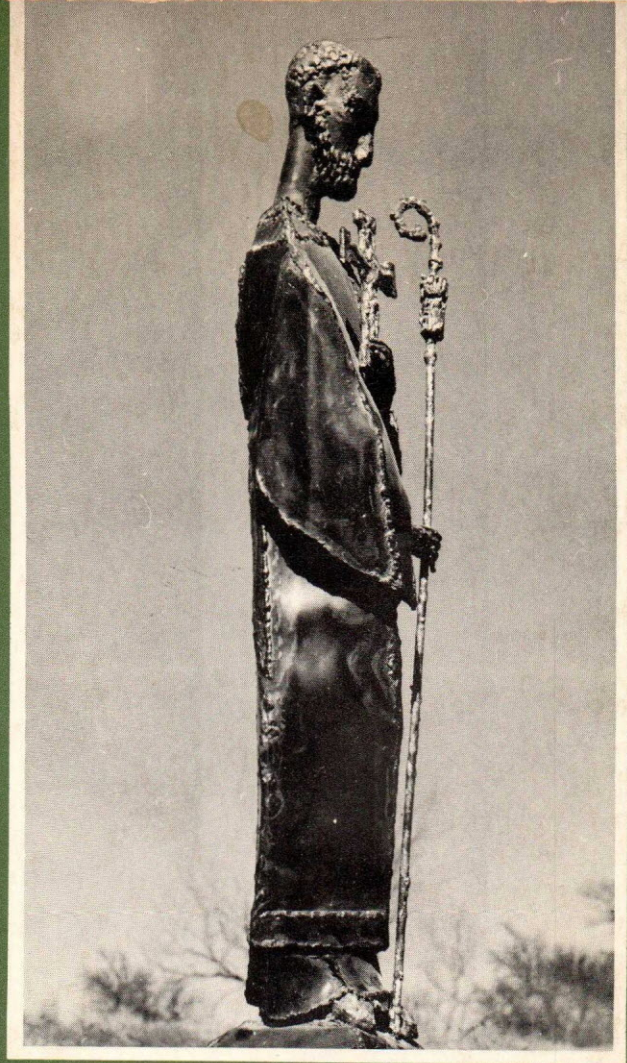


WINTER  
1964



THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

# KERYGMA

A JOURNAL OF COMMENT Vol. IV, No. 1



KERYGMA is a Greek word meaning "proclamation" or "heralding." It originally designated the action of a herald; in the Gospels it takes on the particular connotation of a declaration of the "glad tidings" of Christ's resurrection.

In our context, however, it is a proclamation on a different level—a cultural one. Our major "proclamation" is the fact of an impending choice between a culture that is totally secular and one that is Christian. We do not pretend that what appears in our magazine will always be complete and finished. Sometimes it will be only in the nature of a "kerygma," an idea which is to be developed and expanded later. Ours will be an exploration, an investigation of the implications of Christianity and the University in society.



A Journal of Comment at  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS**

Winter Issue, 1964

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Szeitz, *Pietà*, marble, 24" high



CAROLYN FUCHS

## *Words, Action, and the Modern Novel*

The great concern of the novel, as of all literature, is the nature of man and his place in the universe. Modern novels give us varied and profound images of man: man as dreamer, man as tragic hero, man as victim of overpowering forces, man as ruler of the cosmos, man as *isolato*. Yet the vision of man that is essential to all literature and inherent in all these images is man as knower. For it is his power to know, to understand himself and his world, that distinguishes man from the rest of creation. The man who dreams is able to know his dreams; the tragic hero can understand his conflict. For man, by nature, is involved in a physical order. Yet he alone of all creatures is able to contemplate his experience of this order, to move from the realm of particular actions into the realm of essences. And it is this process of knowing that is a theme of many of the great novels. How can man, rooted in a world of particular, dissociated events, somehow find the meaning of his existence? The answer seems to lie in man's ability to give form to his experience, to shape his actions into a meaningful order, and to express this order in some way. Man cannot exist totally in the realm of experience; unless his actions have a purpose, form, and order, they are meaningless. Yet neither can he exist merely in the realm of the word or idea; his conceptualizations, too, are meaningless if they do not have a firm root in the world of reality. Perhaps Addie Bundren, a character in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, best expresses this concept when she says,

Words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other . . . (Modern Library Edition, p. 465)

It is man's attempt to fuse his words with his actions, to "straddle" the two realms and to become a whole person that accounts for a peculiar tension in the modern novel. It is this tension that draws an Emma Bovary to seek in life the idealized experience seemingly contained in the word



rapture; it is this tension which causes a Frederic Henry, in the midst of the horrors of actual war, to judge such words as *honor*, *glory*, and *courage* meaningless abstractions. In three modern novels as different in structure as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930), Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* (1904), and Robert Penn Warren's *All The King's Men* (1946), this tension between the realm of the idea and the realm of the act is of major importance. Each of these novels expresses the necessity for man to bridge the gap between his words and his deeds, to order his experience, if he is to understand himself and his existence.

The characters in *As I Lay Dying* are well-defined in their response to the events of their existence. Each one is measured in his reaction to the central event, Addie Bundren's death and the ritual of her burial. The thoughts of Addie on her deathbed are dominated by the realization that words are empty unless grounded in meaningful experience. "There are," she says, "the words that are the deeds, and the other words that are not the deeds, that are just the gaps in people's lacks" (466). When her son Cash is born, Addie becomes firmly convinced that words are irrelevant, that "motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there was a word for it or not" (463). She rejects the realm of the word, and rejects her husband Anse because he exists within this realm. She reaches out passionately for action, and her search for meaningful experience culminates in her illicit affair with Whitfield, the preacher. Addie considers sin just a word, a garment worn in the eyes of the world; and she and Whitfield remove the garment to enter the realm of the act, "in order to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air" (466). In attempting to realize herself as a person, Addie seeks pure experience; for her the act is the only reality, the act not motivated by an idea or purpose but sought for itself. Her affair with Whitfield is the most meaningful experience of her life; and she sees it as intimately bound up with her salvation, "because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too" (468).

In contrast with his wife, Anse Bundren exists completely within the boundaries of the word. His experience is translated solely in words, and the contradiction between what he says and what he does is humorously emphasized. The only time Anse ever achieves a semblance of action is when he is forced to act because he gives his promise, his "word," to his dying wife to take her to Jefferson, where she wished to be buried. So he is bound by a word to enact the empty ritual of the journey; but it remains just that for him: empty ritual. He detaches himself at the first



opportunity, leaving the real action to the other characters. His frequent declaration that he "wouldn't be beholden to no man" (419) comes in direct opposition to his habitual lack of action, a lack which causes his sons and neighbors to do for him. When confronted by a washed-out bridge along the road, Anse can only say, "If it was just up, we could drive right on across," (425). And when he faces the grave-site in Jefferson, he says, "If it was just dug" (51). Anse is totally incapable of translating his words into deeds, of making contact with the world of concrete experience. Even the grief which he expresses at the cemetery is grief only in word; on the very day of Addie's burial he marries a new wife and buys a set of teeth he has long desired. Anse and Addie represent the two opposite realms of words and action which must be fused if their relationship is to be meaningful and if they are to be whole persons. But Anse and Addie are not able, together or alone, to mesh the opposites. Anse remains in his world of words, isolated from his wife and family; and Addie rejects Anse's world completely. Neither achieves the necessary synthesis.

The children in the Bundren family share in various degrees their parents' inability to fuse the realm of words with the realm of action. Vardaman, the youngest son, exists almost totally on the level of sensation. The shock of his mother's death is a new experience for him; seeking its meaning, he compares it to his only other experience of death: a dead fish he has brought home from the river. Thus his final understanding of the event is the identification of his mother with a dead fish. Vardaman attempts to relate his experience to concepts; but he is unable to rise above the level of sensation, and he therefore reaches no full human understanding.

Dewey Dell, the daughter of the Bundrens, refuses to relate her actions consciously to words. Through an experience externally like her mother's, Dewey Dell conceives a child. Yet, though her pregnancy is an inescapable physical fact, she refuses to give words to her condition, even to herself. Dewey Dell is determined to keep the conceptual realm separate from her experience. Were she to attach a word to the fact, and name it, she would be forced to accept its reality. And this she refuses to do.

Jewel, the son born as a result of Addie's affair with Whitfield, exists with his mother in the realm of the act. Only for Jewel does the journey and burial have meaning; he fiercely desires to get his mother's body to Jefferson. It is he who always acts; he loads the coffin onto the wagon to begin the trip, he takes the wagon across a flooding river while the others debate a method, he rescues the coffin from the river and from



a burning barn, and he can rest only when his mother is in the ground where she wanted to be. Addie's fierce desire to realize herself in action, which is expressed when she strikes her pupils in school to make them "aware" of her existence, is continued in Jewel. Jewel's horse is his most precious possession; yet he is compelled to beat and curse it violently, to make it physically aware of him. Addie and Jewel share an existence comparable to the existence of the horse, devoid of any word, any conceptualization. For Addie and her son, the act is the only reality.

