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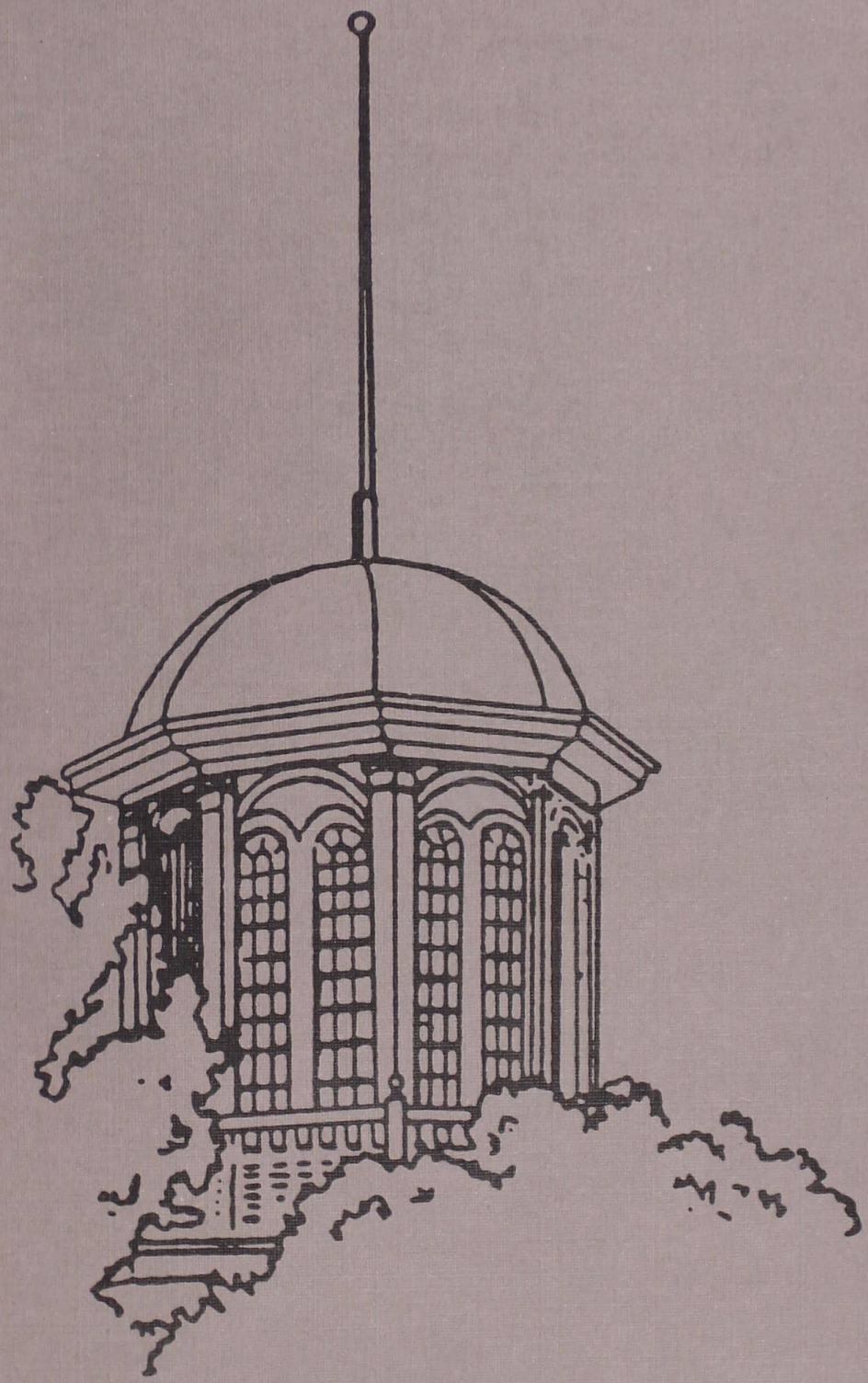

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ARTISTIC MEDIUMS AND THE FORM OF THE CURVED LINE

By Kristin Best, Class of 1985

Point — rest. Line — inwardly animated tension created by movement. The two elements — their intermingling and their combinations develop their own "language." . . . The exclusion of "trimmings," which hush and obscure the inner sound of this message, lends the greatest brevity and precision to pictorial expressions. The pure form places itself at the disposal of the living content. (Kandinsky, 1979:112)

