparison of introductory passages attests. Balzac begins by describing a house in a village, in such a way that the general and particular elements merge:[32] a specific place becomes a microcosm of France; hence, the actions of the characters becomes typical of human nature. Balzac has the broad world view of a trustworthy author-narrator. The carefully drawn context precedes introduction of its inhabitants:

> It is difficult to pass by these houses without stopping to wonder at the enormous beams, whose projecting ends, carved with grotesque figures, crown the ground floor of most of them with a black bas-relief. In some places the cross beams are protected by slates which draw blue lines across the crumbling walls of a house which is topped by a high-pitched roof, which has bowed and bent under the weight of years, and whose decayed shingles have been warped by the long-continued action of alternate

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many of Brookner's heroines and (to an extent) of Brookner herself:

> She is beautiful still, but with the beauty now of a woman of nearly forty. Her face is pale, composed, and calm, her voice sweet but rather serious in tone, her manner unaffected. She has all the dignity that is acquired by suffering, and the saintliness of a person who has kept her soul unspotted by contact with the world, but she has all an old maid's rigidity too, and the penurious ways and narrow views of a small country town....
>
> Such is the story of this woman, who is in the world but not of the world, who, made to be a magnificent wife and mother, has no husband, children or family. (247-48)

[32] Yet in merging, they retain their separate integrity; this is not the fluctuating impressionism of the description which opens Hotel du Lac.

> sunshine and rain. Worn blackened window-ledges catch the eye, whose delicate carving can scarcely be distinguished, and which seem too slight a support for the brown flower-pot full of pinks or roses, set there by some poor working woman. Further along the street one notes the doors, studded with huge nails, on which our ancestors recorded the passions of the age in hieroglyphs, once understood in every household, the meaning of which no one will ever again unravel. In these symbols a Protestant declared his faith, or a Leaguer cursed Henri IV, or some civic dignitary traced the insignia of his office, celebrating the long-forgotten glory of his temporary high estate as alderman or sheriff. The history of France lies written in these houses.[33]

Conversely, A Start in Life begins specifically with its protagonist, for Brookner as an author-narrator makes her specialization the individual, and concentrates more on the realm of her psychological delusion than her social environment. Yet Brookner subtly provides both Ruth's own internalization of her dilemma and a generalized external perspective of her. Thus she reveals Ruth's fluctuating transparency and opacity, as well as her limitations in self-awareness.

> Dr. Weiss also blamed her looks on literature. She aimed, instinctively, at a slightly old-fashioned effect. Her beautiful long red hair, her one undisciplined attribute, was compressed into a classical chignon, much needed to help out with the low relief of her features. Her body was narrow, delicate and had been found intriguing. A slight hesitance in her walk, which made her appear virginal, was in fact the legacy of an attack of meningitis, for which she had had to take sick leave, for the

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[33] Balzac, Eugénie Grandet 33-4.

> first, and, she intended, the last time in her professional life. Her appearance and character were exactly half-way between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; she was scrupulous, passionate, thoughtful, and given to self-analysis, but her colleagues thought her merely scrupulous, noting her neatness with approval, and assuming that her absent and slightly haggard expression denoted a tricky passage in Balzac. In fact she was extreme in her expectations and although those expectations had never been fulfilled she had learnt nothing. (S 8)

Most significantly, Brookner introduces Ruth's preoccupation with texts as guides, and her struggle to decide whether to accept a romantic or virtuous (European or English) approach to life: her "moral education" has "dictated, through the conflicting but in this one case united agencies of her mother and father, that she ponder the careers of Anna Karenina and Emma Bovary, but that she emulate those of David Copperfield and Little Dorrit" (S 7). Balzac presents Eugénie in the context of the external forces that shape and betray her; Brookner depicts the effects of those forces at work from the perspective of the protagonist who fails to recognize them. Also, whereas Eugénie retains her religious faith despite the vagaries of the world, Ruth lacks such a totalizing principle, although she is drawn to a systemic interpretation of life: she wants at once a reliable moral code and a sense of social integration.

