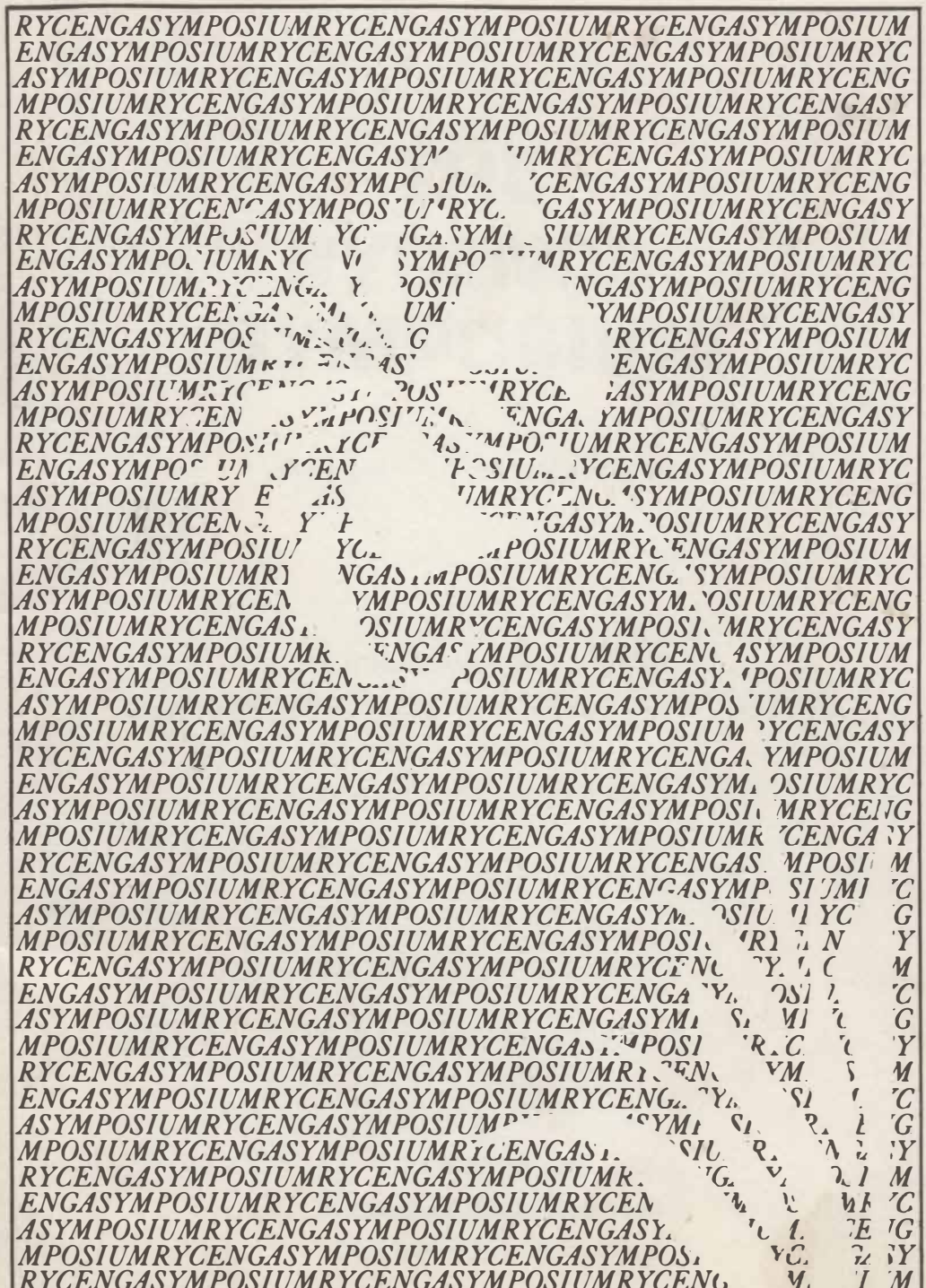
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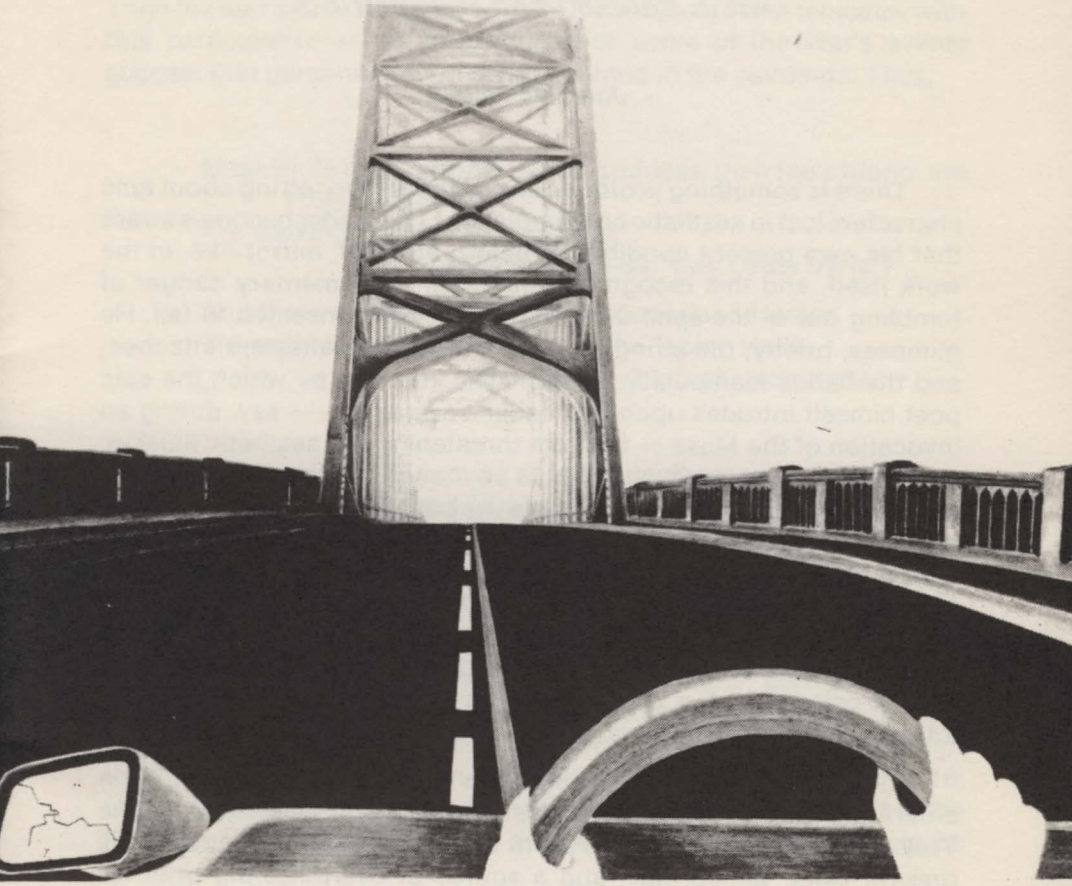

Janine Azzopardi

Pictorial Mimesis in Literary Frameworks: Art in *Aeneid* I and *Purgatorio* X

John McDonald

There is something profound and a little disconcerting about epic characters lost in aesthetic contemplation. The reader becomes aware that his own present condition is being reflected, mirror-like, in the work itself, and this recognition puts him in momentary danger of tumbling out of the spell under which he has consented to fall. He glimpses, briefly, the strings to which the marionettes are attached, and the hands manipulating them. (The conceits by which the epic poet himself intrudes upon his reader's awareness — say, during an invocation of the Muse — far from threatening the aesthetic illusion, actually contribute to it, and should be thought of as integral parts of the "show," if you will; indeed, Dante the poet and Dante the character are quite distinct entities.) The effect is perhaps less unsettling when the object of the characters' aesthetic attention is poetry — we share Dido's rapture (well, some of it) during Aeneas' tale because we listen along with her. But the reader cannot directly empathize with a hero's absorption in a work of art in some medium untranslatable to poetry: say, a painting, or a sculpture. This presents the poet with an interesting mimetic problem.

In the first book of the *Aeneid*, we find the hero, Aeneas, upon entering Carthage, confronted with pictorial representations of the Trojan War, the most decisive event in his own past, the cause of his present exilic wanderings, and a source of overpowering grief for himself and his people. Virgil allows the scene to present itself, without belaboring the intrinsic pathos of the situation. First, we are given Aeneas' verbal response:

> As he wept, he cried: 'Achates,
> where on this earth is there a land, a place
> that does not know our sorrows? Look! There is Priam!
> Here, too, the honorable finds its due

and there are tears for passing things; here, too,
things mortal touch the mind. Forget your fears;
this fame will bring you some deliverance.'
(*Aeneid*, I, 651-57; Mandelbaum trans.)

Then the narrator's voice enumerates the subjects of the tableaux, with this particularity — the descriptions of some of the War's events suggest that genuine motion is represented in the paintings. Thus,

Meanwhile to the shrine of their goddess, their foe's friend, the
Trojan women
Are walking to make intercession . . .
(*Aeneid*, I, 479-80; Day Lewis trans.)

And there was Achilles dragging poor dead Hector
Those three grim circuits round the Trojan walls.
(*Aeneid*, I, p. 20; Dickinson trans.)

As the episode which will occupy our attention here ends, Virgil tells us his protagonist is "fastened in a stare, astonished" (*Aeneid*, I, 699; Mandelbaum trans.).

We encounter a similar instance of aesthetic engagement by an epic character in Canto X of Dante's *Purgatorio*. At this point in their ascent, Dante and Virgil (the two poets are themselves characters in the work; this feature, like the art-within-art motif, prefigures more than a few self-conscious modernist authorial experiments and techniques) have just entered Purgatory proper. They pass through the Gate of Purgatory and a tortuous "needle's eye" (*Purgatorio*, X, 16; Ciardi trans.) before coming to the cliff-face upon which the art of the First Cornice is presented. The aesthetic experience deserves to be quoted in its entirety.

Our feet had not yet moved a step up there,
when I made out that all the inner cliff
which rose without a foothold anywhere
was white and flawless marble and adorned
with sculptured scenes beside which Polyclitus',
and even Nature's, best works would be scorned.
The Angel who came down from God to man

with the decree of peace the centuries wept for,
which opened Heaven, ending the long ban,
stood carved before us with such force and love,
with such a living grace in his whole pose,
the image seemed about to speak and move.
One could have sworn an *Ave!* sounded clear,
for shewho turned the key that opened to us
the Perfect Love, was also figured there;
and all her flowing gesture seemed to say —
impressed there as distinctly as a seal
impresses wax — *Ecce ancilla Dei.*
'Do not give all your thought to this one part,'
my gentle Master said. (I was then standing
on that side of him where man has his heart.)
I turned my eyes a little to the right
(the side on which he stood who had thus urged me)
and there, at Mary's back, carved in that white
and flawless wall, I saw another scene,
and I crossed in front of Virgil and drew near it
the better to make out what it might mean.
Emerging from the marble were portrayed
the cart, the oxen and the Ark from which
the sacrilegious learned to be afraid.
Seven choirs moved there before it, bringing
confusion to my senses; with my hearing
I thought 'no,' with my sight, 'Yes, they are singing.'
In the same way, the smokes the censers poured
were shown so faithfully that eyes and nose
disputed yes and no in happy discord.
And there before the Holy Vessel, dancing
with girt-up robes, the humble Psalmist moved,
less than a king, and more, in his wild prancing.
Facing him, portrayed with a vexed frown
of mingled sadness and contempt, Michal
stood at a palace window looking down.
I moved a little further to the right,
the better to observe another panel
that shone at Michal's back, dazzling and white.
Here was portrayed from glorious history
that Roman Prince whose passion to do justice
moved Gregory to his great victory.
I speak of Trajan, blessed Emperor.