The rhythmic form of the **verse** finds its expression in the straight and the curved line, where a regular recurrence is exactly denoted graphically — meter. Besides this rhythmic measurement of length, which is precise, the verse develops on recital a certain musical melodic line which gives expression, in an inconstant and variable form, to the rise and fall, the tension and the release of tension. (Kandinsky, 1979:101)

What a **musical line** is, is well known. . . . Most musical instruments are of a linear character. The pitch of the various instruments corresponds to the width of the line: a very fine line represents the sound produced by the violin, flute, piccolo; a somewhat thicker line represents the sound produced by the viola, clarinet; and the lines become more broad via the deep-toned instruments, finally culminating in the broadest line representing the deepest tones produced by the bass-viol or the tuba. (Kandinsky, 1979:98)

This paper was presented for Integrative Studies Area 422, Modern Arts Seminar, in the Fall of 1984.

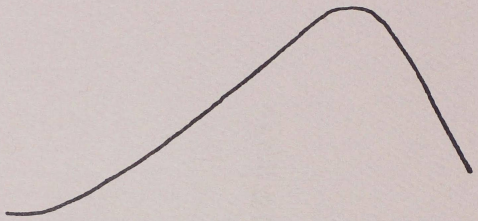
The preceding quotations are from the book *Point and Line to Plane* by Wassily Kandinsky. In this book Kandinsky demonstrates how the three most basic elements of pictorial expression — the point, the line, and the plane — can combine variously to form a vast vocabulary which becomes the language of the graphic arts. He also shows how other art mediums, such as music and verse, use like elements as the basis for their particular vocabularies. The relationship between artistic languages and artistic expression in general can be compared to the relationship between dialects and the standard language from which they were derived. Studying several art forms together often reveals strong similarities among contemporary works which result from the intimate relationship among these languages.

The ambition of this paper is to show this relationship using the example of a curved line, as presented in the book *Point and Line to Plane,* to the basic shape of two artistic mediums: poetry and music. The excerpts of poetry and music chosen as representative are roughly contemporary to the writing of this book and thus reflect many similarities in language which provide a valid basis for comparison. Two passages have been chosen, one from Arnold Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra, Opus 31,* and one from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* which are constructed somewhat similarly, both in terms of mood and basic formal structure. From *The Waste Land* lines 117 — 127 were selected:

'What is that noise?'
The wind under the door.
'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"
Nothing again nothing.
'Do
'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
'Nothing?'
I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'

From the *Variations for Orchestra, Opus 31,* the *Introduction* was chosen.

In terms of basic structure, each of these passages as forming a curved line which begins low rises to a some what angular peak and then recedes almost to the point at which it began. This can be graphically represented as follows:



These two particular passages have been chosen for two reason: (1) because of their apparent similarities, the greatest of which is their basic shape and (2) because of the rich possibilities inherent in each for demonstrating each master's use of technical device (vocabulary) through which the atmosphere of the piece is formed. The empathetic understanding of this atmosphere is of utmost importance to one who wishes to feel fully the contour of the work come alive. However, one should note that, although many valid comparisons can be made between these two works, because neither Schoenberg nor Eliot wrote his work with the work of the other in mind, comparison of the two passages and their similarities together is necessarily limited, and in the interest of clarity, this discussion of the two excerpts together will extend no farther than the parallels apparent in their basic shape.

Preceding the climax in each is an area of material which defines the ambiance of the selection. In the *Introduction,* I see this mood as being represented in colour (instrumental timbre

as well as mental visualization of actual colour). In the poetic passage, I sense the mood is being realized in sound. Perhaps this association is facilitated by the use of language (sequence of words, syntactical structure, and grammar), but indeed, the mood is also created by the inflection of voice tones (for instance, the percussive quality of many consonants, mixed with the sometimes hard and pure, sometimes soft and bell-like nature of the vowels) as they fall on the ear of the listener, separated from and grouped with each other through the use of punctuation and linear scheme.

Devices used by an artist (e.g. tone, colour, word choice, word ambiguity), though important in their task of reinforcing, especially in more contemporary works, can never replace the spirit of the work, that which the soul is striving to grasp. The essence of the work, that which breathes life into dead, black print on stark, white paper and which keeps the ideas of the composer, poet, or artist alive, is by far of greatest importance. Technical achievement must always remain subordinate to it.