> She had much to think about; that was what was so agreeable about kicking over the traces.

> That was what they did not tell you. It was no longer a question of whether she should or should not do such and such a thing but whether she would or would not. Yet she was aware of something out of joint. She would have preferred the books to have been right. The patient striving for virtue, the long term of trial, the ecstasy of earned reward: these things would never now be hers. She had deviated from the only path she knew and she had lost her understanding of the world before the fall. That there had been a fall, she was quite sure. She had only to look at her glowing self to be assured of that. And selfishness and greed and bad faith and extravagance had made her into this semblance of a confident and attractive woman, had performed the miracle of forcing her to grow up and deal competently with the world. People seemed to like her more this way. The concierge waved from his window to her, night and morning. There was indeed much to think about. (S 100)

Ironically, her creation of identity is more an acceptance of pragmatic external definition than a genuine adaptability or reconciliation, so that once made over by Hugh and Jill, this newly socially acceptable creature temporarily loses her ability to exist in solitude.

The relationship of literature and life in Providence is rendered with greater irony. In the compartmentalization of her life which seems to overcome all attempts at unity (or desire for it), Kitty detaches the contingencies of living from her area of study, the Romantic Tradition, and particularly the anomalous text she teaches, Constant's Adolphe. More than Edith or Ruth, Kitty not only concedes a division between her work and her private life, but between the nature of her work and

her concerns:

> "It's the only time I ever really forget myself," said Kitty. "Real life seems to impose such insuperable problems that it is quite restful to think about something entirely different and for which I take no responsibility. I did not cause the Romantic Movement, after all. It is not my fault. And no one is going to accuse me of perpetrating it on the rest of the world. It is like the war. I am not guilty. It happened, but I was not there. There is a marvellous freedom in that, don't you think?" (P 42)

What fascinates her about Adolphe is its structural emphasis on the power of words in their purity to convey unornamented information: "I am sorry to be so pedantic about words, but the potency of this particular story comes from the juxtaposition of extremely dry language and extremely heated, almost uncontrollable sentiments....[Even] if the despair is total, the control remains" (P 135).[34] While she might understand how the unsparing rationalism of Adolphe made his tale dissonant

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[34] Although (as Kitty herself realizes) the extreme rationalism of Adolphe breaks down towards the end of the narrative -- Adolphe carries out his betrayal, but does suffer remorse -- on the whole, the world of Constant's novel is the one Mr. Neville offers Edith in Hotel du Lac. In the world Constant describes, the ability to grasp the elements of existence clearly and separately is highly valued:

> Can it be because there is something doubtful in hope, and that when it withdraws, a man's career takes on a severer but more positive character? Because life seems more real when all illusions disappear, just as the peak and the rocks of a mountain are more clearly outlined against the horizon when the clouds dissolve. (16-17)

with an age of such tremendous vitality and fragmentation, she fails to see how her own perspective is that of Ellénore, his rejected yet misguidedly devoted mistress. Kitty misconstrues words, refusing to concede their several levels of meaning in reality, and overlooks the possibilities of chance (rather than providence or determinism) in an absurd universe. Hence, the word "love" means something quite different to the ineffable, secure Maurice and the serious, questing Kitty:

> He had sounded airy, almost euphoric. And he had called her "my love." Surely that meant something? Her endearments to him, which she had had to curtail because she knew that he would not welcome any show of fervour on her part, were always irrepressible and sincere. She thought that this was how the matter should be. Words meant such a very great deal to her -- and more than that, information conveyed by means of words -- that she wanted them to mean a great deal to everyone else. (P 117)

She not only lacks the information, she frequently lacks the capacity or the experience to know it exists.