Darl, the second oldest son, comes nearer to an understanding of their situation than do any of the Bundrens except Cash. Darl is Addie's unwanted child, the product of a 'deception: "It was as though Anse had tricked me, hidden within a word . . . and struck me in the back with it" (464). And Darl is surely the child of the word, though not to the extent that his father is. Darl is able to know the facts of his experience, but he does not act on his knowledge. He knows of Dewey Dell's pregnancy, he knows the secret of Jewel's birth, and he comes to understand the emptiness of the burial ritual. But only once does Darl really act; in an attempt to rob the journey of all purpose, he sets fire to a barn in which the coffin is kept overnight. In his attempt to enter the realm of action, Darl chooses the wrong means to his end. And his deed results in his being pronounced insane.

It is the oldest son Cash who, of all the Bundrens, finally manages to relate words and actions and achieve a degree of understanding of the ultimate meaning of Addie's death in the lives of the Bundrens. Cash, whose birth effects in Addie the realization of the dichotomy between words and deeds, shows his mother's drive toward action. Early in the novel Cash functions totally in the realm of the act. He is a carpenter, and his being is expressed in the work of his hands. He seldom speaks; yet he is able to reach a somewhat comprehensive understanding of himself and his world. We see the first sign of this new awareness in the scene of the river-crossing. In the midst of the action, Cash experiences a moment of heightened awareness, of intuitive understanding. He and Darl "look at one another with long probing looks, looks that plunge unimpeded through one another's eyes and into the ultimate secret place" (439). And at the close of the novel, when Cash learns that Darl will be sent to the sanatorium for burning the barn, he recognizes that he himself had felt the same desire to end the meaningless journey that motivated the barn-burning. And in this knowledge of kinship with Darl, Cash sees the relationship of actions and their motivations. He sees Darl's action was the wrong one, "because there ain't nothing justifies the deliberate destruction of what a man has built with his own sweat and stored the

fruit of his sweat into" (515). Cash alone understands that, though he "ain't so sho that ere a man has the right to say what is crazy and what ain't" (515), it is somehow right for Darl to be sent away from the world of the Bundrens. As he says in the last passage of the novel, "it is better so for him. This world is not his world, this life his life" (532). Cash alone is able to order the events of his existence and come to an understanding of the world of the Bundren family.

In Conrad's *Nostromo*, a novel structurally very different from *As I Lay Dying*, there also appears, interwoven into a highly complex and dimensional theme, this conflict between the realm of words and the realm of action.

Martin Decoud, of all the characters in Conrad's panoramic vision of the world of Costaguana, is the one who can best be called the man of words. Decoud, a European who comes to the South American country of Costaguana during a revolution, is completely out of touch with reality. He exists in the interior world of his ideas and words. It is ironic that Decoud condemns Charles Gould, the administrator of the great San Tomé silver mine, for his idealism, telling Emilia Gould that her husband "cannot act or exist without idealizing every simple feeling, desire, or achievement," without making "them first a part of some fairy tale" (Dell Edition, p. 197). Yet Decoud himself exists within his illusions; nearly all his important actions are directly contradictory to his stated ideals. He says propaganda journalism is "a sort of intellectual death" (169), yet becomes the editor of a revolutionary newspaper; he sees the political situation in Costaguana as comical, yet aids the revolution by bringing small arms to Sulaco. The fact that his actions oppose the values which he has set up as absolute in his world disturbs Decoud; therefore, he never consciously relates the two. He justifies his actions by basing them on his love for Antonia Avellanos; yet when he is left alone on a deserted island, guarding a shipment of San Tomé silver, he realizes that even his love has been an illusion, a "fairy tale" with no lasting significance. There is no one for Decoud to speak to on the island, no one to hear his words; faced finally with inescapable physical order, he "lost all belief in the reality of his actions past and to come" (396). His illusions destroyed, no longer capable even of affirming his own existence, Decoud shoots himself; and his body topples into the imperturbable waters of the Costaguana Gulf, disappearing "without a trace, swallowed up in the immense indifference of things" (399). Decoud has existed in a realm which Addie Bundren would describe as a world where "the words . . . are not the deeds, . . . are just gaps in people's lacks."

*Nostromo*, the magnificent *capataz de cargadores* of Conrad's novel,



appears to exist solely in terms of action. It is he who acts throughout the novel, aiding in the revolution, helping Charles Gould to establish the San Tomé mine, performing any task he is called upon to do. Yet the motivation behind all of Nostromo's action is his reputation with the people of Costaguana. Teresa, wife of Nostromo's patriot-friend Giorgio, tells him he is living his life "for the praise of people who have given you a silly name—and nothing besides—in exchange for your soul and body" (231), "taking your pay out in fine words from those who care nothing for you" (228). He finally realizes that Teresa's accusation is true, that his actions have had no real meaning for anyone, that even his reputation, which he has spent his life in building, consists merely of empty words. Realizing this, Nostromo feels betrayed by the officials of Costaguana, for whom he had worked for years. In return for this betrayal, he resolves to build up his own "material interests" by means of the San Tomé silver. And in so doing he dies a betrayer himself, or he disregards not only his reputation but also the praiseworthy deeds responsible for it. Nostromo dies a thief, attempting to communicate the significance of his existence to a world that will not listen.

Charles Gould, the owner and administrator of the fabulous Gould Concession, the San Tomé silver mine, is dedicated to high ideals. When he first arrives in Costaguana to take over the mine left to him by his father, he says,

What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. (94)

Charles Gould is prepared to go to any lengths to advance the "material interests" of his mine; his high ideals of law, order, and security justify any action he takes. But in the midst of the tumultuous events of the revolution, Charles Gould comes to a realization that these ideals are just words and that his whole existence is held in the firm grip of the San Tomé silver. He finally sees that he holds the mine in the same determined purpose that the bandit Hernandez holds his Campo in the hills of Costaguana. And with this comparison of himself to a bandit, he achieves an understanding of the real meaning of the Gould Concession;

He had gone forth into the senseless fray . . . in defense of the commonest decencies of organized society. His weapon was the wealth of the mine, more far-reaching and subtle than an honest blade of steel . . . More dangerous to the wielder, too, this weapon of wealth, double-edged with the cupidity and misery of

mankind, steeped in all the vices of self indulgence . . . tainting the very cause for which it is drawn, always ready to turn in the hand. (316-317)

Yet Charles Gould is unable to act on his understanding of the mine; ". . . there was nothing for it now but to go on using it. But he promised himself to see it shattered in small bits before he let it be wrenched from his grasp" (317). He is unable to reconcile his ideals and the all-important "material interests." He sacrifices everything, including his noble words; and we last see him returning up the mountain to the mine, a slave to the silver of the Gould Concession and completely aware of his enslavement.

It is Emilia Gould who is able to achieve an understanding wherein words are harmonious with deeds and the events of the world of Costaguana have form and meaning. She "had seen it all from the beginning" (112), the San Tomé mine "hanging over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy, more soulless than any tyrant . . . ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness" (444). And she knows that the "material interests" to which her husband has fixed his entire existence has isolated him from her forever. Emilia's understanding is different from her husband's cold comprehension of his world; she is able to act upon her knowledge. Emilia is described as having "the wisdom of the heart," which "has no random words at its command. The words it pronounces have the value of acts of integrity, tolerance, and compassion . . . expressed in action of a conquering kind" (80). In her "wisdom of the heart" Emilia "straddles the line" between words and deeds; she alone can really understand the ultimate meaning and implications of the events of the world of Costaguana.

Although published nearly five decades later than *Nostromo*, Robert Penn Warren's *All The King's Men* depicts characters involved in conflicts very similar to those of the world of Costaguana.

Willie Stark, the political dictator of a Southern state, is much like Charles Gould. Willie is caught up in the realm of the act; he acts constantly and passionately for the advancement of his state and his power over it. Like Charles Gould he puts his faith in "material interests," justifying his actions with high ideals that have no real meaning. Willie's precious goal is to build a new hospital, and at first he refuses, nobly, to let power politics interfere in any way. But in the end he agrees to compromise, realizing that he is compelled to build the hospital, regardless of method or high ideals that are meaningless words. His speech informing the people about the hospital is reminiscent of Charles Gould's high ambitions for Costaguana:



I am going to build a hospital. The biggest and finest money can buy . . . To heal sickness. To ease pain . . . It is your right . . . I shall live in your will and your right. And if any man tries to stop me in the fulfilling of that right and that will I'll break him . . . And I don't care what I hit him with. Or how!  
(Bantam Edition, p. 262)

Willie, like Gould, comes to a realization of what his power really means in his life; but it is too late for him to act upon his knowledge. On his deathbed, he can only say, "it might have all been different" (400). He has understood the dichotomy between his ideals and his actions, but he never reaches a reconciliation of the two.