In *The Waste Land*, the introductory passage takes the form of a conversation between a man and a woman, and reiterates the problem faced by the protagonist, which is the theme of the work as well: the idea that life in the modern waste land, void of love and meaning, is life as death. The passage,

> 'What is that noise?'
> The wind under the door.
> 'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"
> Nothing again nothing.

emphasizes an atmosphere of despondency and indifference, which lapses into the slumberous realm of the inhuman — into, perhaps, the thoughtless, arbitrary world of animal action which replaces meaning with motion and love with lust. The undertone of fear ("What is that noise?") causes the shape of the passage to rise. The climax occurs with the lines,

'Do
'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you
remember
'Nothing?'

which come as a powerful jolt: the searing cry of the woman echoes through the dark, empty corridors of unconcern. A nerve is touched. Through sleep-drenched oppression the man reaches toward consciousness. At the edge of awakening come the words:

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.

As Cleanth Brooks points out, the line — "Those are pearls that were his eyes" — refers to "the death described in the song from *The Tempest*." (Brooks 1939:149) This recollection "assumes in the mind of the protagonist . . . the description of a death which is a portal into a realm of the rich and strange — a death which becomes a sort of birth." A death which is more alive than life in the waste land. The passage ends in much the same way as it began, and it is with these lines that the curve which reflects the passage's shape declines. The man has lapsed back into apathy, and the woman asks: "Are you alive or not? Is there nothing in your head?"

The *Introduction* to the work *Variations for the Orchestra, Opus 31* follows much the same basic course. The first eighteen measures primarily develop the mood, the setting of the piece. Motivic devices, such as the fluctuating eighth-note passages of the grouped sixes begun in the clarinets and french horns in measure 3 and the the slightly suspenseful and suspended quality of the eighth-note harmonics separated by eighth-note rests, as seen in the opening gesture of the harp line and the tremolo notes in the strings, lend an atmosphere of hushed brooding and mystery to these measures.

Intensity builds and drama begins to heighten between measures 9 and 18. It is interesting to note some of the ways in which Schoenberg achieves this sense of heightened drama using basically the same rhythmic combinations and intervalic relationships

introduced in the relatively more tranquil first eight measures. There are slight modifications in these devices which help to shift slightly the atmosphere of the opening gesture. The most obvious of these modifications are as follows: First, the fluctuating eighth note patterns now, instead of basically alternating between two notes as seen through measure 3 and 8, is inundated with various accidentals which challenge the harmonic foundation and cause the figures to become less suspended in time, giving them a slight forward thrust. Second, the bouyant passages of eighth notes followed by eighth rests which, in the opening bars utilized harmonics, now become sharper and more percussive when played when played pizzicato in the strings. (This is seen in the contrabass, bars 9-12, and in the second violins, viola and cello lines, in bars 16-18.) Finally, third, the figure of the tremolo note, at first presented in the primarily longer note values of whole and half notes, is now given in half and quarter note durations. The "speed" of these figures has, thus, essentially doubled (flute and violin lines, measure 9 through 12).

Other factors which cause the basic curve of this passage to rise are Schoenberg's use of a greater dynamic range (piano in measure 9, building to forte in measures 12 to 14, and peaking at fortissimo at measure 18), the introduction of new and important "melodic" material (bass clarinet, bassoon, and cello lines in measures 12 through 14, for instance), and the eventual doubling of the numbers of instrumental parts sounding simultaneously from seven staves at the opening measure to fifteen staves by the time measure 18 is reached.

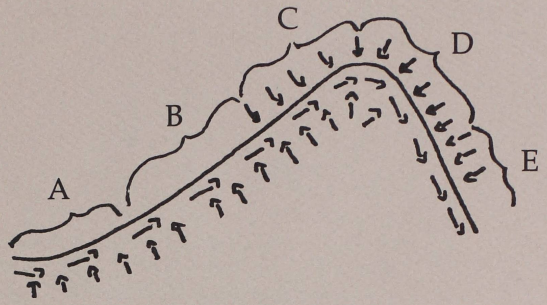
At this point the listener receives the full, stunning effect of the climax, which is a searing series of melodic "reaches" carried by the violins (measures 19 through 23). This climax has much the same sharp force as the woman's cry (lines 121 through 124) in the poem. Just as in the passage from the poem, symbolic meaning flows richly at the climax. here it manifests itself in the form of twenty-one lines of rich, dense harmony. Relentless motion is emphasized by three meter changes within the five measures occurring between measure 1 and 23. The letter "H," signifying the presence of a principle melodic voice, appears

eighteen times throughout this section of the score, while the letter "N" (accompanying voice) does not appear at all. The climax subsides at measure 23, and it is interesting to note how, quite coincidentally, the notion of recollection as seen in the words "I remember . . . Those are pearls that were his eyes" is paralleled is measure 24 when the trombone sound the pitches B♭-A-C-B♮, which spell (in German) BACH, an historical reminder of perhaps the greatest musical genius of all time.