And at his bridle was portrayed a widow
in tears wept from the long grief of the poor.
Filling the space on both sides and behind
were mounted knights on whose great golden banners
the eagles seemed to flutter in the wind.
The widow knelt and by consummate art
appeared to say: 'My Lord, avenge my son
for he is slain and I am sick at heart.'
And he to answer: 'Justice shall be done;
wait only my return.' And she: 'My Lord' —
speaking from the great grief that urged her on —
'If you do not?' And he: 'Who wears my crown
will right your wrong.' And she: 'Can the good deed
another does grace him who shuns his own?'
And he, then: 'Be assured. For it is clear
this duty is to do before I go.
Justice halts me, pity binds me here.'
The Maker who can never see or know
anything new, produced that 'visible speaking';
new to us, because not found below.
As I stood relishing the art and thought
of those high images — dear in themselves,
and dearer yet as works His hand had wrought —
the poet said . . .

(*Purgatorio*, X, 25-97; Ciardi trans.)

Both these epic aesthetic encounters raise some interesting thematic and artistic questions.

Dante follows his literary forebear in placing this episode in a similar context within his overall poetic structure. The two experiences occur at junctures where the heroes exhibit new zeal and commitment to their missions; these turning points also transpire after periods of great trial. Carthage, we are told, is where Aeneas "first dared to hope for / Salvation and believe that at last his luck was turning" (*Aeneid*, I, 452-53; Day Lewis trans.). In Dante, this idea is repeated and intensified. Of the Gate of Purgatory, the poet writes:

I knew by the sound that it had closed again;
and had I looked back, to what water ever
could I have gone to wash away that stain?

(*Purgatorio*, X, 3-6; Ciardi trans.)

Both heroes, then, undergo their experiences in an anticipatory frame of mind, but Dante's gaze forward — with its allusion to the Orpheus myth — is the more exquisite and concentrated of the two.

The principals, at this point in each of the epics, have just emerged from Infernos of one sort or another: literally, of course, in Dante, and figuratively (Troy's flames and ashes, the hellish storm of Aeolus) in the *Aeneid*. There is a parallel structural progression at work here; to employ Professor Frye's schema, it is a development from the ironic mode, in which "we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration or absurdity," to the high mimetic mode, in which the hero "has authority, passions and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and the order of nature . . . [T]his is the hero . . . of most epic and tragedy."[1] Dante's *Inferno* is a succession of scenes of "bondage, frustration or absurdity," and we should not make the mistake of excluding the character Dante from this condition, despite his great "powers of expression": one need only think of Dante being forced back down the Mount of Joy in *Inferno* I to realize that the reader is indeed "looking down" on the scene (even if, as Frye writes, "the reader feels that he is or might be in the same situation"[2]). Aeneas' behavior during the storm is seen from the same vantage point.

This movement from the ironic to the high mimetic mode, and this new mood of expectancy exhibited by the heroes, contains an allegory of birth, or, rather, re-birth. The formula or sequence of the allegory is this: hell, water, eruption, new purpose (or life). Virgil establishes this sequence (I mean for our purposes; no doubt it antedates him as a literary archetype) and Dante repeats it, but it is curious to note how naturally it fits into Virgil's plot, and how artificially Dante strains to retain the particulars of the sequence. The disturbance on the water is an integral part of the action which precedes Aeneas' aesthetic experience in *Aeneid* I. In *Purgatorio* X, a physical disturbance does occur prior to the hero's encounter with the divine art, but it is only through an apt and striking image that the eruption so necessary to the birth-sequence is linked to water:

> We climbed the rock along the narrow crack
> through which a zig-zag pathway pitched and slid
> just as a wave swells full and then falls back.
> (*Purgatorio*, X, 7-9; Ciardi trans.)

The "artificiality" resides in the fact that water is not a part of Dante's immediate *mise-en-scene*. The notion of water is introduced by the comparatively contrived technique of the epic simile, which merely illustrates that Dante felt the birth-sequence to be essential. What these contextual, structural, and allegorical similarities indicate is that the aesthetic experiences take place at crucial junctures in each epic: just at that point when the protagonists have been in some sense re-born, are full of hope and expectancy, and have begun to put on their high mimetic (that is, genuinely heroic) selves.

Both aesthetic encounters are characterized by a sense of isolation: Dante and Virgil are alone by the cliff-face, and (even more like men lost in front of a picture at a museum) Aeneas and his man Achates view the paintings while enveloped in an alienating mist. They are confronted with quite dissimilar objects, though, and their reactions differ greatly.

The subject matter in the tableaux which Aeneas comes across has been etched in his mind through personal experience; the form is one with which he is familiar. His response is openly emotional: "Aeneas stood; wept: — Oh, Achates, is there anywhere, / Anyplace left on earth unhaunted by our sorrows?" (*Aeneid*, I, 459-61; Day Lewis trans.). He seems to temporarily forfeit his intellectual capacities: he is "fastened in a stare, astonished" (*Aeneid*, I, 699; Mandelbaum trans.), or "rooted in a deep trance of attention" (*Aeneid*, I, 495; Day Lewis trans.); both renderings convey a sense of stasis, a momentary lack of freedom. The fear and pity aroused by the content of the objects rob Aeneas of his intellectual and aesthetic autonomy. His *katharsis* is emotionalized (and somewhat trivialized) by the fact that some of the pity he feels is for himself.

Dante, on the other hand, views representations of legendary events he has previously only read or heard about (or seen in some visual portrayal), depicted (the poet tells us) in a manner which has never been encountered, a supernaturally perfect technique. During the aesthetic experience, he retains his powers of analysis: " . . . I stood relishing the art and thought / of those high images" (*Purgatorio*, X, 94-95; Ciardi trans.). Dante does not lose himself in the spectacle, as Aeneas does; were he to do so, Virgil is there to nudge him: " Do not give all your thoughts to this one part' " (*Purgatorio*, X, 43; Ciardi trans.) (and, again, we are reminded that Dante is thinking).

It was noted earlier that the two poets describe the objects of their heroes' aesthetic contemplation as if those objects' makers were capable of imbuing their creations with the sense of motion. Now, the

artist working in a static visual medium cannot represent movement; he may, through various techniques, suggest it, but the close mimesis available to, say, a filmmaker, in showing us a marching army or a bird in flight, is beyond the scope of the painter's or sculptor's art. Poets are not quite so limited: words, like steps or wing-beats, follow in succession, and thus may be used to evoke sensations of movement or even flight. Consider

> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,
> Printing their proud hoofs i' th' receiving earth.
> (Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Prol., 26-27)

or

> Streets that follow like a tedious argument
> Of insidious intent
> To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
> (T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")

or

> At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
> Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
> Downward to darkness, on extended wings.
> (Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning")

Each of these produces a picture of motion in the mind's eye primarily through the manipulation of cadence. There is much of this, of course, in our two epics (even in translation), whose plots are filled with movement. In the very Canto of *Purgatorio* under discussion, for instance, one may be excused a momentary feeling of empathic dizziness as he reads:

> We climbed the rock along a narrow crack
> through which a zig-zag pathway pitched and slid

just as a wave swells full and then falls back.
(*Purgatorio*, X, 7-9; Ciardi trans.)

We expect poetry to do this to us. However, we may be surprised at what we find when we move from these suggestions of physical motion to the poetic descriptions of the static aesthetic subjects found in the Hall of Juno at Carthage and in the First Cornice of Purgatory. These, too, seem to contain motion:

His horses drag him on as he still clings
fast to his empty chariot, clasping
the reins. His neck, his hair, trail on the ground,
and his inverted spear inscribes the dust.
(*Aeneid*, I, 674-77; Mandelbaum trans.)

And there before the Holy Vessel, dancing
with girt-up robes, the humble Psalmist moved,
less than a king, and more, in his wild prancing.
(*Purgatorio*, X, 61-63; Ciardi trans.)

Clearly, to ascribe movement to the figures in the Carthage paintings is a rhetorical device, an artful exaggeration whose function is to shed light on the quality of Aeneas' aesthetic reaction. Virgil tells us that the pictures are "inert" (*Aeneid*, I, p. 19; Dickinson trans.) or "insubstantial" (*Aeneid*, I, 464; Day Lewis trans.), "mere images" (*Aeneid*, I, 469; Fitzgerald trans.) (or, as one translation endearingly has it, "he feeds / his soul on what is nothing but a picture" [*Aeneid*, I, 658-59; Mandelbaum trans.]). We see, at once, that which the hero sees *and* the hero seeing it — Aeneas "reliving the whole scene / In the depths of his soul" (*Aeneid*, I, p. 19; Dickinson trans.). Aeneas, then, "gives" motion to these static objects in an act of sympathetic imagination.[3]

Can we say the same for the art of *Purgatorio* X, those "sculptured scenes besides which Polyclitus', / and even Nature's, best works would be scorned" (*Purgatorio*, X, 28-30; Ciardi trans.), those marvels of "visible speaking" (*Purgatorio*, X, 37; Ciardi trans.) with their array of multi-sensory effects which go well beyond anything Aeneas imagines? Does Dante "give" them these attributes in the same subjective way as Aeneas? Yes, these, too, are rhetorically exaggerated descriptions.

Witness the poet qualifying his relation of these wonders:

> The image *seemed about to* speak and move
> One could have sworn an *Ave!* sounded . . .
> . . . her flowing gesture *seemed* to say . . .
> . . . the eagles *seemed* to flutter in the wind . . .
> The Widow knelt and by consummate art *appeared* to say . . .
> (*Purgatorio*, X, 36, 37, 40, 78; Ciardi trans.; emphasis mine)

As in *Aeneid* I, the reader "sees" the aesthetic object through the eyes of the character, with consequent coloring of the object. Yet it was noted earlier that Dante's response to the visual stimuli was quite the opposite of Aeneas'; not for him the pathos of "many tears and sighs" (*Aeneid*, I, 658; Mandelbaum trans.). The "distortion" in the retelling of the aesthetic object in *Aeneid* I reflected back on the observer, Aeneas, and thus functioned as characterization. Dante reverses this, achieving a brilliant effect: the rhetorically exaggerated claims for the bas-reliefs do not shed any light on the character of the beholder (Dante's response has been intellectually and aesthetically pure) but on the artist, or God. The works possess (literally) incredible qualities — and yet are poetically and dramatically "true" in their specific hieratic context — precisely because they are "works His hand wrought" (*Purgatorio*, X, 96; Ciardi trans.). By contrast, the reader of *Aeneid* I must willingly suspend his disbelief during a presentment which both he and the poet know to be Aeneas' subjectivist fiction.[4] The difference between Dante's exaggerations and Virgil's is the dissimilar uses to which they are put: Dante is evoking and referring to the mysteries of faith, whereas Virgil is employing a technique of characterization.

These divergent authorial motivations are analogous to the two different intended effects of, respectively, the bas-reliefs and the War paintings. Just as Dante has a primarily didactic or evangelical purpose for making the claims he does concerning God's artistry, that art itself is meant more than anything else to inspire emulation (specifically, to move the formerly proud to humility). Virgil's rhetoric about the paintings, we saw, is a story-teller's device; just so, the paintings themselves are meant to evoke empathy, pathos, even (given the right audience) bathos. The contrast is between the representation of icons and that of sympathetic and involving "action," and between the function of art in sacred and secular contexts. This would account for the different motivations for the embellished descriptions of the

aesthetic objects, for the dissimilar forms and subject matters, and for the divergent responses of Dante and Aeneas.