Adam Stanton, the doctor Willie chooses to administrate his hospital, exists, like Martin Decoud, in a world of illusions. He lives his life according to the humanitarian ideals he has set up as absolute, never attempting to relate his ideals with real experience. When he learns of his sister Anne's affair with Willie, he is forced to face reality in all its "horror"; and what he sees is in drastic opposition to his ideals. His private network of illusions is destroyed before his eyes; and, in desperation, he kills Willie Stark, the person he blames for the demolition of his world.

The conflicts which prevent both Willie Stark and Adam Stanton from reconciling the realm of the word with the realm of the act are present also in Jack Burden, the narrator of Warren's novel. In the first part of *All The King's Men*, Jack describes himself as a hard idealist. Facts are the only reality for him; but he is not interested in the fact as an actual human experience. To him, facts are mere words, which he can choose to acknowledge or not to acknowledge. The ability to ignore reality at will enables Jack to remain uncommitted to action, to exist within his personal world of illusions. However, when he learns that Anne Stanton, whom he has loved since youth, has become the mistress of Willie Stark, he is robbed of the illusion of Anne by which he has been living his life. Rejecting the realm of ideals, he turns to the Great Twitch, equating human life with mechanistic action, devoid of meaning or consequences, motivated by nothing; "... for names meant nothing and all the words we speak meant nothing and there was only the pulse in the blood and the twitch in the nerve" (310). Life for Jack Burden becomes the actions of men who are nothing more than "complicated mechanisms," and any conceptualization is a mere illusion. But just as Jack is brought to believe in the Great Twitch by an actual fact which he cannot ignore, so he comes to a new understanding when he learns that Judge Irwin, whom he indirectly causes to commit suicide, is his own father. In accepting this relationship, Jack comes to an understanding of man's responsibility for his acts; he

sees that only if he is able to give form and shape to the past and accept his responsibility for it do man's present and future actions have meaning. And Jack is able to understand that the conflict existing between the realm of the word and the realm of the act must be resolved if man is to be a whole person;

Jack Burden could see that Adam Stanton, whom he came to call the man of idea, and Willie Stark, whom he came to call the man of fact, were doomed to destroy each other, just as each was doomed to try to use the other and to yearn toward and try to become the other, because each was incomplete with the terrible division of their age. (436)

Jack Burden finally "straddles the line" between words and deeds and reaches the "wisdom of the heart," wherein he understands the ultimate meaning of his life.

The vision of man given to us in the modern novel is man seeking to understand, to resolve the "terrible division" of the realm of the idea from the realm of the act, seeking to hear, as Addie Bundren puts it, "the dark voicelessness of the words that are the deeds" (466). And we are shown that only by uniting his ideas and his experience does man achieve a real understanding of the ultimate meaning of his existence.



REV. PHILIP SZEITZ, S.O.CIST.

## *Art As Such . . .*

There is no one "Art" *as such*, there are only arts *such as*: creative writing and poetry, musical performance and composition, and painting or sculpture. We designate as art that creativity which is at once spontaneous and controlled. Thus it is not a process of nature, but an intelligent method by which nature is controlled, understood, and interpreted for others.

Visual arts do more than decorate a two or three dimensional surface. Art is the direct transmission of ideas and concepts through the senses of touch and vision. However, above all, art is the most human activity in which mankind reflects God as the Creator Catexohen.

Our human creativity is bound to the material, but has to reflect the mind and the spirit. An understanding of an art work depends on the senses, activating emotions, and the comprehension of the intellect. Art does bend under material limitations and at the same time it strives for metaphysical truth and perfection. Art is not pretentious or categoric, but courageous in exploration, humble in successful accomplishment, and sincere in aspiration.

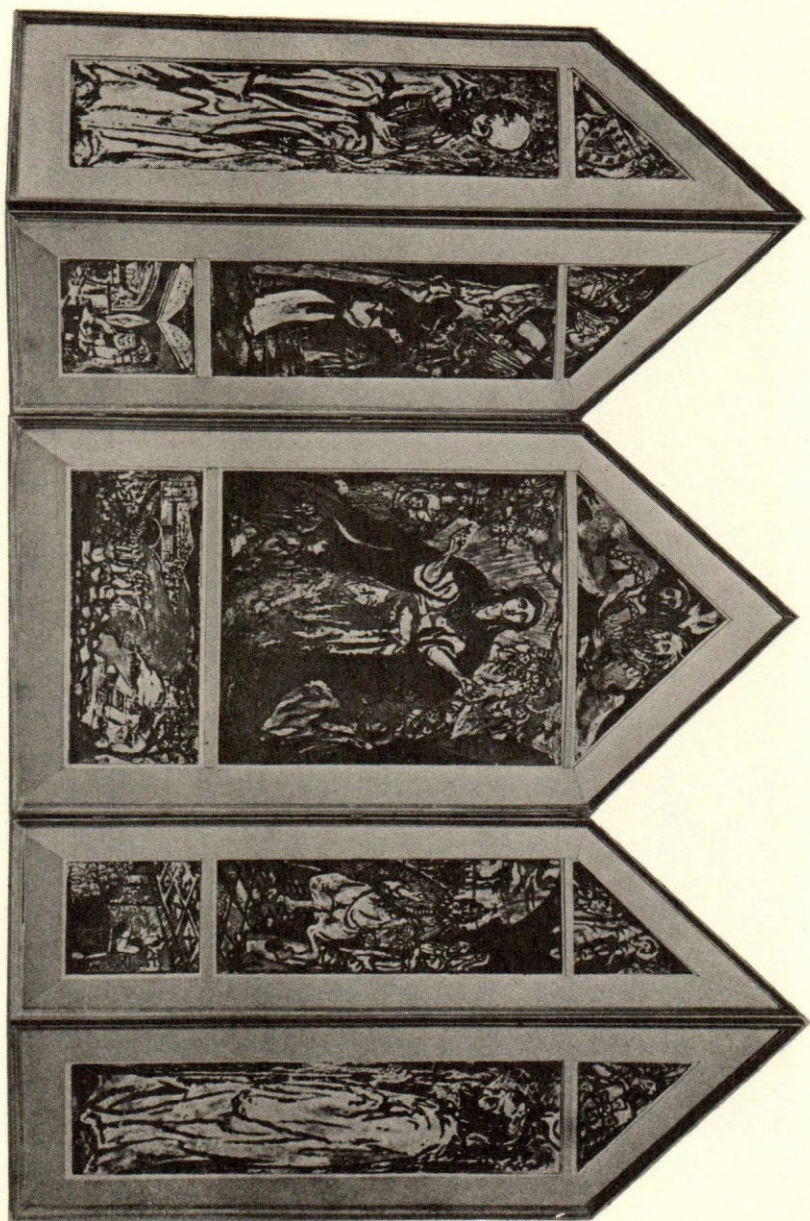


*Szeitz, During the Forty Days, lithograph, 8x11*





*Seitz, O Ye of Little Faith, lithograph, 12x16*



Szeitz, *Cistercian Altar Piece*, aquatint etching, 48x39





Szeitz, *Sorrowful Madonna*, gold leaf and gouache, 14x18



Szeitz, *The Woman of Seraptha*, aquatint, 18x24



## *Junius Crossing*

Junius Lee Wade Sr., that was his pa, minded a store and built a bridge; but Juny Wade looked after the lands in the daytime, when he wasn't in school. And he had them nearly all in his mind like a map. Out behind the house and pens was the old pecan woods, and they stretched back several hundred yards to Potter's Creek that you could wade where it widened out unless it was flood season; but even then you could pole across on a log if you were by yourself or with a friend that was on blood honor not to tell. Then if you kept walking so you could always see the moss on the oak trees to your left or, if it was night, so the Big Dipper was always on your right, you'd come — in what would be a whopping good stones-throw except the woods were too thick to throw stones far — to the old Adams Bridge site on the deep clay slough that only had water in it after a long, steady rain, mostly in the spring. Then you could turn right and walk up the slough about a mile and a half through thick brush and weeds, with all kinds of trees tangled in the woods on your right, and you'd be to the Miller's lands. If you turned left at the bridge site to see what was down the slough, you would wade and wade along its edge through about a mile of sorghum grass and goatweed and brush to the place where the sides of the draw jutted toward each other so you could jump it, but it was wide enough that you'd like to take a couple of your friends and maybe even your pa down there to show them how you could take it; but you couldn't show this place to a living soul. And it looked like almost all pine wood on the other side.