Measure 23, which ends the climactic section, also begins the decline in the basic structural curve to a point atmospherically similar to, yet not quite the same as, the opening. In measure 24, we are reminded to return to Tempo I: the instrumental density lessens considerably, rhythmic texture becomes slower and smoother, and the twenty-one staves of melodic material melt into fourteen with, except for the final measure, never more than seven voices sounding simultaneously.

Indeed, in the case of both examples, a curved line is formed. We can visualize this line as being essentially a straight line. Added tension begins to push the indifferent line upward. As the point of climax is approached, the upward tension escalates. another tension, opposed to the first, is born as the line struggles to free itself from being helplessly swept off in motion. The struggle forms the climax, and as the opposing tension begins to overtake the domain of the first, the escalating tension subsides. The line relaxes, slows, and slips back into its easy slumber.

Kandinsky verifies this in his definition of a curved line: "It is really a straight line which has been brought out of its course by constant sideward (opposing) pressure — the greater was this pressure, the farther when the diversion from the straight line and, in the course of this, the greater became the outward (opposing) tension and, finally, the tendency to close itself" (Kandinsky, 1979:79). The following diagram illustrates these pressures and indicates how the measures and lines can correspond to the intervals labeled.



See excerpt from *The Waste Land*, page 6.

Verse Lines		Music Measures	
A	117-118	A	1- 9
B	119-120	B	9-13
C	121-124	C	14-18
D	125-126	D	19-23
E	127	E	24-33

As the preceding essay illustrates, different art forms possess similarities because the languages through which they are expressed are to some extent alike. This essay showed how a passage of verse and music share a curvilinear structure. However, while this paper has sought to heighten one's awareness of similarities between different art forms, one should be cautious and not find such similarities where they do not exist. Nevertheless, keep looking for them — when they are found, the insights they add on the art forms involved can be enlightening.

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REVOLUTION THROUGH ART:

THE EARLY NIETZSCHE-WAGNER RELATIONSHIP

By Gregory Mackie, Class of 1985

The nineteenth-century has often been called the "Age of Optimism." It was an age marked by faith in progress and in the ability of science to solve human problems. It was also an era of sweeping changes: revolutions in science, society, politics, and thought. The masses emerged triumphant, and the new industrial working class imprinted its values on society. The heroes of the age were Darwin, who showed that change was continuous in nature (and that changes in nature resulted in stronger, better species), and Marx, who applied the theory of positive change to political and economic systems. Nineteenth-century mass culture adopted these views to create a climate of opinion that was optimistic — the view that the world was continually changing and developing, that the people themselves could bring about change, and that change always resulted in a stronger, better humanity.

Friedrich Nietzsche was both a product and a critic of his age. He was a revolutionary in a revolutionary age who sought to overturn established conventions and replace them with a more honest world view. He despised the society in which he lived because it was false; it destroyed Christianity but retained the "slave morality" of that religion. In addition, it retained the "Socratic" belief in progress through the accumulation of knowledge, and the conviction that the world was rationally ordered. Nietzsche advocated the destruction of this "Alexandrian" culture, and wished to replace it with a tragic culture: one

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This paper was presented for History 499, Senior Tutorial, in the Fall of 1984.

that recognized the irrational, tragic nature of life, yet affirmed life as an aesthetic phenomenon. This was the goal of Nietzsche's life work — to bring about the transvaluation of all values, and to build a new society which acknowledged the essential meaninglessness of life and at the same time possessed the will to power: the affirmation of life as a powerful and creative force.