Professor Gombrich, in his essay on the "Greek Revolution" in the visual arts, suggests that when aesthetic formulas are adapted "to the new demands of imperial ceremony and divine revelation . . . [t]he image [is] no longer asked questions of how and when; it [is] reduced to the what of impersonal recital."[5] In other words, it would be irrelevant to ask "how and when" questions of the relief in which the angel of the Lord appears to Mary: the purpose of this object is to inspire like humility in the observer, not to present "an imaginative account of a past event,"[6] which is precisely the purpose of the Carthaginian paintings, the "how and when" of which are well-noted by Aeneas (compare the relative silence of Dante and Virgil while viewing the reliefs). The Dantean image, the image of "imperial ceremony and divine revelation," "no longer waits to be wooed and interpreted but seeks to awe [the beholder] into submission."[7] To illustrate that this idea is functioning in our two scenes, let us simply compare the settings in which the poets place their aesthetic objects: the War paintings are in a temple in which "the handiwork / of rival artists" (*Aeneid*, I, 645-66; Mandelbaum trans.) is displayed, suggesting that the eye of the beholder is being "wooed," whereas God's artistry has for a backdrop the austere and unavoidable "inner cliff / which rose without a foothold anywhere / [and] was white and flawless marble" (*Purgatorio*, X, 26-28; Ciardi trans.). Again, the contrast is between the presentation of secular and iconic art.

This element of the sacred in Dante's work is also relevant to a literary explanation of the differences in form, function, and effect which the two separate groups of aesthetic objects exhibit. The two episodes occur within generically different literary frameworks. Dante's intense resistance to the temptation of turning to see the closed Gate of Purgatory — the strict necessity for constant forward-looking — was noted above; this is one of many indications that Dante's tale falls into that relatively rare category of archetype, the purgatorial ascent. The story of Aeneas, whose backward-glancing reflections occupy two entire books, is one of exile, akin to the wanderings of the displaced Hebrews or those of Alonso's party in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. So it is also considerations of genre which necessitate the didactic nature of the art in *Purgatorio* X and the non-didactic, emotionally cathartic tone of the paintings in *Aeneid* I.

What are the results, within the epics themselves, of the two heroes' aesthetic experiences? Dante goes on to greater repentance and greater assurance. Aeneas (in the short run, at least), temporarily joyful at being reunited with the rest of his men, will find Carthage a disastrously false haven.[8]

The art Dante envisions in *Purgatorio* X (Gombrich's art of "imperial ceremony and divine revelation") is clearly meant as a means to an end, not as an aesthetic end in itself; it is a didactic signpost to salvation. With this idea, and the idea of Aeneas' fate in mind, I leave my readers with one unanswered (perhaps unanswerable) question: To a world-view which holds that spiritual salvation is life's only worthwhile end (which is to say, a Christian world-view — specifically, Dante's world-view), does the *Aeneid* imply (unintentionally, of course) that pagan or pre-Christian art, being an end in itself, is, ultimately, a cheat, a "colossal wreck" around which "boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away"?

Endnotes

[1]Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p. 34.

[2]Frye, p. 34.

[3]Virgil wisely avoids any further pathos which would have accrued to this scene had the "distorted" view of the paintings — i.e., that they contain motion — been articulated by Aeneas in the manner of Books II and III. The subjective quality of the description (the sense we get of seeing through Aeneas' eyes) is all the more powerful and tasteful for having been presented in the poet's voice.

[4]This is not to suggest, however, any lapse in artistic decorum on Virgil's part; there is no generic necessity for the description of the Carthage paintings to be more "naturalistic" than it is on the grounds that Aeneas views them on Earth — this would be to confuse genre with setting. There are more fantastic occurrences in realistic settings in the *Aeneid* than pictures which seem to move.

[5]E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1960), p. 144.

[6]Gombrich, p. 145.

[7]Gombrich, p. 145.

[8]And ultimately, I would argue (along lines suggested by the critic W.R. Johnson), Aeneas finds the task of founding Rome and even existence itself to be "an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with," as Ecclesiastes says: "all is vanity and a striving after wind." But this is, alas, grist for other mills.

Kate Dardine

Ice

October's early frost silvers the goldenrod
And the tall, pale weeds whisper
Softly brush the ice,
Quietly conspire with the brittle chill of autumn.
The new ice creeps between cold stones
And frames the black mud with delicate panes —
  shattered,
The fragile shards pierce and cut,
In the shallows, the river ice rolls and sighs as the
Dark water slips beneath.
Thick blocks, these, portents of a deeper,
Solemn cold.
And the land fills with the anguish
Of slow imprisonment, and the inevitable waiting.
Only the release never comes
In the mountain folds where the ice lies deep and solid,
Layer upon layer.
This is the ice, the blue ancient ice
Sprung from earth's first winter,
Born of a cold that ever creeps and retreats,
Creeps and retreats until the grinding, relentless
Ice covers the land,
Cools the earth's burning core to a lifeless cinder
And the seas are sucked dry from their barren beds.
Yet still softly, swiftly the dark waters flow,
Hush the silvered weed-stalks that border the ditch
And the new ice creeps,
Creeps between the cold stones.

Cindy Weiland

Nancy Griebell

Anna Fabiano

Goodday's Godsend

Tricia Dunn

In the spring before the Black Death, it was a merry England; the year 1348 loved its middle class, its mumming troupes, and its recorder music. But doom loomed nigh . . . Still, frolic endured, and passion lingered like pigs in the poke. Cede to another plague? Fie upon it! Yea, most souls knew full well the air of contagion among them, but they bit their thumbs at it. "Set all at naught," insisted the climate. "Just eat, drink, and sink into the soft green hills. Untroubled."

"Whatever you are looking for, you will get it cheaper over here, sister!"

Hebe St. Honore felt lost amid the noise and confusion of the market until she heard the cotter, the freeman, beckon to her.

"Over here!"

His voice made her strangely giddy as if she, upon that instant, found her way into a slow-moving dream. Nervously she shook her head as she swirled betwixt fainting and crying. "Pacem, pacem." Peace, peace, she tried to soothe her pounding heart.

"Cum bonae voluntatis!" And good will, the man lustily enjoined.

Hebe shut her eyes and put her hands to her chest. How comes it I fear yet seek him, she thought.

"Why do you do that? Are you at all well?" he called.

Hebe's lids flew open; she poured over his strong build, his shaggy, black-paged hair, his amiable smile and halo of red. Yes, halo of red, dear God.

Roger Goodday thought he knew the white, cleanly woman. "No, never met her," though she took away his breath as in the meeting of first loves. "Over there! Right there!" This time she lifted her gray eyes, and again, he thought her wondrously familiar. A Greek statue he had seen once? Yes, yes. Heart smitten with her pale poise, he blushed, hotly. In order to shake off the fervor, he busied himself, securing feed for his caged robinets and linnets. When he looked up, she had already faded somewhere within the bargaining traffic. "Oh curse!" He banged his fist down hard upon the wood table.

She reappeared, to his delight, in front of him. She spoke nothing at first. Then, "Vivificantem," she uttered.

"You bestow too much honor, my lady. I can do many things, but I am no 'lifegiver.' "

"You know your Latin, sir."

"Some," he beamed. "But tell me first, what is your —" He abruptly stopped and stared at the marriage band on her hand.

"My name? Why, sir, I know who *you* are."

"Well now, who am I?" He watched her quizzically.

"The . . . philosopher," she said meekly.

"Say — ?" Is she touched? No less a beauty for it. He doffed his cap and raked a hand over his locks. "Well meant, I hope, thanks. No, hah, I am Roger Goodday. Jack-of-all-Trades."

"Oh." She studies his face, seeming not to have listened.

"And . . . who are *you*?" he asked, soft-spokenly. "No, wait. The . . . goddess?" She frowned. Really! He was only being playful. Really, with another man's wife . . . he winced.

"My name is Hebe St. Honore."

"Ave," he nodded. "I am honored." Still, he could hardly refrain from winking, and then adding, "Tis a pity, though; You've come to the wrong man. No lifegiving potions or words of wisdom, I'm afraid. Would you have a nightingale?" He put one finger through a wicker cage and stroked the breast of a tiny bird.

She seemed to hurriedly talk of sundry matters: "My husband requests potion for a flea-infested blanket."

Before Goodday could answer, she continued in a high-strung voice, "There is going to be a plague."

Goodday rubbed his chin, hardly anticipating such a comment. "Well, that may be, who is to say? It would not be the first one we have had."

She noticeably stiffened.

"Don't worry," he reassured, and since she seemed now to cling to his every word, he again said, "Don't worry."

"Look. Do you see?" she pointed to a sewer packed with filthy rodents. "Rats, all over; please, you must help —"

"I said not to worry yourself." She is indeed mad, he thought, grinning. Mad and lovely — how well that went together. Very well. He tried to explain to Hebe that if indeed a plague should choose to reside in the town of Calix, only God could stop it, so "Pray to God, not *me*."

Suddenly she clutched both of his hands, so that their fingers entwined. "There *will* be a plague. Soon. You are the one to help me stop it!"

Goodday's heart leapt, not for her cry, more for her touch. But the curious eyes of nearby townsfolk scrutinized the pair:

"Why is that high-life woman holding hands with that peasant?"

"Never mind, you! Times are different. No distinction of class, no more nobles or armor-clad knights. We are all together."

"I beg to differ, John. See, she wears a band! She deplores being wedded to an old grisard, so she' swanting to walk out with a handsome young swain. See how she has a hold on the sorry Jack."

"I see. I see that Jack's not so sorry . . ."

Hebe and Goodday became mindful that they were strangers to each other and dropped their clasp. In embarrassed silence, Goodday took a ringdove out of its cage to perch on his finger. With his other hand, he reached under the table and brought out two small, rag-covered containers. "Take these, and place them in the room; one holds the juice of raw onions and the other holds a bag dipped in honey."

She looked puzzled at him.

"To rid the fleas," he said dully. He was in a grump because of the previous gossipmongers.

"Oh yes, you are worthy of much thank." She offered a scrip of shillings but he waved them away.

"Not e'en half a mark. I should be more content," he looked her full in the face," "with your smile."

The populace, it seemed, buzzed louder than ever, scolding Goodday for being so forward. But Hebe's face lit up blithely for him, albeitly modestly at a sideglance.

"We will talk again sir?" she asked in a tiny voice.

"May be," he swallowed.

"Good then. And look to the 'Hostiam puram.' "

What? He raised one eyebrow as she walked swiftly away. Pure offering? But she is mad! And lovely.

"Everything is setting right," Hebe ascertained while treading the mired road back to her manor. "Salvi!" she breathed. Saved. Last night her vision showed Calix running aground with plague, the worst plague ever. When she awoke, she knew to go into town for The Red-Haloed Philosopher. Thanks to the Lord, Luther posed no threat to her trip. He had found a reason to send her off to mart as it were. . . .

"Heeeeee-Beeeeee!" he had yipped, drilling her to alertness.

Braving the scowls of her aged husband, she had drifted to his bed chamber.

"This blanket is thick with fleas!" he had raged.

Hebe. bewildered, had replied, "Already, sir?" Was this a mark of the epidemic she foresaw?

"What? What does it matter, *already*? They are here. Get rid of them!"

"How, pray?"

Old Luther knit his brow. Jaundiced eyes bulged at her pale demeanor. He snapped, "It is a wife's duty to know such things!"

Hebe's heart sunk in dismay at her own ineptness. Bowing her head, she lapsed into muteness.