In Hotel du Lac, Brookner does not relate her narrative to a specific informing text; she turns instead to the refunctioning of a generic text or cultural myth, in ways similar to those described by Jonathan Arac in his article on Christina Stead cited in my second chapter. In Elaine Showalter's consideration of the weight of the past on contemporary English women's fiction, she argues that,

> In trying to deal with this recognition of

> an ongoing struggle for personal and artistic autonomy, contemporary women writers have reasserted their continuity with the women of the past, through essays and criticism as well as through fiction. They use all the resources of the modern novel, including exploded chronology, dreams, myth, and stream-of-consciousness, but they have been profoundly influenced by nineteenth-century feminine literature, sometimes to the point of rewriting it.[35]

Brookner's own cultural displacement (like that of her protagonists) lessens the appeal of this tradition for her. By ancestry and education she lacks this sense of continuity, and in her first two novels draws on French novels of the early nineteenth century, incorporating them in the lives of Ruth and Kitty much as they entered hers: through study. In Hotel du Lac, she relies on elements of her background and experience in choosing to define Edith's dislocation through the social myths associated with popular romantic (rather than historically Romantic) fiction. The sense of dislocation is heightened through Edith's own adoption of a literary icon to define her public and private persona: she refunctions in her own life a popular conception of Virginia Woolf, although she is not much like the actual Virginia Woolf either as a person or a writer. Woolf is an ironic choice, since the popular conception of romantic-fiction-producers like Barbara Cartland and Danielle Steel seems to be of

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[35] Showalter 302.

opulently materialistic, aggressively feminine women, more like Iris Pusey or Penelope Milne. Yet Edith seems to recognize this discrepancy in choosing a pseudonym, Vanessa Wilde, at once evocative of the fiction she writes and structurally reflective of her private muse's name. Through balancing Edith's perspective with an externalized view of her, Brookner reveals how delusory and yet how potent these myths are. For example, her Virginia Woolf persona receives little approbation from others. When her agent reflects on her appearance -- "She really does look remarkably Bloomsburian, thought Harold, viewing the hollowed cheeks and the pursed lips" (H 27) -- he does so in the context of her impassioned yet inappropriate outburst at an exclusive restaurant. Elsewhere, Mr. Neville only sees unsuitable clothes and unhealthy looks in her affectation and urges her to get rid of her cardigan: "Whoever told you that you looked like Virginia Woolf did you a grave disservice, although I suppose you thought it was a compliment" (H 158). As well, her remarkable perceptiveness about the sort of fiction she writes does not arise from a critical and imaginative detachment from it. She claims to recreate a wish-fulfilling cultural myth for essentially passive, mild-mannered women:

> "And what is the most potent myth of all?" she went on, in the slightly ringing tones that cause him to make a discreet sign to the waiter

> for the bill. "The tortoise and the hare," she pronounced. "People love this one, especially women. Now you will notice, Harold, that in my books it is the mouse-like unassuming girl who gets the hero, while the scornful temptress with whom he has had a stormy affair retreats baffled from the fray, never to return. The tortoise wins every time. This is a lie, of course.... (H 27)

In fact, Edith writes for herself and at least partly misjudges her audience, assuming it to be mostly women like Marie-Thérèse Maule in Providence. Actually, the only women who are revealed as readers of her work are the supremely manipulative Iris Pusey and Penelope Milne, and Edith's mother, a thwarted manipulator (her counterpart, Helen Weiss in A Start in Life, also reads romances). The appeal of these books to such women seems to be their affirmation of a status quo in which this audience and its values can thrive. Yet Edith's very real connection to her fictional material underlines the ambiguity with which Brookner treats the relationship of fiction and reality in this novel.[36] As she confesses to David in one of the

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[36] According to Patricia Waugh,

> Edith Hope...is herself a writer of romances which are a plea for the acceptance of traditional courtship and marriage, but in her own life she reveals that these institutions cannot ultimately satisfy her own emotional and intellectual needs. Edith tends to blame herself, however, seeing her "innate disposition" as the source of her exclusion from wedded bliss. She feels unable, therefore, to identify with those women who seek to change the institutional basis of romance, and her writing seeks to contain protest, to protect her liberal view of the fatalistic working out of the human

remarkably honest letters which she would never have the daring to send:

> You thought, perhaps, like my publisher, and my agent, who are always trying to get me to bring my books up to date and make them sexier and more exciting, that I wrote my stories with that mixture of satire and cynical detachment that is thought to become the modern writer in this field. You were wrong. I believed every word I wrote. And I still do, even though I realize now that none of it can ever come true for me. (H 181)