Throughout the course of his career, Nietzsche searched for kindred spirits: others who would join him in his fight against Socratic culture. Especially in his early years, he looked for indications of the rebirth of the tragic spirit that had died with ancient Greeks. He yearned to find the new Aeschylus — a man who combined artistic genius with a tragic view of life. He found such a man in Richard Wagner. The great composer was, to the young Nietzsche, the epitome of the "Dionysian man": a man who expressed Dionysian Will (the most powerful life-force) through his music. Wagner had a great influence on Nietzsche's early writings and was a pivotal force throughout the philosopher's career. In his early years, Nietzsche worshipped Wagner, the latter sections of *The Birth of Tragedy* were a celebration of the rebirth of tragedy in Wagner's music, and his other works during this period all bear the Wagnerian stamp. As their relationship progressed, however, Nietzsche discovered that Wagner was not the tragic man he had sought, that in fact the composer was a glaring example of the very things Nietzsche was trying destroy: false optimism and the negation of life. In the end, Nietzsche was alone; he was too far ahead of his time to find a co-conspirator in the fight against nineteenth-century culture. But Nietzsche's later period is not the focus of my treatise. This essay will concentrate on the early Nietzsche-Wagner relationship: their friendship and the relationship of Wagner's theories and music-dramas to Nietzsche's early works. I will first examine Nietzsche's view of tragedy and its importance to life, and will then see how Wagner's ideas and works fit into the Nietzschean tragic mold. While I will briefly touch on their breakup, my main focus will be on their relationship during Nietzsche's "Wagnerian" period. As Nietzsche himself admitted, this period was crucial to his later intellectual development.

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Before we examine the Nietzsche-Wagner relationship, however, we must first look at their philosophical teacher: Arthur Schopenhauer. He is a focal point because he exerted influence on both men's world views. Nietzsche recognized Schopenhauer as his great educator, and a perusal of Schopenhauer's major works shows us why. Schopenhauer was the first advocate of the Will: the most powerful life-force — the primal force of nature. The Will is the creator and destroyer of the world, but it is not intellect; rather, it is an irrational force that has no ultimate purpose. Individual phenomena are only representations of the Will which encompasses everything. Nietzsche, who first encountered Schopenhauer's works in 1865, was immediately drawn to the latter's metaphysics. He embraced Schopenhauer's atheism wholeheartedly and was attracted to Schopenhauer's honest outlook on life. As Frederick Copleston relates:

> Nietzsche was impressed by the picture of human life as given by Schopenhauer, that sombre picture which embodies an earnest outlook on life, the vision of a man who sees the universe as the phenomenon of a blind will, without purpose, without ultimate meaning — a changing scene, dominated by fruitlessness, frustration, suffering, inevitable death, in which happiness is negative and beatitude a dream. (Copleston, 1980:217)

Schopenhauer's opposition of Will and Representation foreshadowed Nietzsche's opposition of the Dionysian and Apollinian in *The Birth of Tragedy*. But while Nietzsche adopted Schopenhauer's metaphysics, he did not accept the latter's denial of the will to live: "The Schopenhauerian saint reaches his position of superiority by asceticism and renunciation, by saying 'no' to life: the Nietzschean superman realizes himself by affirmation, by saying 'yes' to life" (Copleston, 1980:222). The young Nietzsche, however, was too enamored with Schopenhauer to realize that Schopenhauer's cause and his were not the same. As with Wagner, Nietzsche read his own views into the work of Schopenhauer.

Wagner did not encounter Schopenhauer until 1854, after the rough sketches of most of his music-dramas were complete. But he saw in Schopenhauer, as Nietzsche did, a thinker who echoed his own views: "I can really grasp my own art now with the help of another man, who supplied me with notions cognate to my own views, so that I seized my art with my powers of conception and made it clear to my reason" (Fischer-Dieskau, 1974:22). Schopenhauer asserted that music was the greatest art because it was the direct expression of the Will, and thus Wagner in his later theoretical works proclaimed the supremacy of music over drama. Wagner also saw the expression of Schopenhauer's tragic view of life in his own works. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Wagner embraced Schopenhauer's doctrine of the negation of the will to live. The result of this acceptance was Wagner's last music-drama, *Parsifal*, in which the hero gains salvation through the negation of life.

An understanding of Schopenhauer is very important because he is a pivotal figure in the Nietzsche-Wagner relationship. Their friendship grew largely from their long discussions of Schopenhauer at Tribschen, Wagner's home. Their agreement on Schopenhauerian metaphysics insured many lively discussions on music, society, and philosophy. Thus Schopenhauer was a focal point in their early friendship. But we can also see the inevitability of their breakup, because they disagreed on a crucial point: Nietzsche affirmed life, while Wagner denied it. *Parsifal*, Wagner's tribute to Schopenhauerian negation, was repulsive to Nietzsche, who completed his break with Wagner shortly after he heard it. Thus Schopenhauer represents both aspects of the Nietzsche-Wagner relationship — their early friendly agreement and their inevitable disagreement and breakup.