"Well," he said, "I suppose your youth excuses you from being wise." Youth? Though she was scarce past twenty and four, Hebe knew the world considered such a one middle-aged.

"Lose no time in going to the market, Hebe. Purchase a remedy for these bugs. Hence, go!"

The market square . . . where merchants set up stalls in town, twice a week, to peddle their goods. Hebe had sought to suppress a fragile smile as she fancied meandering through rows of enchanting feathers and sweeping May branches (looking for The Philosopher, of course), breathing in scents from the east, clapping for dancing monkeys (and looking for this Philosopher), and indeed, she saw it clearly. Another vision.

"Are you so incoherent with joy at the prospect?" Luther demanded, agitated by her swimming eyes.

"Oh certainly not, benevolent Luther. It grieves me to leave your side." Hebe had answered truthfully; she did not really want to leave him since he had fallen to such illness upon a sudden, over and above his usual ailments. "Be that as it may, I want to leave many a time, especially when he corrects me harshly — in front of the servant," she wavered to herself, the reconsidered. "I must deserve it somehow." She hugged her cloak.

Luther taunted, "Remember, even after I die, you will take the order of widowhood endorsed by the church. Hah, but this marriage is a mockery, a burden I carry from my period of debt!"

Hebe had bit her lip, trying to ignore his rantings. After all, if it were not for Luther St. Honore, convent life would have been her destiny; Abbess Drusa would have presided over her every move. Restored to good spirits, she had flitted out of the manor. Such a proud place she lived at! Courtyards and gardens, carefully planted trees, and white carved beams. What wealth. Sinful. "Non sum digna, Domine." I am not worthy, Lord.

"Oh, please it you to water them courteously, Amice," she had

admonished gently to a cherubic young girl tending newly bloomed gilly flowers. Somehow, when aurora had broken in all its gloriole, Hebe found it easy to dismiss nocturnal dread and skip merrily to market. . . .

And it happened. She had found him. Foreboding returned, and yet, "He and I will do some good, I know it," she concluded. She walked back home, resolving to speak to Sir Goodday again in the next week. Singing a psalm softly under her breath, she stopped to tie flowers to her sleeves. She often took delight in this kind of frippery, though no one could say she did not remain honestly clad.

"Do you have to walk far to your house?" a low voice tickled her ear. Hebe kept her eyelids down, remembering not to bat her lashes like her neighbor, Lady Agnes de Bridge, who always reared her head up horribly, like a lion, to smile at buffoons. (Then again, Lady Agnes gave generously to the services. For all her heavy jewelry, the matron had morals, she admitted.) Hebe continued to peer at her wooden tray where sat two containers of flea remedy and her linen-clothed shillings. Out of the corner of her timid gray eyes she could discern — Heaven forbid! The unkempt Roger Goodday.

"What are you doing here?" she spun around. "This part was not to be. I did not see this!"

Goodday laughed, at ease. "I startled you."

But of course you did!" Hebe pulled the hood of her cloak around her sleek, thin head and glided away.

Just as Goodday began to take in her curiously plaited hair, admiring the wovenness, and the soft wisps at the nape of her neck, she darted off.

"Well that is insolence! I am faring like a sorry piper here all by myself, Hebe St. Honore!"

He saw that the highway, full of holes, caused Hebe to mince her steps. She looked back at him, and he folded his arms in mock anger. Then, something happened. She lost her balance and fell sore in the mud.

"Oh Domine!" she glared up at the sky.

Goodday, quaking at the knees for her vexed countenance and ivory legs left bare by her draped skirt, chuckled, "Thou shalt not escape me it seems. Wait for me! I will help you!"

Picking his way to the site, Goodday bent his head low and reached for her hands in an awkward fashion.

"I need no assistance. Not as yet!" Hebe scrambled to her feet.

Shyly it seemed, she brushed past him and moved on, her nut brown hair and white apron bedecked with slosh.

"You will want to wait till your costume is undamped, truly."

As she peeked meekly in Goodday's direction, he let her catch sight of a cocked eyebrow and madcap grin. With round eyes, she turned away, immeasurably flustered.

"I should never hurt you, Hebe St. Honore!"

"Nevertheless, you scare me!" she called as she fled down the road back to her manor.

"Will I ever see you again, you daft delight?" he murmured.

"Yes, yes, as long as you do not fly in the face of what must be done!" How now! Well-a-day! How did she hear that last cheeky remark of his? What mirth! His heart never raced so for Ernestine, his wife.

Twice a week, Hebe told white lies. At dusk, she did her penance for them. "Confiteor, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione verbo et opere." I confess that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed. How so? She invented excuses every week to go to town.

"I must buy salt and dye, my Husband."

"For what purpose? We have more than enough, imp!" Although Luther's features had lost e'en more slack, he could still bellow.

"Sewing and such sorts for the poor, milord," Hebe decided on an impulse. What of it? Why *not* spin some vestments and the like? She gladdened at having transformed a fib to goodness.

"Tell Amice to go in your place then. This philandering on your part is ridiculous."

"Tis *I* that must go, kind sir. The Stoddard family specifically requests *my* charity."

"Silly goose, don't dally then. Go to and be back before supper preparations."

Hebe took leave. "That was not deceit. It was duty. To Goodday . . . no, to England! Oh, cursed plague!"

All along the way, she thought of ways to make suspicion from onlookers subside. "I shall beseech Sir Goodday about the making of rose water or marking ink. That will shut them up. When their satisfied backs turn, we can talk."

"Sir Goodday, do you always eat so little?" Her face showed alarm and Goodday melted inside. They had gladly made a habit of meeting each other halfway to the square; howbeit, it was a backtracking for

Goodday who already lived within town. No more spying eyes! They met in an untenanted, out-of-the-way meadow.

"Your compassion disarms me, chick," he tilted his head back, emptying a handful of almonds into his mouth. "I love to tease her," Goodday crowed, exhilarated. He seized her hand, and boldly kissing it, laughed, "You are the fairest of any cracked sparrow I know."

"Stop!" she pulled away. "If anyone has a bee in the head it is you. I am not a dolt." Hebe looked wounded.

"It was only in jest, Hebe. Don't be cross." He paused. It is just that you must help me to understand you."

"Gladly would I tell all," Hebe endeared. "But I am where *you* stand. Deo Omnipotenti shows me puzzles I have yet to decipher."

"Oh?" He traced her lips absent-mindedly with the feather plucked from his cap. She showed irritation by that, her voice even more so.

"Do I know? I see red halos, I see this someone 'philosopher.' Latin words. Always, always I see pestilence."

"Now, I am the 'philosopher,' you say?"

Hebe stared of into space.

With a bemused sigh, Goodday asked for an answer.

"Draw back your scorn and you will be He that will help me to save the forlorn from the flea."

Goodday shook his head.

"I do not expect you to reply. To you I am spouting drivel. But I must exact an oath."

"Good then."

"Never trifle with me, sir, or laugh up your sleeve. Whatever I say take to heart and believe."

"I swear."

"That is well. I must go now."

"Oh, not yet! What does 'Hebe' mean? There's a riddle for *you*." Goodday waited, hoping he had roused her curiosity, but she continued to look off towards the highway.

He persisted. "I ask you if you know what 'Hebe' means."

"Tsk, would that my name were more common, like Elizabeth or Margaret," she mulled, fidgeting with the lace on her apron.

"Don't wish that." He sidled close to her, even closer for aught one cares. "Hebe in Greek myth is the goddess of youth."

"Yes I know, the cupbearer to the gods."

He smacked his forehead. "You may as well tell me what I will do next." Feeling intimacy creep at the corners of his mouth, he moved to kiss her. But Hebe seemed to sense his desire and fell back, running nimble-footed like a gazelle down the path. Curse! He had almost

encircled his strong arms about her waist and pulled her to him.

Odd, how, as of late, only she did occupy his thoughts, anon he laid his books, his trade, Ernestine and baby Francis aside.

Again they met.

" Howexcellent! You came back!"

"Are you knave or knight?" she interrogated.

" Stayand you will learn for yourself."

She hesitated.

" Iam well-intentioned," Goodday said shortly.

Hebe studied his solemn face for a moment, then sat down in the tall grass. " Foryou," she smiled and offered her tray.

" Whata sweet chickabiddy you are. I don't know what to say." He stared happily at the array of foodstuffs.

Hebe tingled with joy as Goodday wolfed down the rich cheese, then sheepishly eyed a bowl of spiced pottage.

" Withyou, I have an appetite."

Having said that with a glint in his eye, Hebe wondered if she did well in keeping company with him.

" No doubt you've heard of the philosopher stone?" he asked, mouth full.

In all truth Hebe longed to sit closer to his dirty elbows and shins; she wanted to touch that grainy neck. " Dearme, stop it!" she berated herself. " Whatsay you, Sir Goodday?"

" Youcan say Roger, you know."

Hebe chose to ignore the request, plucking at blades of grass.

" Thephilosopher stone!" he barked.

She flinched, "W-what?"

" Ithink you know what. Divine my thoughts, ducky, and know the impossible dream of all chemists."

" Whatare you saying?"

" You*act* as if you know nothing about me, about how I occupy my time, about —"

" Howcould I possibly know anything about you, you never —"

He took her face in his hands. " Butyou do, I think. I think that if you are verily mystical, we might try a little experiment. Look at me."

As their gazes locked, Hebe began to fall far away. Images danced across her gray eyes. Very soon, a scene clearly presented itself and she watched, fascinated. . . .

She saw Roger Goodday mopping his brow and squinting into an immense jar crackling over hearth fire. " TheStone of the Philosopher

whereby scourge is thwarted." He made his incantation scarcely audible so as not to invade the lull of early morn. "Purest of the pure, elixer of life . . ."

Squeezing her eyes shut, Hebe broke the trance. "I saw you working. You are an alchemist?"

"Holy Heaven, you *do* have powers . . . I studied alchemy for some time, overstraining my sight in the shade of every evening, burning candles at both ends, trying to disprove a legend."

"The Philosopher Stone . . ."

"The right solution would imbue particular stones with the secret of turning base metals into gold, and for ensuring long life."

She looked deeply into her dark-circled eyes again, and met the past. . . .

Goodday ladled a rock out of smokey liquid, and held it up to the white dawn offered by one small window. Natheless, the mineral stayed black as umbra.

"Curse! Confound! Damn!" Goodday threw the stone across the room, and cracked a shelved jug. Clay pieces clunked to the floor. . . .

"After all that brewing it came to nothing, Roger, er —"

"God, yes, call me by my name for once," he entreated, and playfully touched Hebe's nose. "After I regarded that leaden stone for over six years, I turned a cold shoulder upon it. Now I can sleep, having given up the search for what is unattainable. Today, I dabble in all trades. But I wanted you to know all of that. The stone has been the most important thing in my life . . . up till now."

Goodday ran his eyes over her, and Hebe, unable to endure his burning look much longer, blurted, "That is not all I saw. I saw Ernestine."

Taken aback, Goodday only muttered, "No." Then, bitterly he added, "There is no one called that. You imagined that."

"I only know what is true, Roger. You let me look and I saw. Be fair. You promised to believe in me. I want to believe in you."

"What did you see?" he whispered, eyes on the ground.

Hebe told him that after the jug had broken her attention turned towards a girl who had roused herself in affright, wailing. . . .

Wheeling around at his child-wife, Goodday frowned, "Ne'er bemoan so! I forefend it!"

Ernestine abated and watched her husband with large baleful eyes. He looked another way. Anon, she skulked to a far corner of their above-shop abode and hushed a stirring infant.

"Shh!" she sternly touched a finger to her lips as her husband shuffled towards the door.