This ambiguity differs from the more straightforward criticism of texts as guides in A Start in Life, or the ironic treatment of delusion in Providence. Edith is both condemned to dislocation by her belief in romantic love and granted a creative means of accepting her situation by writing romantic fiction. For her, love is less a sublimated desire for social integration (as it seems to be for Ruth and Kitty) than a grand emotional principle which allows her to confess to David in one of her unmailed letters, "You are the breath of life to me" (H 179). Unlike Ruth or Kitty, she is fully and always conscious that David does not reciprocate this sentiment, yet she persists in wanting to give it expression in her life and can do this through her affair (futile as it is)

> character. Brookner's novel as a whole, however, fails to suppress the contradictions inherent in this position. (139)

with him and through her admittedly contrived fiction.[37] Similarly, her adoption of the Virginia Woolf persona both exacerbates her loneliness and permits her access to an appreciation of privacy in which she is comfortably herself. She has a sense of home, if not a satisfactory social identity, and within her house and garden can attain the impressionistic sense of beauty and reality that characterize much of Woolf's writing: "Sometimes it was still light when she went to bed, but as the light was of such very great interest to her she would put down her book just to watch it fade, and change colour, and finally become opaque and uninteresting" (H 122).

The belief in and pursuit of love are to Edith what the desire for social integration and a systemic ordering of existence were for Ruth and Kitty. Brookner reveals the inadequacy of this principle through David himself, who clearly does not return Edith's passion, and through Edith's own desire for social normality, a desire which attracts her to both men she nearly marries. However, the pragmatism of Mr. Neville is no alternative, simply because Edith (unlike Ruth or Kitty) recognizes that dislocation is her identity, that in the clear separation of dissonant elements which would permit choice, she would

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[37] Brookner claims that "the lessons taught in great books are misleading. The commerce in life is rarely so simple and never so just" (Haffenden 66). This contention could apply just as easily to Edith's popular romantic fiction as to the novels that engage Ruth or Kitty.

have to sacrifice part of herself. Pure pragmatism is for her dangerous, as she realizes when she discovers her error in assuming Jennifer to be innocent, and decides to reject Mr. Neville.

> She saw her father's patient face. Think again, Edith. You have made a false equation.
>
> She sat down slowly on the bed, feeling a little faint. And if I were to marry him, she said to herself, knowing this, knowing too that he could so easily and so quickly look elsewhere, I should turn to stone, to paste: I should become part of his collection. But perhaps that is what he intended, she thought; that I should replace the item that was missing. And for me, those pleasures which are lightly called physical would remain where they have been for so long now, so long for me that they have become my lifetime. And I should lose the only life that I have even wanted, even though it was never mine to call my own. And Mr. Neville's smile, so unfailingly ambiguous, would always remind me of this.
> (H 183-4)

In commenting on the ending of Hotel du Lac, Brookner demonstrates how Edith accepts the terms of her dislocation: "'Coming home' would be coming back to domestic propriety: 'home' implies husband, children, order, regular meals, but 'Returning' is her more honest view of the situation. To that extent she does break through to a clearer vision."[38] I find the ending of Hotel du Lac more encouraging than the endings of the earlier novels, but also profoundly ambiguous and sad. Edith seems in subtler and more quotidian ways caught

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[38] Haffenden 71.

between the polarities of the Romantic Tradition which strike Kitty: "the ability to stagger on through a life exaggeratedly devoid of normal happiness, or the ability to admit a radiant fragmentation of the mind that would put one out of the struggle altogether" (P 35). Edith seems at the end to act with an authority quite unlike the bewilderment of Kitty or the passive stoicism of Ruth: "I should like you to get me a ticket on the next flight to London," she said, in a clear voice. "And I should like to send a telegram" (H 184). However, her decisive tearing up of the only letter she would have mailed to David is a clearer rejection of closure than in either other novel. She rejects stability based on bloodless pragmatism, even if she still must live in a social world defined more by this new rationalism than by genuinely unifying values, and so must remain dislocated. Perhaps she consigns herself to the possibility of heartbreak always accompanying any chance of happiness so that she can maintain her integrity. Yet to marry Mr. Neville would be, within the terms of Edith's principles, to consign herself to despair. According to Anita Brookner, "To remain pure a novel has to cast a moral puzzle."[39] To allow Edith to make a choice other than her ambiguous one would have been artistically dishonest.