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Having determined the importance of Schopenhauer to the relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner, we will now examine other factors that contributed to their devotion to each other. The factor that united them, at least in Nietzsche's eyes, was their apparent agreement on the nature of art and its importance to German culture. Both considered art to be the greatest source of honest truth and saw in it a means to overthrow the corrupt

society in which they lived. Nietzsche, the younger of the two, was impressed by the tempestuous spirit of Wagner, who was at the peak of his career. Nietzsche was just getting started in his career: he was a young, struggling philologist looking for a benefactor to get his career on track. Wagner was that benefactor, giving Nietzsche the help he needed — Wagner's approval of Nietzsche's early work gave the younger man instant credibility. It is now time to examine more closely the sources of their early spiritual kinship. We will begin by examining Nietzsche's first major work: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this work, Nietzsche dealt with the origins of Greek tragedy, in his eyes the highest and truest art form ever created by man. The pre-Socratic Greeks were, for Nietzsche, the first and best example of the tragic culture that he wished to see reborn. It was in *The Birth of Tragedy* that Nietzsche first proposed his aesthetic theory, a theory in which the music of Wagner played a vital role.

The centerpiece of Nietzsche's aesthetic theory was the relationship between two great forces: the Apollinian and the Dionysian. Apollo represented illusion — specifically the illusion of a beautiful, static, ordered, and purposeful world. Apollo was the rational god, the bearer of sublime Truth; he represented the *principium individuationis*: the world as representation, or phenomenon. He was the god of the "plastic arts" — sculpture and architecture. Dionysus, conversely, was the god of intoxication. He was a symbol of the Will, the irrational but powerful life-force that both creates and destroys the world. Dionysus represented the universal force that lies behind every phenomenon: a force that is chaotic and unintelligible. He was the god of music, music being a direct representation of the will. The Apollinian and Dionysian forces worked together in Greek tragedy, creating an art form that represented the highest pinnacle of man's aesthetic achievement. Having described the forces at work in art, Nietzsche next traced the development of Greek tragedy.

Greek tragedy as an art form began with the chorus of satyrs. The chorus was not the "ideal spectator," as many historians had postulated, but a musical representation of the Dionysian Will. In his description of the chorus, Nietzsche revealed the aesthetic

theory that he would maintain throughout his career — that true art expresses the tragic nature of life and the joy that comes from the affirmation of life as it truly is:

> The metaphysical comfort — with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us — that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable — this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings that live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and the history of nations. (Nietzsche, 1967:59)

Art offers us a true picture of the world, and saves us from the despair that might lead to a Buddhistic negation of the Will.

But the Will can never be represented directly. Music may be able to express the Will, but without a mediating force it would be too chaotic to understand. Thus, in mature Greek tragedy, "The Dionysian chorus . . . discharges itself in a Apollinian world of images" (Nietzsche, 1967:65). Apollinian forces give the Dionysian a clear, objective shape, so that revelers can understand the god's wisdom. The tragic nature of life is codified so that "Dionysus no longer speaks through forces but as an epic hero, almost in the language of Homer" (Nietzsche, 1967:67).

Thus the tragic hero in the Greek tradition represented Dionysus: all the characters in Greek tragedy are manifestations of him. The hero is the man of wisdom — the seer, the breaker of laws, one who rebels against Apollinian norms. But, given the chaotic and destructive nature of Dionysus, such wisdom always leads to annihilation. Thus Oedipus, the solver of the riddle of the Sphinx, a man who rises above illusion, is doomed to destruction. Prometheus, the Titan who rebels against the gods, suffers the same fate. But such wisdom is worth the price: that was the theme of Greek tragedy. The individual who possesses Dionysian wisdom is doomed to destruction, but his destruction is only

a further confirmation of the truth which he possesses. The individual is but a temporary phenomenon; the Dionysian Will is universal and eternal.