Capping his head and tying the cords of his leather breeches, Goodday strode over to drop a kiss on Francis. To no avail. Ernestine firmly wrapped her arms about the boy and spat at Goodday until he backed out of the threshold. . . .

Flushing with disdain and grinding his teeth, Goodday finally managed to croak, "You saw all that?"

"I did."

"I owe that cat to a contracted marriage. Nuptials," he smirked, "thrust by familial arrangement upon two acquaintances."

"But you have a son," Hebe prodded.

"Yes." He smiled vaguely at the mention of brawny Francis.

"That is wonderful for you."

"Is it? I don't know. You saw how the cat will not let me hold my own son."

Hebe supposed Ernestine could indeed make a justifiable cat with her hisses and suspicious oval eyes.

"She is but fourteen," Goodday tried to reason. "But in striving to bear with her unlearnedness, I feel like her father."

Hebe pondered for a moment, then suggested, "Perhaps her sufferance in birthing Francis left a biding wound in her manner. She seems to rarely speak. Give her time."

"She always looks black at me, whereas *you* are beatific." Goodday gazed at Hebe's bowed head, her ivory skin, and the smooth hollow of her neck; he tried to blot out the memory of Ernestine's brown round face with its bugaboo saucers.

"I am sorry for your troubles," Hebe started to weep softly.

Goodday wrapped his arms around her waist and pressed his lips to her ear. "Shush, my water nymph."

Pity stopped Hebe from revealing the truth of their talk: it was not Goodday, but the Stone that was essential to her; once she had it, she could forego any more talks with him. "But how do I tell him? How?" she brooded, as Goodday nuzzled her neck.

With one hand Roger Goodday shielded his eyes and stood waiting impatiently for her arrival. "Ho hum, she is late," he yawned and watched his lengthening shadow. All week he had been preoccupied, unable to test his latest supposition: How to Preserve clothes from Moths. "What matters *that*? *Love* is an agonizing distraction." He chewed his lip, waiting. Finally, he saw her, wearing a white linen gown and cloth sandals. A high collar of lace decorated her neck.

Going down on his knees he cried, "Hail Mary, full . . . only

joking."

Her face looked sorrowful. "My husband is in a bad way, very sick."

"Sorry." He folded his hands and put them at the back of his neck. "Your attire looks exquisite."

"Well," she mumbled, seeming uncomfortable, "I wore no cloak today."

"I know. It's too hot." Goodday himself had opened his shirt-front, rolled his sleeves, and gone bare-footed.

Wearily, Hebe sank down. "I should be at Luther's side."

"Why lick the hand that smites you?" he quipped.

"How dare you talk ill of someone who is — ill!"

"Dismiss it." Ever since Hebe had laid bare the secrets of his life, Goodday had found himself unable to refrain from talking tactlessly.

"Do you have any children?" he demanded.

"Oh no."

"No?"

"No, no," she went on. "I will not speak of that."

"I see." Of course he did not "see." He would never be a "seer" like Hebe.

"I wish . . . but he . . . my . . ." Hebe struggled, "We have, I never —"

"What, Honeybread?" Goodday gently probed, as he tilted her face toward his. "Tell me."

She rushed, "It is expressly forbidden that I sleep with another."

"Ah." Goodday reddened.

"Luther always gave in to my fright. But he resented me for it. Well, he is too old and sick to care *now*."

"Why are you frightened?"

"Because I am not allowed."

Goodday lay down in the grass and rested his head on his arms. Mind in turmoil, he could find no reply to all this prattle. He only became engrossed in unbearable fantasies and had to walk around.

"The time has come for me to say good-bye to you."

"You just got here," Goodday whined.

"You still have the stone, the one you practiced upon?"

"Hah?"

"The Philosopher Stone," she said in a broken voice.

He looked at her, perplexed. "I threw it away, Hebe."

"Find it! Bring it to the market square. I will send Amice for it." She fingered the lace on her neck. Their eyes met and she contemplated him for what seemed an eternity.

"Good-bye, Goodday," her lips said, but no words came out.

"Oh botheration!" Goodday shouted, "You may not leave!"

"I think that you are vexed by too much passion," she said, keeping her distance.

He shrugged, feigning lightheartedness, and, as Hebe hastened for home, Goodday kept pace with her.

"The rules of courtly love say 'no one should be deprived of love without the very best of reasons.' We are deprived," he shook her shoulders.

"With good reason."

When he asked her what she meant, Hebe placed a sympathetic hand on his arm. "The mission calls for me to avoid you now. You need only give Amice the stone next week, and we will be done."

"How can you do this to me when you make me the gladdest man of the world?"

She inhaled sharply.

"You know I cannot stop looking tenderly at you."

"Please." Her eyes were uncondemning. "Accept."

"When can I see you again?"

"You will not. But get the stone to Amice."

He knelt down and hugged her stomach. "Don't go."

But she was gone after having wrestled herself free. Goodday kicked at the earth. A long time later, when darkness came, he left.

"It is God's will," said all the wise teachers and physicians when a particularly virulent variety of Bubonic plague visitied England. With summer's languid heat came diseased rats, infesting the countryside; the Calix market-place became glutted with tradesmen, more so *now* than before.

"So many people! With the plague on? I should have thought that with all the bedridden ones, I'd have finally gotten my share —"

"That's just it, John. The price of everything's started to get cheap. Hurry and buy, then let's join that band of fellows. Deserters, on their way to Westbrook where conditions are not so bad yet."

"Did you hear about the ship of Senen? Found in the sea, laden with wares. Crew had all died, no one guiding the ship."

"They are calling this the Black Death."

"Phoh! It'll pass us soon."

"Do you think so?" . . . .

Hebe embraced the mass of flowers as she cut the stems. When Amice sauntered into the garden, she turned her puffy eyes to the girl. "He's dead."

Amice began to sob.

"What took you so long?"

"He was nowhere to be found. I looked and looked," she sputtered. "I gave out his name and in time someone showed me to his door. I said, 'I am Amice, I have come for the stone.' "

"What did he say?"

"Says he, 'Get you out girl. There is only plague here.' "

"But did you not —"

"He slammed and barred the door."

Hebe gave a reassuring pat to her maidservant' smournful, fleshy face.

"It did not signify with him. I shall have to fan the embers then . . ."

She flew to the square.

Ernestine pouted as Goodday lectured.

"I told you to listen carefully, wife. Keep this fire burning all the while that I am gone. It is a —" he paused momentarily to retrieve the word, "a disinfectant. Swaddle Francis with these plasters. We do not want to get sick, do we? I shall be back presently, so fret not."

As Goodday bounded for the door, Ernestine howled.

"What what! I am out to get a horse you see, so we can leave Calix. Do what I told you!" He slammed the door.

Down in the square, he saw a long line of bowed heads. As the cathedral bell tolled, a tonsured priest cupped his hands around his mouth and called, "Make your confessions, be absolved, sinners! Or else, the living shall not suffice to bury the dead! Mark me! Listen well!"

"This is the end," Goodday realized. "Oh God she was right. Where is she? How does she fare? 'Twas a painful parting for me. Well, I shall finally rest in peace *now*," he hooted as he felt a sudden attack of the shakes. He leaned against the shop and closed his eyes.

"Roger!?"

"Wha—"

Having found each other, they stood transfixed awhile.

With rapid strides he went to her and took her in his arms. She covered her face with her hands, and he pulled them down.

"This time I shall not heed the neck cranings of onlookers." He kissed her on her mouth for a long time. "Where have you been, Hebe?" He caressed her chin. "I missed you sorely and now the epidemic's come, like you said."

Tears welled up in her gray eyes. "Luther just died."

"Francis will not live much longer."

"You forgot all about the stone."

Suddenly he recalled her wanting it. And the girl Amice she would send. She *did* send.

"It is not too late. The Black Death has just claimed some of the weak. The dying can still be saved. Your son —"

"What are you talking about?"

She looked delirious. So close was he to her that he saw each individual lash of her newly "wild" eyes. He gaped, dumbstruck, as her pupils dilated. They grew larger and larger until she fainted. One fell swoop into his arms.

"There goes another. Cursed plague," remarked a bystander. "Good as gone, man, leave her be," he advised as Goodday carried her off in his arms.

Hebe awoke in darkness. After growing accustomed to the pitch, she knew herself to be in a cellar. Dampness she could welcome, after the scorching, lethargic sun.

Goodday appeared in the dimness, bringing a cup to her lips.

"Here, this is called briony, for stomach weakness."

She sipped it as Goodday lit a candle. Looking about the book-filled room, her thoughts carried back to the Stone. She sat up in the bed where she had been placed, and tossed off the coverlets.

"Help me look for it."

"What — the stone, my anger? I really don't know what I did with it."

"Oh you must!"

He smiled adoringly at her. "If I look for it will you be good and rest up?"

She crept weakly back under the blankets.

"Perhaps we shan't die after all," he announced cheerfully. I know of some medicinal herbs — oh, what's the use, after all? This is the final hour." He clapped his hands. "And I shall make the most of it!"

"Find the stone. It will save us all," she moaned.

"Allright! I hear you!" He rummaged through pots and jars, behind charts and books, in search of the misplaced black rock. "Why, here it is!" He dove onto the bed and handed it to her.

Hebe held it in her palm, surveying it, and very soon it glowed fiery red. "Touch it, Roger."

He looked askance, but did as she ordered.

"I saved you."

Goodday burst into peals of laughter and whispered something about bats in the belfry.

"I must go now. There are so many more to heal —"

"No!" He gripped her wrist. "Life is so short." He took the pins from her hair.

"You fool! Don't you see, purity is what the stone has always lacked —"

"I see that you have contracted a fever, for certain." He nestled close and glided his tongue over her throat.

"You saw it glow, it works!"

"It glows from the heat of your flagging health." He undid the ribbons of her garb. "Let's go down in glory."

"You do this and I will cease to exist. A host of others as well. You will be all alone, for you alone are cured by me, you alone —"

He kissed her violently.

"Oh death will descend —"

"Let it." Goodday reached over her and snuffed out the candle. . . .

Her hand fell wearily open.

The stone dropped on the floor and turned black.

Up! in a tree
You may not see
But, 'tis the buzzing
Of a Honey Bee.

The Bee's wings sang
A humming's musical tone.
You dare not move
For his sting.

Izora Cummings

Chimes beneath my window sing,
New daffodils part the ground;
A melody above the tree
Veils the only stone.

Faces, that inside I see,
I am bereaved to hold;
Here the reverie, spring will stay,
And there the seasons go.

M.J. Vetro

Here springs a shining buttercup,
The first, the only one —
Small and golden, lifting up
Her face to meet the sun.

Splendid in her brand-new glory —
Lovely radiance;
Now go — run and tell her story
And sing and dance, and dance.

Eleanor Kohler

Love is learned by chagrin —
Piousness by sin —
Laughter by a salty tear —
Memories by history —
Freedom by slavery —
Confidence by fear.

Sabine Cauvin

Anna La Manna

Monstrorum Artifex

Golem, Frankenstein,
Pygmalion's artful masterpiece,
Or awkward storefront mannequin,
Phantoms magnified
And flashing on the wall,
What unquenchable
Desire of mastery
Makes us mould the clay
To brother's shape
Or monster's,
Then makes us hope
And half believe
That clay can speak
Or shadow walk?
Or can it be?
In truth can I
Be said to live
Because I merely bleed and love?
Or am I not an artifact
Of marvelous deception?
In moments often
Of clairvoyant lassitude,
I spy the puppet shape
That haunts my breathing form,
And you, my brother, lover, enemy,
Are pure shadows of conjecture
To my mind.
If I am real
And of the world,
Do not despair
That clay can walk
Or shadow speak,
And that one day
A universe of breathing forms
Will pour
Unendingly
From your dead hand,
False life
That is the child
Of your false life.