The first time Juny decided to walk down the slough from the bridge site, he was nine years old, going on ten. It was passing cold that day; as a matter of fact, on Christmas just a week before, there had been a little snow on the ground, and Mr. Shannon had come back from his brother's in Collin County and said they'd had a hell of a big snow up there. Right after lunch, Juny went out to play along the road. There really wasn't much to do around the house, and the closest any of his

school friends lived was about eight or nine miles down the Roseboro Springs road. It would have been okay hiding from Indians and shooting at them along the road there, but the rows of pines were planted so regular you'd get outsmarted if you tried to change trees very much. He was running around from tree to tree, trying to outfox the redskin that could have been hiding behind the half-open door of the smokehouse, when he heard a wagon down the road. That'd be Old Lady Shannon — he'd almost forgot today was Saturday. She always came to see his ma on Saturdays, and she always kissed him if he was there when she came in, and that felt like rubbing the insides of a cold, baked sweet potato on your face. And she dipped. So he ran to the house and through the dog-walk, and when he got to the kitchen his ma was already sticking her head out the door asking what all the commotion was. He stopped there and smiled at her.

"Ma," he said, taking her hand and skipping over her question about the noise — she hated for him to run on the porch or the walk — "Ma, you sure do look extra nice today."

"Why, thank you Juny," she said.

He let go of her hand because it was slimy with soap water. "You must feel awful well today," he said.

"Well, yes, I feel tolerable well, but . . ."

"Your hands not hurting you at all today?" he asked.

She smiled. "All right, I'll milk today since you got to start back school Monday. But you be back afore night, hear." She caught his arm before he could get away. "And you get your heavy jacket and cap."

He heard the wagon creaking to a stop out front as he ran in for his wraps and back out, then almost to the milking pen gate his ma hollering "Careful of that slough, Junius Wade. And put on your jacket, or you'll catch your death."

He ran through the milking pen and under the barbed wire as fast as he could, and then into the woods, pulling his leather jacket on. He buttoned it real tight and pulled the fur cap down around his ears just like his ma would have had him do it. And he grinned; he was still shivering, partly from the cold but most from thinking about how he'd finagle his ma into letting him get away before Old Lady Shannon got there.

There were stump holes scattered here and there in the woods, and Juny trotted through, jumping them and pretending to barrel-race through the trees. These really weren't woods — he remembered telling his ma that for ages before she would tell him he could cross the creek — it was just a worn-out old pecan orchard, about fifty acres of too old and



second growth, no-good pecan trees that his great-grandpa duBois had planted and people still laughed about at church suppers and funerals. Mr. Shannon had told him one time how he got it from his pa that old duBois had moved up to Texas from Louisiana back in the sixties because the Yanks had burnt him out; and he couldn't speak a word of English, so it hadn't done any good for the folks around to tell him not to plant all those pecans; then his son-in-law, Juny's Grandpa Wade, had let it go to pot when he and duBois' daughter inherited the place; and Juny's pa had thought of working on the orchard, but he kept too busy running the store in town and, lately, working extra with the WPA men on the new bridge. Not woods, but thick enough that if he wanted to climb a big tree and went far enough towards the creek, people at the house couldn't see him very easy. Juny slowed to a walk and picked up a handful of fallen nuts to throw at the jaybirds that squawked at him. When he was almost to the creek, he heard his mother holler "Juuuneeeee," her voice rising real high on the neeee. He walked on down to the creek and rolled up his pants legs. He was taking off his shoes when she yelled again. He cupped his hands around his mouth like his pa had taught him and answered "Haooh." She had plenty of practice with his name, but it was a long way to holler sentences, and he barely heard her, "Dooon't cross creek," then something about snow. He squinted his eyes and moved around until he could make out the brownish grey wood of the house through the blackish grey blur of pecan branches and could see a red spot shining through that was probably the red dress Old Lady Shannon always wore on Saturdays. That old bittie must be having pains in her corn or something, else his ma never would have thought about snow. But Old Lady Shannon's corn was seldom right except about her shoes being too tight, so he waded into the water. It only came up just above his ankles.

On the west side of the creek, there was real woods; and all along the edge, willows leaning out over their crinkled reflections. And farther in, great big cypress with their tiny leaves and swollen bottoms, some of them with their knees bent up from the ground looking a lot like Goliath must have. There were some pines and bare oaks, and the sweetgums with the bark on the small branches crawling big along each side like tall-backed caterpillars. There weren't just fussy jaybirds in these woods; he could hear blackbirds and mockingbirds, too, and once a screechowl. This was his most favorite place; he'd been crossing the creek for three or four years to ramble in the woods because it was wild and nobody much ever came there, and it was almost like they were really his. He walked around in big circles, looking at the familiar trees — he'd named the biggest ones and the ones that he could climb; the ones he could climb

he'd given big names: Juny Wade Pine II, Juny Wade Pine IV, Juny Wade Elm — and jumping the scattered fallen logs, and ambling through all the same patches of briar and brush he had trampled so many times before. When he got to the patch of dried dewberry vines beside Juny Wade Pine XII, he pushed his way through to the rabbit hole in the middle that he had found back in the summer by chasing the rabbit until she ran into it. That had made him feel good; even getting scratched by the prickly vines had felt good. But now the rabbit just sat at the edge of the hole until Juny got within a few yards; it was Juny Rabbit I. He walked over to the hole and, when the rabbit scampered in, kicked a few leaves in, then sat down beside it.

He looked around him at the trees, seeing mostly only the ones close to him, and the parts of the ones farther away that showed fuzzy through the closer bare limbs. But a little to the left was Oak W., standing head and shoulders above all the other trees around, because he could see pretty much of the top of it sticking up above the closer ones. Oak W. was on a straight line between the creek shallows and the Adams Bridge site on the slough. When he had first seen that oak and rubbed his hands and his back against the rough bark, he had decided then that it would be his first oak to climb, so he had just given it his last initial. Now he walked over to Oak W. and carefully judged the distance to the first limbs. They were almost twice as high as his head. But he remembered the logs lying around in the woods and looked around for chunks short and light enough to handle. He dragged one log back to the oak; then another and another, and pieces to make them fit together better in a tight pile. With each log he added, he felt the beads of perspiration grow like rolled snowballs and drop from his forehead and down his eyebrows and cheeks, but he was still not hot. Soon he had to climb up one, then two logs to add each new one; and every time he made the top of his platform higher, his arms and legs tingled like they didn't know whether they needed to stop or to work harder. Only the bleeding scrapes on his hands were sure. But when he noticed that the oak's shadow was growing faster than his tower, he stopped, cradling one end of a log in his arm, and looked at his platform; and it looked good.

Standing on top of the pile, he reached up. The gap between his hands and the lowest limb was almost two foot. He crouched low and then sprang hard and caught the limb with both hands; he hung there, for a few heaving breaths that turned white in front of his face, and looked at the ground. Then, by swinging his legs back and forth and giving a strong kick at the right time, he wrapped one leg around the limb, then the other. Then he hoisted himself up and hugged the trunk. The lower limbs



were far apart, and he had to lift himself with his arms several times; but higher up, the limbs were close together like stairsteps, and he inched his way until he was above all the nearby treetops. He crawled around to the side that was lit by the sun, opened his pocket knife, and planed off the bark from a place on the trunk until he had a round the size of a plate, smooth but still brown. And he carved in large, careful letters JUNIUS OAK WADE.

Above him, on a topmost branch, a single acorn hung against the wind that had taken all the dead leaves and most of the other acorns, even from the lower branches. He climbed up into the smaller limbs, some so thin that they bent under his feet; but he climbed until the acorn was within reach, pulled it from its twig, and clutched it hard in his skinned hand, the thought sifting through his gritting teeth toward that fist, "Now where's Oak W.?"

The view from the top of his tree was great. Way to the east, he could see the top of the courthouse in Marshall; a few miles south, the new bridge his pa was building over the Sabine; and behind him, he knew before he turned, were the tall pines — taller than even his oak — on the other side of the slough. He put the acorn in his mouth to keep it safe and out of the way while he climbed down. From the bottom limb he jumped to the ground and started running with almost the same bent knees that landed him smooth on the ground. Running toward the slough, he wrapped the acorn up in his handkerchief and stuffed it into his pocket.

He followed a familiar line of trees until he came to the site of the long-rotten Adams Bridge; on the other side he could see the lone monument of what used to be the only bridge across the Sabine for miles, or so they said. The old people said that the slough used to be the Sabine until it changed course way back when, and nobody could remember why. They did say that once, in the big storm of 1900, the river flooded and ran through the slough again and was two rivers; but now this was only a deep, dry draw, a backwater in big rains. And on the other side, lying on the bank, was that one piece of wood, about six foot long and aging into big splinters and chunks, but round enough between the curling spikes that you could tell it used to be part of a piling. Juny had walked up the slough from here several times, all the way to the Millers'; but he'd never seen what was south of the bridge site, so this time he turned left.