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[39] Guppy 161.

CONCLUSION

> "Anybody ever tries to tell you how this most beautiful and most evil of planets is somehow homogeneous, composed only of reconcilable elements, that it all adds up, you get on the phone to the straitjacket tailor," he advised her, managing to give the impression of having visited more planets than one before coming to his conclusions. "The world is incompatible, just never forget it: gaga. Ghosts, Nazis, saints, all alive at the same time; in one spot, blissful happiness, while down the road, the inferno. You can't ask for a wilder place."
>
> Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses[1]

In John Berger's novel G., there is a description of the morning of May 9, 1915, which alternates passages about an Austrian banker in Trieste contemplating his sleeping wife's infidelities with passages about a fierce and bloody battle on the Western Front. Only one line draws these alternations together, the comment that "Sunday, 9 May, appears to have been a sunny day all over Europe."[2] The structure of this part of the novel seems to imply both simultaneity and dissonance, and a clear break between two levels or sorts of experience. In both the Trieste and the Auvers Ridge passages there is no narrative awareness of the world of the alternative passage, although both are concerned with motivation and control:

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[1] Rushdie, The Satanic Verses 295.

[2] John Berger, G. (1972; New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 253.

> You would always be welcome, she added with a smile that was too eager to be happy. No, he replied, if that is what I had in mind I would not have married you and you could have been my mistress.
>
> A handful of men advanced, no longer aware of who they were; if their mothers had called them by name they would not have answered. A little before the German lines they saw a ditch where they hoped to take cover. When they reached it, they discovered it was full of barbed wire. Some, in their desperation, threw themselves on the wire. The others, one by one, were shot and fell....
>
> Von Hartmann paused to watch Marika sleeping. She no longer slept with her hair loose. He was proud of being able to see the expression of his wife's face in repose for what it was. She looked greedy....
>
> On an adjacent sector of the front a number of survivors from the Irish Rifles were making their way back under heavy German fire to their own lines.[3]

Yet the structure of the book as a whole belies this neatness of separation; it evokes the way in which public and private life do not merely parallel each other: they are enmeshed together in the process of history. G. traces the career of a young adventurer in the early twentieth century, and gradually reveals the impossibility of separating social and personal experience. G.'s early seductions are remarkable for their immediacy and self-containment: "Her difference from him acts like a mirror. Whatever he notices or dwells upon in her, increases his

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[3] Berger, G. 254-55.

consciousness of himself, without his attention shifting from her."[4] Yet both his immediate social contexts and the political upheavals of the world around him gradually impinge more and more on his almost absolute individualism and amorality, so that by the end of the novel, pursued by political extremists who ultimately kill him, G. finds himself in the midst of a crowd and can only surrender to its will:

> [The] vanguard, most of whom were men, was very different and advanced like a wave continually breaking and reforming, murmuring and roaring. Everything about them appeared to be diverse -- their clothes, their ages, faces, headgear, physique, language....All that they had in common was their poverty and their destination.
>
> Once more G. was aware of the absurdity of the question: where should he go? Once again, in place of an answer, he could only think: further. He began to walk with the crowd in their direction.[5]

The novels I have examined are, on the whole, less structurally stylized than G., since they tend towards a modern realism which I consider especially useful for treating an internal sense of dislocation. G. analyses the conditions of dislocation (if not so much the state of dislocation itself) from an objective external perspective. Yet both G. and the novels I have chosen are essentially concerned with the same issues: the

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[4] Berger, G. 107.