Charles Edstrom

Language: Master or Servant?
The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in Society Today

Susan I. Norton

Linguistics is the science which attempts to understand language through its internal structure. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has raised tremendous controversy within that science for over 50 years. There are two possible interpretations of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, and the dissension is over which assertion Whorf intended to make. The first, an extreme form known as linguistic determinism, states that without language there is no thought. The second, more moderate interpretation, known as linguistic relativity, states that language influences thoughts. As the future unfolds, the Hypothesis becomes even more relevant, for, as we specialize to ever greater degrees, our vocabularies separate us, while, in an ever-shrinking modern world, we are called upon to be more and more aware of differences in language and, therefore, in world view.

Historically speaking, various aspects of linguistic relativity were set forth by several thinkers prior to the eighteenth century. Aristotle, Plato, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), and John Locke (1632-1704) all anticipated one aspect or another of the Hypothesis.[1] Locke came extremely close to stating the ideas later expressed in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, when he said, "Words . . .by constant and familiar use . . . charm men into notions far remote from the truth of things."[2] Locke was quite explicit in saying that the use of language can deceive us:

> Men having by long and familiar use annexed to them [to words] certain ideas, they are apt to imagine so near and necessary a conexion [*sic*] between the names and the signification they use them in, that they forwardly suppose one cannot but understand what their meaning is.[3]

Although Locke never presented an hypothesis, he did state one of the core idiosyncracies of language that poets, philosophers, and eventually linguists have attempted to explain: that people connect meaning with symbols called words and assume that all other people hold the same value for these symbols. This led to trying to explain the relationship of language and thought, out of which came the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

Linguists have attempted to understand the internal structure of language and have developed a set of terms to explain their perception of language. In linguistic terms, the three major components of the internal structure of language are expression, content, and vocabulary. Sound by itself is not language, but patterns of sounds form expression, the first component with which linguistics concerns itself. These could be called aural buildings blocks of language. They are the sound structure of language, but at this stage there is no meaning implied; they are just sound patterns.

These sound patterns are organized by a speaker around another structure, called content, which is the whole of human experience. The mental process whereby the speaker selects certain features for description and determines the ways in which he will interrelate them is, to a degree, predictable, and form the component called content.

The structure called expression is associated in definite ways with the structure called content, and the relationship is quite complex. It is different in each language, and this difference may be profound or slight, but is always characteristic of that language alone. These specific relationships between expression and content are called vocabulary or, in familiar terms, words, their meanings and grammar. It is this three-sided structure of language, most importantly the constraints that the structure of expression places on content, that the linguists such as Whorf and Sapir sought to understand.

In the area of expression, linguists can be more precise than any other social scientist because experimental results in this area are quite reproducible. But the much less studied area of content has been a source of frustration in linguistics. First, linguists were late in comprehending the three-sided structure of language. Second, there has been no way to gain access to the content structure except through the expression structure. This use of inferential reasoning has not appealed to linguists intent on building a highly rigorous scientific method which deals with directly observable data. Content has had an inferior status in the eyes of linguists. The content without the structure of expression is not amenable to any kind of unified study

because, as was stated before, the substance of content is the whole of human experience.[4]

The native speaker of a language interrelates the components of his language with great ease, but to the speaker of another language the interrelationships may seem cumbersome or illogical. Linguists, in their effort to study language, must rise above the pedagogical view of language and see its structures as equal to the tasks they perform, and also must appreciate the shared characteristics of all languages, despite their apparent divergences.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an amateur in the field of linguistics, began studying with Edward Sapir in the 1930s. Sapir and Whorf were interested in the relationship of content and expression, for example, the way men think about time and the grammar of the language they use to talk about time. For Sapir and Whorf, language is no mere passive recording instrument which reflects a pre-existing reality. Rather it is the essential factor in forging our conception of reality and the way in which we perceive it. As David Cooper has stated, "What reality is for a person will be a function of the language he employs, and there will be as many 'realities' as there are radically distinct languages."[5]

Whorf's papers on the relations of language to both thought and perception had revolutionary implications for linguistic science. He stated that "Language is more than a medium for expressing thought. It is the major element in the formation of thought."[6]

One problem presents itself, however. Penn states that:

> The first difficulty is in deciding just what 'the' Whorf hypothesis is. Is it 'language determines thought,' an extreme hypothesis indeed? Or is it 'language influences thought,' a much milder assertion, and one which can never be disproven as long as some influence of a given language on some non-linguistic behavior of its speakers can be demonstrated.[7]

Penn attempts to resolve this difficulty by saying that:

> It is suggested that 'the' Whorf hypothesis might better be regarded as two hypotheses, an extreme one

> asserting the dependence of thought on language and a mild one suggesting some influence of linguistic categories on cognition.[8]

Penn also notes, "No statement can be found in Whorf's writing which clears up the ambiguity as to which assertion he intended to be making."[9] For this reason some workers in the field of linguistics have been critical of the Hypothesis. Rulon Wells, for example, says that the Hypothesis is "a illusion" which merely "looks like an empirical proposition."[10] It is a great pity Whorf died so soon after he had researched the Hypothesis by which he is known today. He was unable to respond to the criticism and to take part in further discussion in the years when the debate was raging.[11]

In critical discussions on the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis since 1950, there have emerged a strong and a weak form of it, which may be designated Linguistic Determinism and Linguistic Relativity, respectively.[12] According to Helmut Gipper, human thought is, to be sure, relative to the possibilities of the languages in which it is expressed, but it is not determined by language. Each natural language represents an open system and, therefore, is able to be changed by the speakers.[13] During this period of controversy between Relativity and Determinism, a number of experiments were carried out to test the Whorf Hypothesis, with apparently conflicting results. These seeming conflicts were explained by the fact that the experiments were testing two different forms of the Hypothesis. Those who tested the weak form found evidence supporting the Hypothesis, while those testing the strong form found evidence which appeared to invalidate the Hypothesis.[14]

It is easy to see what controversy this confusion over the definition of "the" Hypothesis could cause in attempting to test it. Perhaps this is why so little testing was attempted when Sapir first published the Hypothesis as a concept.

As Robins recounts:

> Certainly the strong form of the hypothesis is unacceptable. On a priori grounds one can contest it by asking how, if we are unable to organize our thinking beyond the limits set by our native language, we could ever become aware of these limits; and empirically the admitted possibility of translation between languages

> of different structures would scarcely be compatible with total linguistic determinism, while the equally admitted difficulties involved in translation afford solid support for the validity of linguistic relativity.[15]

It seems as though those who attempted to test "the" Hypothesis, but arrived at contradictory results (because they were looking at a single concept and attaching different meanings to it) actually verified one of the many applications of the Hypothesis. It was Whorf who applied the Hypothesis to the technical language of the natural sciences. He states:

> This fact [the Hypothesis] is very significant for modern science, for it means that no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself most free. The person most nearly free in such respects would be a linguist familiar with very many widely different linguistic systems. As yet no linguist is in any such position. We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated.[16]

The notion of language as a categorical system laid out like a grid upon an unformed reality is an apt way of decribing this view.[17] Another way of perceiving the Hypothesis is: "Thinking is language spoken to oneself. Until language has made sense of an experience, that experience is meaningless."[18] Still another approach to the problem might be to realize that "each language encourages its speakers to tell certain things and leave others out."[19] A more specific example might be: "If a man is a policeman we expect that he will act like a policeman; if a girl is a 'hippy,' we expect she will act like a hippy. We attribute to individuals the atributes of the groups with which we perceive them to be affiliated and we tend to hear what we expect them to say rather than what they did say."[20] It is easy to begin to see the potential application of the Hypothesis in the social sciences. According to Cormican, the

ramifications of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in social work can be phenomenal, particularly in dealing with subcultures. The Hypothesis teaches us not to label.

Members of a subculture (e.g., Apaches) may have the same linguistic pattern which might lead us to label them. However, these labels are all arbitrary. "What we call things and where we draw the line between one class and another depend on the interests we have and the purposes of classification . . . The individual object or event we are naming, of course, has no name and belongs to no class until we put it in one."[21] Social workers, along with other Americans, use color words like black and white to categorize people, although all people are various shades of brown and 70% of all black Americans have white ancestors and 30% of all white Americans have black ancestors.[22]

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis argues that, once a classification has been made, the label determines our attitude toward the thing labeled.[23] Labels like "old lady," "black," "psychotic," or "mentally retarded" are called "labels of primary potency." Labels of primary potency abstract one feature that a society feels is important, and which groups different people together in one category, overlooking all other features and individual differences. These labels also attribute other features to those who are labeled, whether the person so labeled possesses them or not. In the end, it is not the complex individual but the label that is perceived.[24] All professionals who deal with people must be sensitive to what their own language usage reveals about their attitude toward the people they are working with, as well as to the world view revealed by the language usage of those with whom they are working.[25]

Roger Brown states: "Structural differences between language systems will in general, be paralleled by non-linguistic cognitive differences, of an unspecified sort, in the native speakers of the two languages."[26] He goes on to say that: "The structure of anyone's native language strongly influences or fully determines the world view he will acquire as he learns the language."[27] For example, Japanese women were interviewed in the same place by the same interviewer and asked the same question in two different languages. Their responses were markedly different depending on whether they answered in Japanese or English. For instance, one set of responses went: "When my wishes conflict with my family's . . . it is a time of great unhappiness" (Japanese). But ". . . I do what I want" (English). Or "Real friends

should . . . help each other" (Japanese). And ". . . be very frank" (English). The drastic differences in the attitudes of the women could be accounted for only by the language world each inhabited when she spoke.[28]

Farb says that at times we are all guilty of the erroneous belief that, "since human beings are born with the same senses and approximately the same degree of intelligence, they should be able to report equally well whatever they experience. But different languages make such equality difficult to achieve."[29] Brown believes that "What is expressed easily, rapidly, briefly, uniformly, perhaps obligatorily in one language may be expressed in another only by lengthy constructions that vary from one person to another, take time to put together, and are certainly not obligatory."[30]

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis also predicts that language makes its speakers intellectually lazy. They will categorize new experiences in the well-worn channels they have been used to since birth, even though these channels might appear foolish to an outsider. The language spoken by the Western Apaches of Arizona, for example, has its own channels for classifying parts of the human body, a system which ignores certain distinctions made in other languages and which makes different ones of its own. About 1930, a new cultural item, the automobile, was introduced to the Apache reservation. An automobile, surely, is different from a human body, yet the Apache simply applied their existing classification for the human body to the automobile.[31]

In a time when we need an ever-growing awareness of language and usage, our working vocabularies are becoming self enclosed.