As he brushed through the thick weeds, he was a little chilly now, looking down in fascination into the deep gorge of the slough and around in front and to his left for the snakes he knew were asleep but was still scared of. When he got to the place where the top of the draw narrowed,

he tried to remember how many times since his eighth birthday, when his ma had finally told him he could wade across the creek — he had already been doing it since he was six — how many times she had warned him to be careful close to the slough. Just below where the edges jutted out towards each other, there was a long drop in the floor of the slough that made a big wash-hole; and it must have been thirty foot from the edge down to the bottom of that hole. He judged the gap across the top of the gorge at the narrowest place, then backed off, took several deep breaths that burned his nose and throat, crossed his fingers, and ran.

On the other side, he only stumbled a little when he landed, and he sat right there to catch his breath. Looking up at the slough, he grinned and felt the words warm his quivering lips when he whispered "Junius Crossing." But that could mean his pa too — anyway, it wouldn't ever be on the map. He just closed his eyes and sat until he noticed the cold press of air on his cheeks again; then he swivelled around on his numb bottom to look at this world he wasn't supposed to be in. When she'd said, "Of course, you won't try to cross the slough," his ma had explained that it was dangerous and besides, the funny little dwarfs, and the man who was the pan-fixer, all camped out there when they were around, she'd said, and you couldn't trust them.

The woods that he walked into now were all pine trees, tall ones; a lot taller than the ones close to the house. And the limbs didn't start till way up, so the whole top of the woods was a high ceiling of like bunches of thick needles, and he could only see the sun shining through in front of him in patches every once in awhile; the floor was all clear, with just a great big mat of yellow and brown needles, and here and there a briar, or a little huckleberry bush, and poison ivy on some of the tree trunks. He'd found out a long time ago, even if his ma wouldn't believe it, that poison ivy wouldn't make him sick like it did her — it wouldn't even make him itch; he could remember the time he had wallowed in a patch of it right after she had told him not to touch it, and then he'd told her when he got home so he could get his whipping; so he tried to stay away from it now, if it wasn't too hard. The tree trunks were far apart and tall like the columns on the old Doc Roseboro big house, but bigger and growing their own weather brown and peeling paint all the time; they were far enough apart that he could run fast through them, and he turned north so as not to get too far from the slough. It felt good running in the soft pine straw, and there wasn't any wind except what running pushed by his face, so the cold in his mouth and nose didn't burn much, and it tasted good with the tingle of pine. He couldn't hear anything but the crunch of straw under his shoes and the chirping of wrens he knew



of red. The dwarfs were dancing again; and the red underside of the woman's apron flew up as she twirled around. He walked slowly back to the cedar, watching the dwarfs; and he stopped beside the tinker.

Without stopping his dance, the tinker asked, "What do you want now?" The candle-glow flitting across his face as he danced, smoothed out the wrinkles.

Juny reached into his pocket, watching the dancers' shadows on the ground. He pulled the handkerchief from his pocket and looked up at the tinker. "Sir, could I stay for awhile?" He held the acorn out on its wrinkled wrap.

"Kevin," the tinker called softly, and the youngest dwarf stopped dancing, "the young man has a gift for you."

At the first light after false dawn, the little man showed Juny the way he was to go and told him goodbye. He headed straight east through the pine forest, guiding by the sunlight that sliced through between the tall trunks. He heard a murmur ahead of him, and when he came in view of the slough, hard on the Adams' Bridge site, he could see it was full and flowing like a river. But he saw the old piling, sharp slabs curling out from it with age, pulled it down to the edge of the slough and wedged himself in among the splinter-branches, and pushed off into the new-filled old river. He paddled with all his might, but when he got to the middle of the stream, the current had carried him so far that just ahead he could see the narrowing where he had crossed the slough. He took a deep breath when his raft entered the strong eddy, then down and the piling caught in the bottom of the wash-hole; he could tell by squirming a little that he was too well secured in the splinters of his bark.

The water wasn't near as cold, when it seeped inside his jacket, as he'd thought it would be; and it felt funny and good all over the way the current pushed by his back and sides, sort of like your stomach feels when you go real quick over the top of a hill. Looking up, he saw the things floating over: sticks and pine needles and a few pine cones. And it was amazing how they were all pretty and silvery on the bottom from the air bubbles they held — just as silver as the big gar, his head gashed from hitting a rock or log, that brushed by his side and swept past. He watched the gar as far as he could down the river, then looked back up at the silvery things on top. And he wished his pa could've been there — his pa would have liked these things. Then he took one long, warm breath.

## II

The tinker and his family were at the edge of the wash-hole, watching Juny when he went down. And they stayed until noon, knowing that the

melted snow upstream which had swollen the Sabine so suddenly into its old bed would just as quickly subside. When the current had slowed enough that the bottom of the pool was visible, they could see Juny's body, his face turned up and blueing with cold and death, and they went back to their lunch and sleep before the night's frolic.

On the next day, the dwarfs returned after noon to see Juny; he was wrinkled and white as the snow that had covered Collin County. Satisfied, they returned to their camp beside the big clearing.

The third day, just before dusk they found the water sunk below Juny's ankles and his wrinkled face browning from the sunlight. After studying Juny's body carefully from the edge of the slough the tinker told his family to go back and break camp so that they could move on. "Wait, Kevin," he stopped his son who had started to waddle off with the others, "When you fill in the chart for our coming back here, mark this place Junius Crossing."

### III

Throughout the week, the sheriff, his hounds less guide than confusion in the washed lands, and his search party combed the Wade lands. They had to go back to the Wade house for rope when they found Juny's body, and when they brought Junius and Kathleen Wade and the Shannons and their other friends and the preacher to the wash-hole in the slough, nobody said anything for awhile, some of the women sobbed and sniffed, and the preacher asked if they wanted to pray. Junius Wade looked at the little body hanging from the splitting pile stuck in the bottom of that hole; and, except for the pants and shrunken leather jacket, wouldn't have recognized as his son's that corpse with its face brown and wrinkled like the countenance of a Methuselah who might have looked up from his stoop and seen something too good to take his eyes from.



ALLEN F. REID

## *The Law*

A birdshot mole slept softly next your nose;  
Your smile curved more steeply to the right;  
And you stood five-feet-four. Within your sight  
I brightened as a torch-lit cat's eye glows.

You mingled with the bathers on the shores,  
Yourself till some procrustean effect  
Regularized your face so your aspect  
Was one of several standard five-feet-fours.

From waves no siren strains, but lapping, loud,  
"The Law! The Law!" and then "The Law" anew.  
And on the beach the group which engulfed you  
Swirled into the milling, surf-bound crowd.

The human swell flowed down the tide-washed lee  
Into the lap of placid, velvet sea.

RICHARD CARVILLE

## *The Sculptured Face*

Mud, shady formless untimed ooze,  
Lurks in the dark-bottomed ditch:  
The object of the careless fallen  
Man's curse. Yet time and blind  
Caring scrape and rub of the man's hands  
Mould of the mud a cherished selfless  
Formed half-smile face, now seen and realized  
Light-giving sun shrivels the moulded mud,  
Once wet wrapt cool face, makes it  
Cracked and wrinkled crumbling earth,  
And somehow saves the brown-boned face:  
The sun-breath wind exalts the mud,  
Now blessed dust afloat in morning mists.



SISTER FRANCES MARIE MANNING, S.S.M.N.

## *Locum Habitationis Glorïae Tuæ*

*Ps.XXV*

Then suppliant bands approached with sacrifice  
To give by proxy lives of youth in prime  
Of beauty or of strength. Bedecked with thyme,  
The heifer stood submissive to the price  
That could propitiate where none suffice  
But firstlings of flawless flocks and vine—  
And this in sacred grove or other shrine  
Ennobled by all decorous device.

They sensed instinctively that deity  
Enthrones in tabernacles built with hands  
Or consecrated by man's piety.

But Delos and the sibyl's utterance  
Were stilled when Nazareth and Christ became  
The local habitation and the Name.

RICHARD BAKER

## *A Reply to a Poem (BB)*

a poem deserves a poem, a prayer a prayer  
in lands where loves are few and everywhere  
are sprouting seeds of human hemlock. gods  
are dead; the only truths are sung by bards:  
so say some who flew and fly now more  
from sandalled time. and others do implore  
the scoreless weeds that blush in season then fail  
as deities, name as Eden this passing jail  
that we, as ancient men, must see as barred  
and love as such though we are bent and marred  
by such ironic impress.

a love like ours  
the world has seldom had, that needs the flowers  
for flowery things, that cherishes sand for time's  
onflowing sake and lastly as heavenly lime.



RICHARD BAKER

*When Flowers Hold You in Your Hands*

When flowers hold you in your hands  
And lilies lisp your lips, I'll sow  
My salt and reap no return, inter  
My tears and plant no more than if lead  
Were my seed and sea my soil; but now  
My need is green, demands your hands,  
Your gown of graceful weeds, a bed  
Of grass grown brown by lying. Prefer  
This to then we do and must  
And weave our sheet while looms remain  
And love like this before we're dust  
For lovers are fleshless meeting again.