Nietzsche then traced the destruction of Greek tragedy as reflected in the works of Socrates and Euripides. Socrates sought to undermine Greek tragedy because it was irrational and vulgar. The new Socratic aesthetic read as follows: "To be beautiful everything must be intelligible" (Nietzsche, 1967:83-4). Since knowledge is the highest virtue, art must lead to knowledge: not Dionysian wisdom, but the contemplation of serene Apollinian images. The dramatist Euripides held this Socratic view: his goal was to eliminate the Dionysian element from tragedy. Thus his works maintained the chorus only as a vestigial ornament, and emphasized brilliant, dialectical rhetoric. The entire plot was described in a prologue, and then the actors presented the story on stage. The tragedian's goal was no longer to intoxicate the spectators with Dionysian dithyramb, but to dazzle them with dialogue. The new plays also expressed the Socratic notion of the rational order of things: the metaphysical consolation of Aeschylus was replaced by the "poetic justice" of Euripides. Socrates and Euripides were examples of the "theoretical man" — they valued intellect over passion, order over chaos, and serenity over intoxication. They dethroned Dionysus, and thus Greek tragedy came to an end.

The Birth of Tragedy while outwardly an analysis of the rise and fall of Greek tragedy, was actually a statement of Nietzsche's aesthetic — an aesthetic he applied to modern times as much as, if not more than, to the past. Art in its highest form is, in Nietzsche's view, a true representation of the tragic nature of existence. Music is the highest of the particular arts because it directly expresses the universal Will, but music combined with drama (as in Greek tragedy and Wagnerian music-drama) is higher still because it gives form to the chaotic Will. We understand the nature of the Will through the medium of the tragic hero: an individual phenomenon, but one who reflects the universal. Having discerned Nietzsche's aesthetic, we now turn to Wagner, and discover that the Master of Bayreuth shared many of his young

disciple's views. At least in the beginning, there was much on which the two men could agree.

Wagner's aesthetic theory, expounded in his theoretical works and realized in his music, was very similar to Nietzsche's. The following summary of Wagner's musical goals, taken from Robert Jacobs' *Wagner,* can be compared favorably to Nietzsche's view in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

> He [Wagner] decided that poetry was of its nature incapable of expressing the 'purely-human,' for it was a 'mere organ of the intellect.' Only music, after all, could express it — music, the language par excellence of elemental emotion. Not, of course, the cut-and-dried music of conventional opera, but the music he had envisaged in Paris, the endless stream of expressive melody. The function of the 'true poetic stuff in general' would be none other than to define the otherwise indefinite emotions which this melody would express. In the new drama, in other words, music would supply the dynamic power of expression; poetry would fulfill its function in directing this power. (Jacobs, 1974:48)

Thus Wagner's 'pure-human' emotions represent the Dionysian force, expressed through music; his poetry, epic poetry "reaching back to the elemental figures of medieval history, saga, and myth" (Jacobs, 1974:47), represents the Apollinian force, which defines and directs these otherwise confused and chaotic emotions. Wagner, like Nietzsche, was impressed by the ancient Greeks. He felt that they had combined all the particular arts to create a "universal art work" — a work that mirrored the whole nature of their community. His goal, then, was to recreate the universal art work (*Gesamtkunstwerk*): a work that would "attract all the senses simultaneously and by doing so achieve a concrete, dynamic, synthetic embodiment of truth" (Jacobs,1974:59). This view was expressed in *The Art Work of the Future* (1849), a call for the rebirth of German culture through art. Wagner was a revolutionary, who had taken part in the revolutions of 1848; thus he

advocated the overthrow of corrupt modern society and the rebirth of the glorious past embodied in the ancient Greeks. This overthrow would come about through the revival of art: the rebirth, through his music, of Greek tragedy.

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The idea of the rebirth of tragic culture in the modern world was thus another unifying factor in Nietzsche and Wagner's friendship. Both looked forward to the day when "Alexandrian" culture would be overturned, and tragic culture would reign supreme. In the 1870's, they worked together to make their dream a reality: Wagner made plans for the construction of his shrine in Bayreuth, and Nietzsche wrote several works heralding the rebirth of the tragic spirit that was immanent in the coming Bayreuth Festival. This festival was to be the beginning of the redemption of mankind: Wagner was to have full control over the performance of his works, and his *Ring* series would be performed as a whole for the first time. Both men felt that, once this shrine was erected, others would flock to their vision and it would only be a matter of time before corrupt modernity crumbled in the face of Dionysus's return. Nietzsche's works during this period reflected the hope that both men shared. The latter sections of *The Birth of Tragedy,* his major work during this period, were a call to arms for the tragic man, a prophecy predicting the rebirth of tragedy in German culture. Also during this period, he produced "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (1876), a celebration of Wagner and his role in the rebirth of the German spirit. It was during this period that the young Nietzsche's opinions emerged: his hatred of modern society and his faith in the re-emergence of tragic culture through the universal art of Wagner.