> An entire generation has grown up that distrusts language's ability to express a true picture of reality and that relies upon the empty intercalations of like, you know, I mean. The world has grown inarticulate at the very time that an unprecedented number of words flood the media. The output has burgeoned, but the speakers have retreated into the worn paths of stock phrases. A statistical study of telephone speech showed that a vocabulary of only 737 words was used in 96 per cent of such conversations. Apparently people speak more, yet say less[32]

In our educational institutions, the Socratic ideal of "know thyself"

more or less represents a pious gesture toward the goal of the Faculty of Arts. This goal seems hard to reach in the present state of programs because the self, as suggested by Sapir and Whorf, is the product of a socio-linguistic-educational and ideological context of great complexity.[33] It would seem that even the University with its lofty ideals is falling into a linguistic trap. As Jacques Monod said:

> When my thesis was accepted . . . my teachers who were not ill disposed to me, gave me to understand that I had not any future in the university because what I was doing was at the borderline between microbiology and biochemistry; it was not a discipline that could be labeled; it corresponded neither to a professorial chair nor to a course being given; hence, there was nothing for me to do at the university.[34]

In closing, let us not forget the ominous foreboding of Orwell's *1984*:

> Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work. Most of it was a tedious routine, but included in it there were also jobs so difficult and intricate that you could lose yourself in them as in the depths of a mathematical problem — delicate pieces of forgery in which you had nothing to guide you except your knowledge of the principles of Ingsoc and your estimate of what the Party wanted you to say.[35]

One may only hope that further study of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and its ramifications in all areas of human cognition may help man to a deeper understanding of the ways in which language shapes his perceptions of reality. If Orwell's nightmarish vision is to remain only a dream, we must ensure that language remains our servant, rather than becoming our master.

Endnotes

[1]Julia M. Penn, *Linguistic Relativity Versus Innate Ideas* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), p. 2.

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[3]Locke, Book 3, Cap. 10, Sec. 22.

[4]Leonard F. Dean and Kenneth G. Wilson, eds., *Essays on Language and Usage* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 141-54.

[5]David Cooper, *Philosophy and the Nature of Language* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1973), p. 100.

[6]*Culture as Communication*. (U.S.A.) n.p., n.d., p. 2.

[7]Penn, p. 13.

[8]Penn, p. 10.

[9]Penn, p. 13.

[10]Rulon Wells, "What Has Linguistics Done For Philosophy?" *Journal of Philosophy*, 59 (1962), 703.

[11]E.H. Robins, "The Current Relevance of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis," *Communication & Cognition*, 6, 2 (1973), 40.

[12]Robins, p. 38.

[13]Helmut Gipper, "Is There a Linguistic Relativity Principle?" *J. Indiana*, 5 (1979), 13.

[14]Penn, p. 17.

[15]Robins, p. 39.

[16]Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll (Cambridge, Ma.: M.I.T. Press, 1962), p. 214.

[17]Roger Brown, "In Memorial Tribute to Eric Lenneberg," (U.S.A.: n.p., n.d. [Part I of *The New Paradigm of Reference*. Supported by NSF Grant No. GSOC-7309150]), p. 9.

[18]Peter Farb, *Word Play* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 167-68.

[19]Farb, p. 171.

[20]Alfred Kadushin, *The Social Work Interview* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1972), p. 33.

[21]S.I. Hayakawa, *Classification in Language*, ed. Hogins and Yarber (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), pp. 297-98.

[22]John D. Cormican, "Linguistic Subcultures and Social Work Practice," *Social Casework*, 57, No. 9 (1976), 591.

[23]Hayakawa, p. 304.

[24]Gordon Allport, "Linguistic Factors in Prejudice," in *Language Awareness*, ed. Paul A. Eschholz *et al.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), p. 108.

[25]Cormican, p. 592.

[26]Brown, p. 4.

[27]Brown, p. 10.

[28]Farb, p. 184.

[29]Farb, p. 170.

[30]Brown, p. 12.

[31]Farb, p. 185.

[32]Farb, p. 168.

[33]Patrick Imbert, "Multidisciplinarity, Semiotics, and Pedagogy," *Ars Semeiotica*, 3, No. 2 (1980), 280.

[34]Imbert, p. 275.

[35]George Orwell, *1984* (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1961), p. 39.

B. Eric Newman

Candice McGee

Acting On Broadway

Suzanne Keiser

After the waiter delivered the wine, Julia looked across the table at Gretta, whose long, straight, black hair had been newly cropped at the shoulder, making her watery blue eyes stand out against her china-like complexion.

"You're okay?" The noise in the restaurant made Julia speak loudly to be heard.

"As okay as I can be; I'm not angry anymore," Gretta replied, sipping her cocktail.

Julia marvelled at her friend's composure. A woman at the next table was enjoying a cigarette, and Julia waved the smoke away. "Should you be drinking?"

Gretta chuckled. Looking into her glass, she swirled the liquid and raised her eyebrows. "Why not?" She smiled sarcastically and drank.

Julia stopped as the waiter approached carrying their meal. He spilled a drop of creamy white dressing on the red tablecloth, wiped it up nervously, and scooted off.

"Seriously Gretta, are you allowed to drink?"

"This wine has nothing to do with a tumor," she said, "so I may as well enjoy myself."

"Be sensible," Julia said, annoyed at Gretta's nonchalant attitude.

"Sensible," Gretta snapped, her eyes flashing. "I'm twenty-four years old, I'm going to die, and you're telling me to be sensible?"

"You know what I mean." Julia was exasperated.

"My situation doesn't make sense; how can I be rational?" Gretta's voice rose and she leaned toward Julia. "You're too sensible," she said.

"Can't you take care of yourself?" Julia shot back.

"Why should I bother?"

"Gretta!"

"That's the way I feel, Julia. You don't know what it's like to watch yourself die."

"Don't be morbid," Julia grimaced and shook her head.

"I'm just facing facts; I wish you would too."

"It's hard," Julia said slowly.

"I know. When Dr. Hoffmann told me about it, I refused to believe him. Then I was angry."

"Angry?"

"Yea. I kept asking 'Why me?' but now I've acceped it — can't you?"

"I'm trying, but it's not easy to take death lightly."

"Don't make light of it, just understand how I feel," Gretta said.

"I'll try," Julia said nodding.

"Okay then." Gretta sat up and smiled. "I have an announcement to make."

"What is it?" Julia perked up.

"I've decided that before I die I want to do something I've never done," she explained.

"What is it?" Julia was interested.

"I want to act on Broadway."

"You got a part?" Julia grinned.

"Not exactly." Gretta looked into her avocado salad, examining its contents. "But I'm going to act at the Shubert Theatre."

"You've lost me," Julia said sipping her wine. "Did you get a part or not?"

"I didn't get a part, I'm going to create one." She looked up from her salad and smiled.

"I still don't understand." Julia sat back in her chair, wine in hand.

"I'll explain everything — eat your lunch," she gestured toward Julia's veal with her fork.

"I'm finished. Tell me what you're planning, Gretta," Julia frowned.

"Okay. Remember when I worked at the Shubert a few years ago?"

"Uh huh." Julia listened intently.

Gretta bent down and picked up her purse. Searching through it she found what she was looking for and held it out toward Julia.

"A key." Julia still didn't know what was going on. "Don't play games, Gretta."

"It's for the theatre. I got it when I worked in the box office and never gave it back."

"So what you're planning to do is break in and perform onstage," Julia sighed and shook her head. "You're kidding."

"I'm serious. It's really the only thing I want, and I need your help."

"You need me?"

"I need an audience."

"Gretta, I understand that acting means a lot to you . . ."

"It's my life," Gretta broke in, "and I've always wanted to perform on Broadway."

"But Gretta, what if you get caught?"

"I won't."

"How can you be so sure?"

"What can happen? I'll go in and lock the door behind me. No one knows about this besides you."

"Gretta . . ." Julia began.

"I really can't expect you to understand," Gretta interrupted. "You're a successful accountant; you've made something of yourself. You've set goals and achieved them; I've set goals and failed."

"Don't be ridiculous," Julia said. "You've got a lot going for you. You're one of the most intellectual people I know and you're special — you're an individual . . ."

"And I'm dying, and my closest friend won't help me with the one thing that would make my life complete," Gretta cut in.

"I didn't say I wouldn't help, but I'll have to think about it."

The waiter arrived with the check and Julia handed him her American Express card. Gretta reached for her coat, her eyes hopeful.

The late November sky was glowing orange as Julia sat bundled in a woolen wrap on her terrace. She looked at the bustling Park Avenue below to see hurried people carrying parcels. Christmas shopping already, such a joyous time of year. She rolled her eyes at her thought — joyous, sure. Staying outside a long time despite the sharp wind that chopped at her pale, slightly freckled face and blew her rich auburn curls, she thought about Gretta, whose proposal that afternoon had been the most ridiculous thing Julia had ever heard; it couldn't work.

Later that night Julia changed into her gray silk pajamas then took a place on the sofa. Maria had started logs burning in the fireplace before she left for the evening, and now they were raging. The warm room, enveloped by the steady ticking of her grandfather clock, sent Julia into a trance; she stared at the reflection of the fire on the white marble hearth and thought about Gretta.

Their days in college . . . Gretta's admiration and excitement when Julia got the lead in *The Glass Menagerie*. They had both auditioned, and Gretta hadn't even flinched when Julia won the role.

Julia pulled a woolen afghan over herself and sank further into the couch . . . the time Gretta had given up her long-awaited skiing trip to accompany Julia on a weekend home; Julia needed the moral support when her parents were divorcing. Her eyes moistened; Gretta

was going to die. No more excited, middle-of-the-night phone calls with Gretta raving about a possible role in a play that was sure to make Chester Tuholski famous. "Who's Chester Tuholski?" Julia would ask half asleep but laughing.

"You'll know when you see his name in lights," Gretta'd say, jabbering about how getting this part could change her life. Julia had always known that given time Gretta could have found her niche in life and would have excelled, but now time wasn't something Gretta had. She pulled the covers more tightly around herself and turned onto her side. Gretta was going to die. She wished she could close her eyes and make the throbbing memories go away. It hurts so bad, she thought, moving her knees toward her chest. A steady pain had developed in her abdomen; it jabbed at her insides and moved slowly upward. Her breathing became erratic and trying to force the ache that had risen to her throat away, she made whimpering sounds that finally gave way to racking sobs.

One week after their luncheon Julia's doorbell chimed, and she found Gretta standing in the hallway.

"I've been trying to get in touch with you," Julia said. "C'mon in."

"You have?" Gretta wore a hunter green cape that hung to her ankles.

"Yea," Julia replied. She watched Gretta remove her cape and place it over the back of the sofa. "Want some tea?" she asked.

"That'd be great, thanks." Gretta stepped toward the fireplace, and Julia wondered what she was thinking as she stared into the flames.

Julia reentered the room. "Here," she said, sitting beside Gretta on the hearth.

"Thanks," Gretta accepted the cup.

"What's on your mind" asked Julia.

"Nothing," Gretta forced a smile.

"C'mon Gretta, this isn't like you."

"What do you mean, Julia?"

"You know what, you're evading the issue.

"No I'm not," Gretta replied, "I was just waiting for you to bring it up."

"Why?" Julia asked.

"It's your decision," Gretta replied. "I just want you to know that I want this badly."

"I know, and I think you're right."

"You do?" Gretta was surprised.

"At first I thought it wouldn't work, but . . ."

"But you realize it will," Gretta interrupted.

"I still think it's ridiculous, but I'll help you — what are friends for?"

"This is great!" Gretta smiled.

"So when do we do it?" Julia asked.

"How about next Sunday," Gretta suggested. "I'll meet you at the Shubert at three."

"In the morning?" Julia rolled her eyes.

"Yes, in the morning," Gretta insisted.

"Okay, I'll meet you there," Julia agreed, smiling.

Gretta put on her cape, and Julia walked her to the door.

"Thanks, Julia."

"Thank me after we pull this off," Julia replied, and Gretta nodded in agreement.