MADELEINE BECAN

## *The Last Owls and Lustlarks to Sing*

The last owls and lustlarks sing the dawn  
(The morning is hissing in mist)  
The birdsong shatters and splashes the lawn  
and the vineyard's no longer our tryst.

Quiet and horror greet the noon  
(The field is melting with mice)  
The hanging skull drips in the bloodwash of June  
and the weedweb is spun with a splice.

Where shall we go then, after eve?  
(The serpent is twining the vine)  
and the lark in the dark preys and pecks at the weave  
of the sleeve red and worried with wine.



MADELEINE BECAN

## *Aftermath*

When you called, stricken in the shining wind  
not eased by gullclouds still sky-thinning,  
I waged elsewhere, rain and tempest spinned  
in winds of my own winning.

Now let me (wonder if the spinning rain's  
still maiming brainstrikes in the weather)  
let me rub the hand along the veins,  
and wear me for a feather.

If you say (birdclouds warn the waning sun)  
the day, three-quarters gone, is brighting,  
I shall say the rainblamed cloud's undone  
the worry of a jagged lightning.

GEARY BLANKENSHIP

## *Ruth*

*(upon viewing Heri Bartsch's "The Reaper")*

A copper tanned and iron anatomy,  
with hemigrapefruit teats and teasing hips,  
supports a mantled head with unmouthed lips  
that sit unmoved in widowed agony.  
It seems a hollow, metal reverie  
except for muscled strength that almost rips  
a sheathing dress, and for tender grips  
that grasp our minds to grassy mystery.

Miles removed from Moab and holy writ,  
she braces against london bridge's end  
with plants footed firmly in her hands.  
Hollow eyed, she contemplates the wheat  
she holds, dead hard hunger's godsend,  
and oh! hard mettled handsome holy stands.



GEARY BLANKENSHIP

*Winter: An Argument*

Margaret, are you grieving for the quack  
your childhood duck has quit? Your eyes were dryer  
when he stood upright and when the pyre  
grove was golden and songs not quite so black.  
But kiss the colding earth of red (from lack,  
not living blood) -leaf days, and feel the fire  
catch ground at your lips' loss. And when the lyre  
plays wintry notes, don't run: it's at your back.  
The dirt will deal more maybe misery  
before it's full. But Margaret, you must take  
a standing stoop into death's thieving hoar  
and be instructed how, while luxury  
of youth lets stubborn selves cry Janet's wake,  
it must be Margaret, and more, you mourn for.

DONA SPAWN

## *The Group Mind*

A Review of Mary McCarthy, *The Group*, New York:  
Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1963

It seems a bit late for another review of Mary McCarthy. Indeed, most of that which needed to be said about the merits of her book, *The Group*, has already been brought out in the numerous reviews that have appeared all over the country. Some of the most serious literary journals have discussed her book and, in many cases, have made allowances for Miss McCarthy that, one would hazard, they would not have made for any other living writer. Indeed, she has been treated with what amounts to a fond indulgence. Her second chapter has apparently been the object of the most frequent critical "forgiveness." As one reviewer in *Newsweek* put it, the chapter was written as a guarantee of the novel's popular success and has really very little to do with the literary merit of the rest of the novel. But it does seem that if one is to forgive the second chapter, the third must also be excused from consideration. Surely the offensively graphic sexual descriptions in the second chapter are no more a guarantee of the popularity of the novel than is the story of the young woman on her first trip to a doctor as a prelude to the continuation of an affair. What is puzzling about the success of this novel is that it has been so widely accepted in authoritative literary circles. In recent months *The Saturday Review*, *Encounter*, *Atlantic*, and the *New York Times Book Review* have carried reviews which, although they do not acclaim it as do some of the more popular journals, treat it and Miss McCarthy with a great deal of meditation. No critic has dared not to take the novel seriously. And, perhaps, this explains the careful distinctions drawn in some reviews between the "popular" side of the novel and its more seriously "literary" aspect. But whether we can guess Miss McCarthy's intention or even the extent of her willingness to compromise seems irrelevant. If we are to take the book seriously and do it justice, then it does seem that we must assume Mary McCarthy's sincerity in all its parts. And the success or failure of the book must be determined on the basis of its whole structure and intent.



What is the over-riding purpose of this piece of fiction? On the level of plot, it is the story of eight Vassar graduates of the class of 1933. Miss McCarthy has said that her purpose in writing this story was to illustrate the various philosophies by which people tried to live during the New Deal era, and to view the ultimate, somewhat humorous, disappearance of these philosophies in the minds of the people who adopted them. The girls are all shown trying to live by different principles, and even their stories seem separate in the novel. They seem to have no real effect on one another, even though at Vassar they were a group and shared the common desire "not to be like mother." In the novel, three events bring them together: first, the wedding of Kay Strong, the "behavioristic" philosopher of the group and at the same time the most earnestly Mid-western; second, a party; and, finally, Kay's death. Thus actions in which Kay is the central figure provide a frame for the novel. She is the first to break with convention. She issues all invitations to her wedding by telephone; marries a writer, Harald Petersen; and lives totally independent from her family. She does not divorce her husband even after, on a whim, he has attempted to have her committed to a mental hospital. Harald considers himself one of a select few who are above law, ethics, and criticism. For many years Kay believes in his genius, works at Macy's, and is proud of him. But she becomes more and more repugnant to him, and he even begins to resent her adulation. Finally she is forced to divorce him and to immerse herself in volunteer war work, until one day she falls out of a hotel window while trying to spot a plane for the Civil Air Alert.

Kay is more of a device than a central figure. Her actions reveal some of the peculiarities of the group as a whole. At her wedding the girls are somewhat appalled by the unconventional:

The knowledge shared by them all of Kay's having 'lived with Harald' filled them with a sudden sense of the unsanctioned. They glanced stealthily around the chapel and noticed for the nth time the absence of parents or *any older person*; and this departure from convention, which had been such fun before the service began stuck them now as queer and ominous.

Apparently Miss McCarthy herself does not approve of the conventional. But neither does she approve of these girls who attempt unconventionality. When Libby MacAusland, a would-be publisher's assistant, is fired from her job, she cannot take her failure with modern good humor. Miss McCarthy deviates from her rather straight-faced narrative and addresses an audience, which she assumes to be female, in the tone of a gossip spreading the latest story: "She took a step backward, and girls, can you imagine it, she fainted kerplunk into Mr. LeRoy's arms."

What Miss McCarthy seems to be saying is that, in spite of the new philosophies, the girls are hopelessly conventional. One is tempted to believe, at first, that the failure of the philosophies to produce a lasting way of life indicates a mistrust of the liberal principles they embody. Priss, who is married to a doctrinaire husband and who tries out Dr. Spock's method of substitution on her son, is a total failure as a mother. Norine Blake, who subscribes to the school of free expression, is depicted as an impossible boor. But one would suggest that, if anything, the novel attacks the conventional and the traditional. There is, in the final scene of the novel, a striking manifestation of this idea. Elinor Eastlake, who had been the most beautiful and intelligent member of the group, and who had spent most of her time in Europe until immediately before Kay's death, turns out to be a lesbian. Only she has dared, with success, the unconventional. The girls wonder, with subtle conventionality, if she will frown on them for not being lesbians. And it is she who strikes a fatal blow at Harald, who still thinks himself above any established code. Harald appears unexpectedly at Kay's funeral and asks Elinor to let him go with her to the cemetery. She agrees and, on the way, he makes some rather interesting overtures to her:

Christ, don't be conventional . . . I don't expect that of you. You and I understand each other. I might have loved you, Lakey, if you weren't a lover of women. You might have saved me; I might have saved you. You can't love men; I can't love women. We might have loved each other—who knows? We're the two superior people in a cast of fools and supernumeraries.

It is appalling to Lakey that Harald should put himself in a class with her, and she vows revenge for the group. She allows Harald to think that she has had an abnormal relationship with Kay. And when Harald does assume that such a relationship existed not only between Lakey and Kay but between Lakey and all the others, he blurts out: "You're rotten . . . Completely rotten. Vicious. Did you corrupt the whole group? What a pretty picture!" And we are told that Lakey "was content; she had forced this dreadful man at last to be truthful; the fact that he revealed a hatred of 'abnormality' was only to be expected." And it is apparent that Miss McCarthy expects us to approve of this revenge. Lakey is the free spirit that Harald (and everyone else in the novel) would like to be.