[5] Berger, G. 307.

simultaneity of global and personal, or public and private, realities, the dissonance among them, and the problems in reconciling them. For the protagonists discussed in this dissertation, those problems arise from an awareness of fragmentation and dissonance. This awareness both gives them a greater vision than that of their contemporaries, and renders them often profoundly lonely. None rejects the validity or value of forms of social integration (such as marriage and family life). However, they can neither manage any sort of satisfactory escape nor remain in these relationships without feeling that their integrity is threatened by some inherent hypocrisy.

Analysis of dislocation could be extended to other sorts of texts, both of fiction and non-fiction, such as literature of political commitment or of cultural displacement (Lawrence, Lowry and Brookner all treat this phenomenon; I am thinking as well of postcolonial literature[6]). For example, both the protagonist's sense

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[6] In a note to Chapter Four, I mentioned Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. One of the protagonists of this novel, Saladin Chamcha, an Indian actor resident in England, is dislocated by his inability to reconcile his difference (perceived both internally and externally) with his ardent desire to be English. He only achieves a measure of integration by returning to India and learning to forgive his past. In V.S. Naipaul's A Bend in the River, Salim, an African Muslim of Indian descent, also confronts cultural conflict and a dislocating sense of difference. Towards the end of the novel, he is arrested. His reaction is remarkably similar to Somers's response to medical examination for military service in Kangaroo.

of the justice of a cause and his or her moral ambivalence about the means undertaken towards an end (and the discrepancy between personal and political desires) could be explored, not as separate issues, but as simultaneously existing aspects of an ultimately fragmented view of a fragmented world.[7]

Raymond Williams sought in his criticism an approach that would balance the importance of the individual and of the community in the pattern of life as a whole. Thus, in Culture and Society, although he recognizes that forms of dislocation can and do exist, he sees the possibility of their being transcended:

> The institutions of cynicism, of denial, and of division will perhaps only be thrown down when they are recognized for what they are: the deposits of practical failures to live.

Both experience a sense of violation, and any complicity with orders is only in the service of maintaining integrity. However, the conflict here is based not only on an individualistic mistrust of various forms of social organization, but also on cultural difference.

> I felt that nothing separated me from those men in the courtyard, that there was no reason why I shouldn't be treated like them. I resolved to maintain and assert my position as a man apart, a man waiting to be ransomed. The idea came to me that it was important for me not to be touched physically by a warder....I obeyed orders almost before they were given. (278)

V.S. Naipaul, A Bend in the River (1979; Penguin Books, 1988).

[7] This provides a way of exploring the split between personal reminiscence and political analysis in George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia, in which Orwell is caught between his belief in the justice of the Republican cause and his abhorrence of the factionalism within it.

> Failure--the jaunty hardness of the "outsider" -- will lose its present glamour, as the common experience moves in a different direction. Nobody will be proud any longer to be separate, to deny, or to ratify a personal failure in unconcern.[8]

This is, of course, a vision of the future rather than an assessment of contemporary global realities, and my emphasis in exploring dislocation has been more on the present than the future. Yet Williams describes several characteristics of dislocation as I have defined it, although I have not chosen to evaluate them as explicitly. The sort of internal dislocation I have explored reflects a world both fragmented and diverse. To those who experience it, such a world seems to necessitate both separation and denial. Yet the state of dislocation is not necessarily pessimistic: it recognizes that looking beyond private experience is crucial, and acknowledges that the world as a whole encompasses both terror and wonder, evil and compassion.

The difficulty of finding a consistent and comprehensive way of recognizing one's identity and immediate social contexts to be part of the immensity and diversity of the world is at the root of dislocation. The dislocated can be crushed like Lowry's Consul by the horror of discoveries which make private life impossible,

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[8] Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (1958; Penguin Books, in association with Chatto & Windus, 1977) 319.

or can journey forward like Louisa Pollit with an openness to new social contracts within the world as a whole, or can find like Edith Hope a means of organizing the universe and existing within it with dignity and grace. This crisis of perception which I have termed dislocation, in its many forms in this world of wonder and upheaval, will be a subject of our cultural texts and for analysis of them for a long time yet.

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