It had just stopped raining when Julia stepped through the double doors onto Park Avenue. The streets were deserted except for a New York Times delivery truck that was stopped at the corner, waiting for the stoplight to change. Julia began walking in the direction of the theatre district, trying not to think about how dangerous it was to be out alone. It's only a few blocks, she told herself, but quickened her gait anyway. The click of her heels was booming in her ears; it seemed loud enough to waken the entire city. Turning onto East 44th Street, she encountered an old man propped up against a building, a ragged coat the only thing protecting him from the cold. Julia shoved her gloved hands deeper into her pockets and shivered. Horrible, she thought, and hurried on. Upon reaching the Shubert she stepped into a small cul-de-sac and saw Gretta waiting for her.

"Did anybody see you?"

"I don't think so," Julia whispered.

"Okay, let's do it." Gretta took the key out of her pocket and pushed it into the lock. The door swung open, and they stepped into total blackness.

"I think the lights are . . . aah, there they go," Gretta said. The room was really a hallway, and the light came from one bulb hanging from a wire.

"I'm gonna get my stuff together. Why don't you . . ."

"I'll wait here," Julia suggested.

"No, go find a seat; it's right through there." Gretta pointed to a small door with STAGE stenciled on it. Julia opened it.

"It's dark," she said.

Gretta flipped a switch, and the stage lights went on.

"How's that?" she asked.

"Okay, I'll wait, hurry." Julia was getting nervous. What if someone had seen her step into the alley. She crossed the stage and looked out at the multitude of empty seats. The lights only illuminated up to the fifth row; beyond that was darkness. Julia felt uneasy; she kept expecting something to jump at her from every corner.

Withoutwarning the overhead lights went off. Julia stood motionless in the center of the stage. She tried to listen for a sound that would tell her it was only Gretta fooling around, but her breathing filled her ears, and her heart pounded furiously. Beneath the door Julia could see a sliver of light, and it loosened her muscles. The bulb must've burned out, she thought, and gaining courage she said "Gretta." Her voice was no more than a whisper, but it seemed to reverberate throughout the hall. "Gretta," she said louder and took a step toward the light. Her eyes were beginning to adjust to the darkness, and she could see a shadow of a figure standing in the wings. "Gretta, is that you?" She moved toward the form.

Suddenly, the lights blared, stunning Julia momentarily. She saw a flash of movement, felt a sharp pain in her chest, and fell to the ground. Something sticky dripped onto her arm, and she looked up to see a person standing over her. The lights above were blinding and because of the glare, she couldn't make out the face.

"Who stole the show this time?" a voice said.

"Gretta?" Tears were streaming down Julia's cheeks. "Help me."

"Help you?" Gretta laughed. "Who do you think did this?"

Julia tried to get up, but pain cut through her chest and she collapsed.

"How does it feel to be the underdog, Julia, don't like it, do you?"

"I don't know . . ." Julia sobbed.

Gretta kneeled next to Julia. "You stole the lead from me in college." Julia was rocking back and forth, blood covering her blouse and dripping onto the floor. "That part could've changed my life. I could be famous now, but you ruined me, Julia, and now I'm ruining you."

"Gretta," Julia croaked, reaching for her attacker's arm.

"Don't try to apologize now. This wasn't a sudden decision. I've been planning this since the weekend we spent at your parent's house. I was going to do it then, but the timing was wrong; timing is so important." She stood and examined her blood-stained gloves. Then she walked toward the stage door. "Thanks, Julia, for helping me pull this off."

Julia lay sprawled on the stage. Why, she thought. Everything was swirling, and the lights above were growing dim. The shocking pain in her chest was being replaced by a dull throb, and a blanket of darkness covered her as the tears dried on her face.

Anna La Manna

Rio de Janeiro

Rio, your name is poetry,
River of January.
Rims a scallop
Of beautiful bays
The giant mountains rise
Voluptuously from the waters
And white sand beaches —
Leme, Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon.

No matter day or night
You are always alive
You never sleep.
Even before sunup,
The first strollers walk on
Your white sand beaches.
And waves strongly hit your shore
Cariocas jog, run, leap, play ball
Perfecting their bodies,
Along Copacabana Avenue.
And the charming golden-skinned mulattas
Exhibit their swimsuits and bodies.

Along Ipanema beach, a vendor carries his coffee
Machine around his neck.
The sugar loaf soars to the wide blue sky
The "Redeemer" stretches his arms
On the Corcovado Mountain
In a cruciform.
While down below
A violonista strums
His guitar in the Leblon Cafe.

Oh, Rio, Rio, Wonderful City
You are a song of life.

Sandra Carvalho

Evergreen

Tree: A large woody perennial plant consisting of a root system with one or more main roots and their branches and leaves.

I stand alone
Nourished by golden sun
Cooling rain and refreshing breezes
Proudly owning my own special space

Brown spikey pinecones
Rest on my soft green boughs
Chipmunks, birds, squirrels chatter noisily
Violets and buttercups decorate my base

I am serene
In quiet solitude
Firmly rooted in my private place

Then

Swaying gently
Swaying harder

Bending
Bending deeper

Until finally

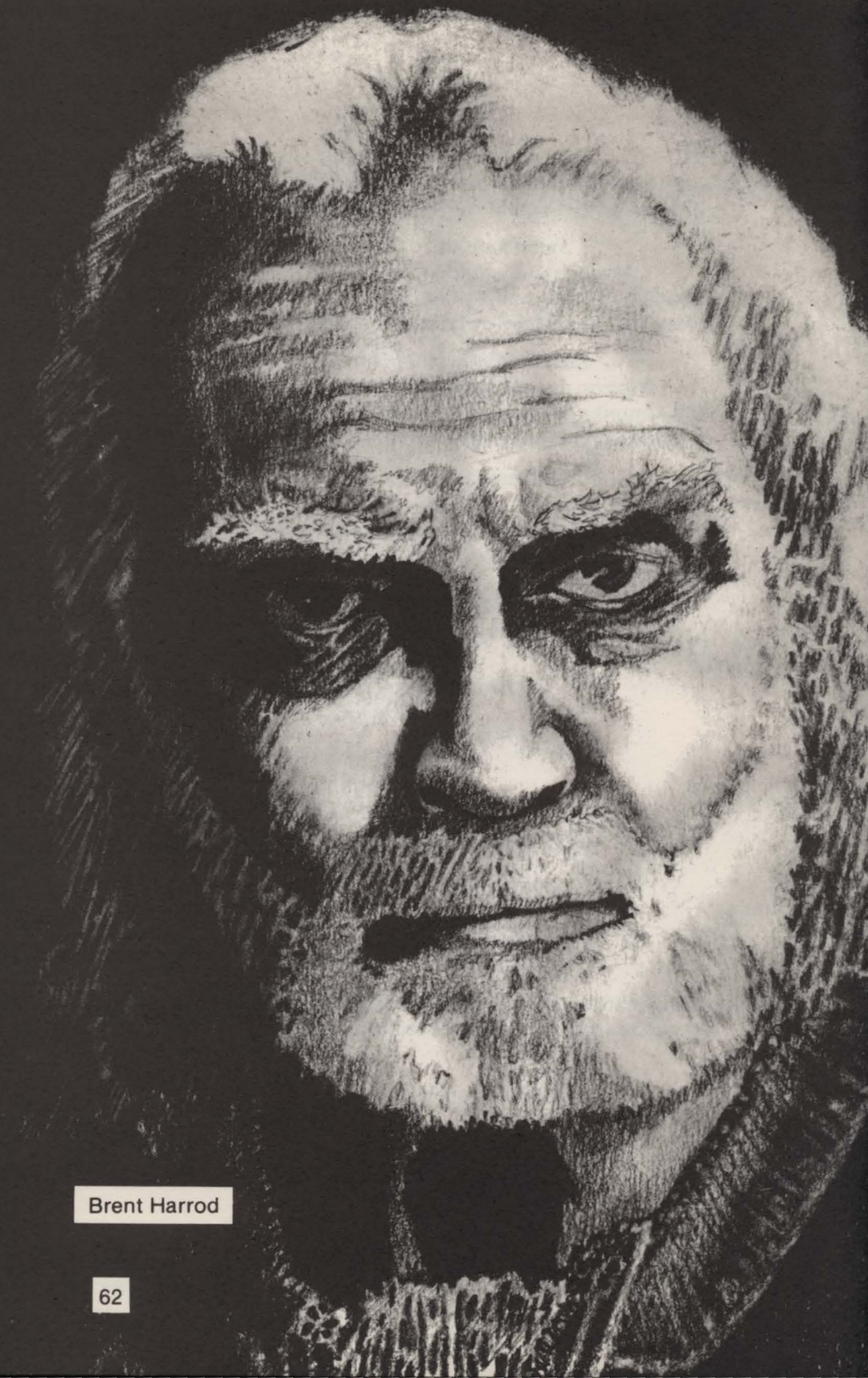
Breaking
Cracking
Crashing

I lie

Wounded
Drying
Dying
Dead

Saw: A cutting instrument with pointed teeth arranged continuously along the edge of the blade; used to divide wood, metal & bone.

Anne Grant Rice



Brent Harrod

Burren nights are not for moon-struck drunkards.
Curses rain from the moon in an old world
(moon of stone and cold standing water),
curses upon the Caliban liquor at hand.
This wandering tomb speaks famine, chastity,
kiss of stone, grip of the pond's green
scum. Prospero's sober moon — no dog,
no bush, old maid with twisted virgin-knot.
O Caliban, first American,
I drink of your American yawp under an old moon,
and remain standing.

John McDonald

The Bridgeport Alps

Over grassy strips & gutter cliffs,
Eroded snow humps lie sooty & melting —
Roots of miniature mountains, which
Two weeks previously, were waist high peaks,
Heaped by blowers, shovels & plows —
The Andes on Wood Avenue,
Jagged Rockies on Norman Street,
And in the Waldbaum's parking lot,
Vast Himalayas were piled
With steam shovels & backhoes.

But a winter's thaw's entrenched.
Street & sidewalks are drying.
Two-hundred million years have been
Compressed into a fortnight —
Inexorable rain, sun &
Car exhaust have effaced these alps.
The runoff has mined caverns &
Natural bridges — they scintillate
With icy stalactite teeth.
And unless the sky glaciers return,

These humps will dissolve into sewers & spring.

Feb. 1982

The Noctambulists (Draft #5)

My Lady & I walked through the
Predawn-November-city darkness.
The freeway groan resounded off houses
And through the stripped, newly dormant trees.

On the streets & lawns, leaves
Were beginning to brown & twist;
Piles had been formed, & large plastic
Bags were filled for the nascent collection.

But my sight was drawn to the sky.
The stars moved & aligned themselves
Into new constellations. My Lady
Laughed & I was paralyzed. She absorbed me;

I fused with her & saw through her eyes.

I realized all the sleeping people,
In the city, were emerging from their
Homes, & wandering the streets.
They seemed unaware of our presence.

(Their eyes were open, but unblinking.)
Many rubbed their hands
As if washing them; some chafed
And scratched so hard they bled.

Others gnawed on their fingers
And arms — biting to the bone.
Others wildly danced in tightly
Wrought circles & figure eights.

Still others massed & stampeded the streets —
They fused into rolling waves of bones,
Muscles, & flesh — Giant millipedes, rolling lengthwise
They toppled trees & overturned cars.

Stray dogs, cats, raccoons & rats were torn apart.
In the wake, tree branches, splattered
Offals, trashcans & signs littered the streets.
Gradually, the torrents lost inertia,

Slowly subsided & collapsed into the
Noctambulists. They returned to their
Doors, & into their beds. The streets again
Became quiet — except for the freeway groan.

The sleepwalkers would never know what happened.
They would wake & go to work, school, play
And hardly suspect the early morning gathering
My Lady & I witnessed as one.

They might feel as if they slept a billion years.

John Domeracki

Margaret Doherty

Suzanne Close