Strangely enough, Miss McCarthy has said that she intended her book to be humorous. The blurb sheet describes it as a "sad-funny" story. Possibly the clearest indication of Miss McCarthy's humorous intent is to be found in the point of view she adopts for her narrative. Certainly



the story, characters, and events are not in themselves humorous. The point of view may be classified as that of the omniscient observer. But it is an omniscient observer with a biting personality who continually makes value judgments and uses the kind of language that indicates a definite type. Such statements as "and, girls, can you imagine it" reveal the narrator's penchant for gossip. The reader is painfully conscious all through the novel that perhaps he is hearing something he shouldn't. And one must admit a certain amount of regret at having heard the stories, the extremely intimate stories, of these eight women. The book might well be a case history in abnormal psychology but for the fact that Miss McCarthy is presenting these characters with some criticism of life in mind. They are, she would have us believe, the *status quo*. All of them are after some kind of fulfillment which they are unable to attain because of their conventional upbringings. Only Lakey and one other character, Polly Andrews manage to achieve some kind of freedom. Polly is "unconventional" because she takes her somewhat insane old father to live with her. If Miss McCarthy were criticizing this kind of conventionality in favor of deeper values, the novel might have achieved some success as satire. But she never quite lets us see the values that she would use to replace the old ones she mocks. She approves of Polly Andrews but she also approves of Elinor Eastlake. It would seem that she is advocating, like Polonius, that the highest value is to be true to oneself. In the place of standards she has attempted to substitute a kind of general maliciousness. She ridicules her characters relentlessly and the reader is forced to accept the ridicule, and concur with it, without knowing why.

Miss McCarthy is not Jonathan Swift. And if she were able to master the bitter, satirical irony of the master, there would still remain grave difficulties with the novel. Her theme is too private; her characters are too one-sided. Is Miss McCarthy's purpose satirical? One must assume that it is. But she demonstrates no fidelity to this purpose. She is content to interject a kind of "tongue-in-cheek" comment from time to time which is itself funnier than the scene she describes. Sex is what she is best at describing. Yet it is hard to believe that it is the function of the novel to present such clinical and private descriptions simply for their own sake. It would be difficult to separate Miss McCarthy's novel from any one of a hundred pocket novels that are written to satisfy the almost childishly innocent curiosity of the reading public. But the "reading public" would never identify itself with Mary McCarthy's characters. The serious reader of literature, on the other hand, is unable to identify with her purpose. And so, in a strange way, her novel remains an unclassifiable failure. But it is nonetheless a failure.

SUSAN FRENCH

## *Fellini's Fraction*

The genius of Federico Fellini has twice made outstanding contribution to the now impressive maturity of the art film. His sensitively beautiful *La Strada* and raucously expressive *La Dolce Vita* are concerned with man's Odyssean journey for self-identification in a world of stupified brutality. Fellini's latest movie, *8½*, focuses upon this same general theme of man's search for the knowledge or truth which would preserve his personal identity and meaning. More particularly, *8½* is the portrait of an artist caught in the inhibiting vice of social pressures which corrupt and nullify the sanctity of his artistic vision.

As in the former two films, Fellini uses the first sequence of action to present the theme of the film. The entire episode takes place in total, relentless silence. We see the hero, Guido Anselmi, played by Marcello Mastroianni, caught in a traffic jam in a car slowly filling with carbon monoxide. Attempting to escape from the poisonous fumes, he looks to the surrounding automobiles for help, but their occupants merely gaze upon his dilemma with the cold, blank stare of disengaged observers. Finally, he frees himself from the locked car through its roof-hatch and floats upward in a joyous release from bondage. He is then seen high over a sea-side beach with a rope tied to his leg, the rope being held by someone on the beach who appears to be connected with the staging of a movie. Another man comes riding up on horseback, and breaks the eerie silence of the first scenes as he shouts, looking at a script in his hand, "He must definitely come down!" Guido attempts to untie the rope, and in so doing tumbles headlong into the sea.

The next scene reveals that the previous episode was a dream—the first of a series of such flights within Guido's mind which continue throughout the film illustrating and emphasizing the personality of the hero and his dilemma. Guido is a famous and talented movie director who has just related this vision to a psychiatrist whom he has consulted in hopes of remedying his dissatisfaction with his work. His search for



inspiration is objectified in the figure of a beautiful girl in white who appears and reappears in his mentally troubled moments. She is known only as Claudia and is his elusive muse.

Constantly surrounded and inhibited by numerous professional assistants and film followers, Guido finds his directing talents subjected to ever increasing pressures, and his dream of near suffocation in the traffic imprisoned car mirrors this predicament. Prolonged escape, however, is impossible as Guido's dream instructs him when he attempts to untie the rope from his leg only to fall into the sea, that powerful symbol of what Joseph Conrad in *Lord Jim* called "the destructive element."

Although the relevant passage from *Lord Jim* may not have been the inspiration for Fellini's opening scene, its similarity of description and intent is significant in illustrating Fellini's objective. The Conrad passage bears quoting:

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb into the air as inexperienced people endeavor to do, he drowns . . . . The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up. (*Lord Jim*, Rinehart Edition, p. 184.)

The quotation does much to clarify Fellini's initial theme. Guido must immerse himself in life rather than escape from it into the protective clouds of isolation, and with the exertions of his mind and heart he must make the deep and murky reality keep him up. Fellini is saying in the dream sequence that although Guido feels smothered and inhibited by the world in his search for true artistic expression, he must, necessarily, for the very success of the creative process, re-evaluate his position in the human condition and recognize its underlying truth. The only words to break the silence of the opening scene, "He must definitely come down!" emphasize the necessity of the artist's struggle to create a work of art. Guido must not try to isolate himself from the earth, or "climb out into the air." As an artist, he must find in the forms and substances of the world not only the inspiration for his vision but the means of representing it in lucid and intelligible form.

Herein, we have sharply displayed the guiding motivation of the film, its thematic basis, now ready for expansion and expression in the remaining action of the movie. What must now occur and, thus, what becomes the task of the rest of the picture is the presentation of those subtle causes of either Guido's success or failure in recognizing his position as an artist. However, the movie fails to deliver its promise of a structurally developed analysis of Guido's artistic plight.

The ensuing scenes verify and re-emphasize Guido's binding captivity among the waste and muddlement of the world. Guido is unable to find a source for inspiration in any aspect of his surroundings. His artistic conflict centers around the production of his next film, a film which dissatisfies him because it offends his artistic standards. In an attempt to find the missing link in his creative process, Guido goes to a sophisticated health resort, famous for the healing effects of its mineral water. Here, within the confines of what he hopes will be a literal baptism, Guido experiences dreams of his childhood which have heavy and moral implications for the sterility of his condition. Because as a child he had been made to feel "guilty" about his innocent curiosity about a whore, Saragina, whom the priest in his gymnasium called "the Devil," Guido begins to believe that part of his artistic restraint stems from the "Catholic conscience in his society." Later, because his wife refuses to understand his tortured situation, especially as it involves his indiscretions with other women, Guido encounters renewed checks upon his creative impulses: "I don't have the courage to say anything." Everywhere he turns he meets another obstacle of society which blocks and prohibits the valid expression of his talents, and the deadline inflicted by his producer is an immediate pressure that he cannot ignore. In short Guido feels himself persecuted by the world around him, for he cannot see in its laws a fundamental order and basis for truth. The most elaborate dream of the movie exemplifies Guido's tendency to fall back upon an idealized solution to his problems: he envisions all the women of his past and present as living under the same roof, with him and his wife, who obligingly assumes the role of head-mistress. And, even more ideally, he imagines that they are all contented, for nothing is hidden in this arena of femaleness; all is in the open, and thereby free from sin and social restraint.

In this dream Guido returns home with arms laden with presents for his adoring string of women. They cluster about him excitedly, each one administering to some aspect of his comfort. Because Guido is pleased by their attention, they, in turn, are contented. The conflict in the dream itself arises out of the objection of one of the women, who, because she has reached the "certain" age, has been sent "upstairs" into retirement. This particular woman, an exotic dancer, receives permission from Guido to do one last performance, her specialty number, for the entire household. At the end of her act she breaks down in tears, and sobs to Guido to let her stay with him. "I'm not too old," she says. But Guido commands that "the rules of the house" be obeyed and she must go upstairs beyond the reach of his benevolent presence. The other women take pity on the poor dancer and begin to scream uproariously at Guido for being



unkind and ruthless. He picks up a long black whip and flourishes it around the room. The disorder grows wilder and more chaotic, orchestrated with screams as the aroused females run away from the fierce pop and snap of the whip. Then, suddenly, all is quiet. Guido stands triumphant. One woman comments to a newcomer in Guido's harem that such activity is ritualistic, occurring once a day: "It's so exciting!" she says. With perfect tranquillity restored, all the women sit down with Guido at the long dinner table to eat the soup that Guido's wife has prepared. As the dream ends we see the wife happily scrubbing the kitchen floor, full of contentment because she is allowed to contribute to such collective domesticity.

There is a startling and unsettling contrast between this dream and the initial one. Apparently the first has been completely negated; Guido has learned nothing from his fall into the sea. In fact, after the dream of the arena of women, Guido retreats further and further into the realm of his fantasy until it is difficult to detect what is actually reality and what is a dreamy substitute.

And yet the climax of the picture would have us believe, through the compressed images of a mental suicide and rebirth, that Guido makes "the choice of a free man" when he refuses to make the mediocre picture urged upon him by a greedy producer. We are to believe that Guido, in refusing "to erect a void out of a void," in not "leaving a crippled footprint in the sand," makes the proper artistic commitment to the integrity of his creative vision. However, as I have tried to illustrate, there is a preponderance of evidence which suggests that Guido's commitment is at least open to the charge of insufficient motivation.

During most of the movie, Guido is seen retreating further and further into fantasy. If we are meant to understand the dreams as representations of his mental states, that part of his personality which is artist loses ground steadily to the picture-making escapist. We never see Guido obtain any lasting knowledge of himself as artist. Where and when does he "definitely come down"?

Fellini does not develop his theme into an integrating and shaping element within the totality of the film's structure. There is an uncontrolled ambiguity in the climax of the picture which seriously undermines the theme so brilliantly presented at the outset. Though the imagistic impressions resulting from Fellini's camera artistry are comparable to the impressions of lyric poetry, their rendering of shades and refinements of meaning is ultimately pointless. The result is an exhibition of images which Fellini desires to be intensely symbolic but which, at the end of the movie, are still in search of significance.

SUE STACY

## *Miller's Quest for Post-Edenic Happiness*

Arthur Miller's latest play, *After the Fall*, concerns the attempts of a once-successful lawyer to arrive at an understanding of his life in terms of the responsibility he must assume for his actions and for the effect of these actions on others. Like Miller's other heroes, Quentin, the lawyer, is trapped in an unloving world; unlike them, he comes to view himself as a causative agent in that lack of love.

The play opens on a stage bare of furnishings except for one chair and a bleak tower in the background. Isolated from mankind by his inability or unwillingness to give or accept love and haunted by the fear that he "is simply destroying himself," Quentin begins his quest as he engages in conversation with the "Listener," an intelligence beyond the footlights whom Miller says may be God or a psychoanalyst.

The opening monologue begins: "Hello! God it's good to see you again! . . . I have a bit of a decision to make . . . it's one of the things I wanted to talk to you about . . . I met a woman . . . I'm not sure, you see, if I want to lose her, and yet it's outrageous to think of committing myself again . . . " The woman is Holga, a German archaeologist, and she provides the motivation for Quentin's self-searching, and hence for the play. The dramatic conflict arises from Quentin's indecision over "committing" himself again; for with two divorces behind him, he feels his life has been a progression of failures and that he has nothing to bring to a third marriage unless he can understand the past.

The task of ordering Quentin's past is accomplished by a series of flashbacks depicting characters and circumstances who influenced his failures. The first figure from the past is Felice, a dancer, who has divorced her husband because she felt she needed to go "toward something"; she feels that life must have more interest than "how much mileage you got on a Volkswagon." She is an optimistic believer in her own actions and judgments, and as the play develops we see that she mirrors Quentin's pre-



lapsarian view of himself and his actions. She tells him: "I'll always bless you. Always!"

As Felice retreats into the recesses of the past, Quentin recalls his mother's funeral. "She's under the ground, but she's not impressively dead to me . . . I don't seem to know how to grieve."

In the next tableau, Quentin comments on his fathers paroxysmal reaction to his wife's death. "This? I hadn't thought of this as grief. I hope it is." Quentin has realized that in some manner his emotions are not quite human, and this realization begins his refutation of his and Felice's blessing of himself.

As Quentin's dramatized memory calls forth the other women in his life—his first wife Louise, his second wife Maggie, and Holga—a pattern of self-recognition begins to emerge as a directing force in the drama. Louise exposes to Quentin the underlying flaw in his character which makes him less than a whole person and has led him into the pattern of failure which dominates his life. "You don't pay any attention to me . . . The way you behave toward me . . . I don't . . . exist. Quentin, I am not a praise machine! I am not a blur, and I am not your mother! I am a separate person."

Louise's accusations force Quentin to realize that he does not recognize her as an individual because he himself cannot be an individual. He recalls a friend and teacher, Lou, who had asked Quentin to defend him before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Quentin agreed not because he believed that Lou was innocent, but because he dared not individualize himself by acting on principle. "I really don't want to be known as a Red lawyer; and I really don't want the newspapers to eat me alive; . . . I don't know how to say that my interests are no longer the same as his, and that if he doesn't change, I consign him to hell because we are separate persons."

Quentin is driven to ask Louise: "When you finally become a separate person, what the hell is there?" and she answers, "Maturity." For Quentin maturity would consist of positive actions arising out of a faith and courage in the validity of his own knowledge of right and wrong. He recognizes this quality in Lou's comrade, Mickey, who is also subpoenaed. But Mickey has come to the realization that the Communist Party advocates a doctrine he can no longer support; and because he is courageous and independent he is able to act upon his beliefs. He begs Lou to reject the Party. But Lou cannot dare to exist as himself. He cannot free himself from the political morass he recognizes to be a lie, just as Quentin is unable to free himself of the entangling alliances with Lou. Unable to

reconcile his beliefs with his actions, Lou commits suicide. With Lou's death, Quentin receives a reprieve from Louise's sentence that he must become a separate person. The reprieve is a temporary one, however; for Quentin is assailed with guilt as he realizes he was glad Lou died.

Quentin sees his second marriage—to Maggie, a singer who has sought security in a series of love affairs—as a victory over the frustration and hypocrisy in his life. But Maggie is incapable of believing that Quentin loves her, and day by day her jealousy enslaves him to this prima donna who must constantly be assured of his love. Finally on the brink of insanity, Maggie tries to hold Quentin by attempted suicides which she believes will increase his love for her. The hell she creates for him, however, forces him to assert himself. He is heavily in debt as a result of her childish extravagances and without a job because of the constant attention she has demanded. Quentin has at last suffered the ruin which Lou's timely death staved off. He has reaped the rewards of a man incapable of living by his own conscience. But he makes his declaration of freedom when he refuses to be responsible for sustaining Maggie's life when she has no desire to live. Quentin tells her: "Not any more, I am not guilty for your life! But I am responsible for my own . . . I'm going away; so you're not my victim anymore."

Maggie is too completely out of touch with reality to understand Quentin when he tells her to have the courage to face herself. But such courage is beyond her; an overdose of sleeping pills ends her life. And Quentin is once again stunned by guilt as he admits he desired her death and release from her obsessions.

Holga is the antithesis of the other women in Quentin's life, and she points the way for his final and complete renunciation of the parasitical life and the resolution of his burden of guilt. A product of the Germany of horrors, the concentration camps, and the uncertain peace, Holga exemplifies the person Quentin is struggling to become. She has recognized all that is base in man, but she has tempered this recognition with the acceptance of the concomitant good present in individuals. Holga does not expect to live her life with the certitude that one's choices are always right; for as she tells Quentin, "But how can one ever be sure of one's good faith?"

In a sensitive scene Holga relates the dream in which she encounters an idiot child; and she tells Quentin that she recognizes that the idiot represents her life: "Until I thought if I could kiss it, whatever in it was my own, perhaps I could rest. And I bent to its broken face, and it was horrible . . . But I kissed it." Holga tells Quentin that "one must finally take one's



life in one's arms." He must recognize himself—as a monster if need be—but accept himself for what he is and nothing more.

In the resolution scene of the play, Quentin understands and accepts Holga and her vision of existence. He has reviewed the past. He has recognized the murder-suicide aspect of Lou's and Maggie's deaths, but he realizes at last that all men share in evil. No longer need he fear being a separate person. "Is the knowing all? To know and even happily, that we meet unblessed; not in some garden of wax fruit and painted trees, that lie of Eden, but after, after the Fall, after many, many deaths. Is the knowing all? . . . And the wish to kill is never killed, but with some gift of courage one may look into its face when it appears, and with a stroke of love—as to an idiot in the house—forgive it . . ."

The search for identity is hardly a new theme in the literature of the theatre, but *After the Fall* is a gratifying treatment of this theme in the context of current American drama. Miller has denied his character the comfort of rationalization and made the positive assertion that, in spite of his inclination to evil which followed the Fall, not only is man capable of making choices, he must do so. However, the play is not content to say that merely making choices is enough. Man must also evaluate his decisions as right or wrong. Moral responsibility cannot be abrogated because "Man is evil anyway."

*After the Fall* has as its theme the awareness that man must recognize a tendency to evil as an inescapable part of reality and with this basic knowledge expect perfection neither in himself nor in others. One feels, however, that Miller has not extended his insight far enough. Quentin achieves a recognition and acceptance of Fallen Man; and he comes to believe that this knowledge, when applied with the "stroke of love," is sufficient for purposeful life. But the source of this redeeming love seems to be nothing higher than a vague humanitarianism existing without reference to any aspect of divine love, which is the only proper source of redemption for man after the Fall.