Nietzsche's hatred of nineteenth-century culture stemmed from his rejection of optimism. The nineteenth century was an appallingly optimistic age because it was the age of the theoretical man:

> Our whole modern world is entangled in the net of Alexandrian culture [a reference to Alexandria, the home of scholars and scientists in the Hellenistic world]. It proposes as its ideal the theoretical man

> equipped with the greatest forces of knowledge, and laboring in the service of science, whose archetype and progenitor is Socrates. (Nietzsche, 1967:110)

And what was the result of Alexandrian culture? "We must not hide from ourselves what is concealed in the womb of this Socratic culture: optimism, with its delusion of limitless power" (Nietzsche, 1967:111). The belief in science as the means of discovering Truth led to optimism in nineteenth-century culture, but this optimism, in Nietzsche's view, was only a facade. Science could not discover the universal, but only phenomena; it shielded man from the contemplation of the world as it is: the embodiment of an irrational Will. This wisdom was too horrifying for modern man to look in the face; he thus avoided the eternal and wrapped himself in the present moment:

> In former times, there was nothing one was warned against more than against taking the day, the moment, too seriously; one was urged *nil admirari* and to be concerned with matters of eternity; now only one kind of seriousness still remains in the modern soul . . . .To employ the moment and, so to profit from it, to assess its value as quickly as possible! (Nietzsche, 1983:219)

Modern man was basically fake. All his endeavors were attempts to build a facade around himself — to mask the true nature of the world so that he could maintain the delusion of happiness. Modern art was but another attempt to maintain the illusion:

> . . . the task of modern art . . . suddenly becomes clear: stupefaction or delirium! To put to sleep or intoxicate! To silence the conscience, by one means or the other! To help the modern soul to forget its feelings of guilt, not to help it return to innocence! And this at least for moments at a time! To defend man against himself by compelling him to silence and to an inability to hear! . . . for they [modern men] do not want light, but bedazzlement; they hate light

> — when it is thrown upon themselves. (Nietzsche, 1983:220-1)

Thus, while modern man was outwardly optimistic, he yearned for something more substantial. To suppress this yearning and to appease the guilt that accompanied his decadence, he created an illusory wall between himself and the truth. The modern age was characterized by stupor: man drugged himself with false optimism in order to stave off impending doom.

For indeed the destruction of modern society was immanent. Dionysus was too powerful to be held off by illusion: he would return to regain his lost throne! Art was beginning to rise up and destroy the optimism of science:

> Out of the Dionysian root of the German spirit a power has arisen which, having nothing in common with the primitive conditions of Socratic culture, can neither be explained nor excused by it, but which is rather felt by this culture as something terribly inexplicable and overwhelmingly hostile — *German music* as we understand it, particularly in its vast solar orbit from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner. (Nietzsche, 1967:119)

Music, the language of Dionysian will, was the medium through which tragic culture would be reborn. Science would be replaced by wisdom — the wisdom that comes from the knowledge of the tragic nature of man's existence.

The focal point in the rebirth of tragedy through music was, of course, Richard Wagner, the new "Dionysian man." "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" was a tribute in which Nietzsche lauded Wagner for restoring the myth to its rightful place as the supreme expression of the tragic. The first sections of this essay are devoted to a description of Wagner's personality. He is described as a "man of incredible will," who is characterized by fidelity and sense of purpose. Wagner is a revolutionary who sticks to his ideals despite the vulgar society around him. He is a tremendous individual

genius in a world that worships mediocrity. In short, Wagner's life represents the Dionysian ideal: a man governed by will, not intellect, and a man who has accepted the tragic view of life. He himself is a tragic hero: his life has been marked by disaster and defeat, but, armed with the wisdom of Dionysus, he turns chaotic Will into a dynamic, creative force.

Nietzsche then moves to the rebirth of Greek tragedy and Wagner's role in this glorious event. Once again, Nietzsche declares that science has run its course, that man is turning to art for redemption. Nietzsche describes Wagner as a "counter-Alexander":

> I recognize in Wagner . . . a counter-Alexander: he unites what was separate, feeble, and inactive. . . . He is a master of the arts, the religions, the histories of the various nations, yet he is the opposite of a polyhistor, a spirit who only brings together and arranges: for he is one who unites what he has brought together into a living structure, a *simplifier of the world*. (Nietzsche, 1983:209)

Modern scientists and historians, in the spirit of Alexander (the diffusor of Greek culture), concern themselves with individual phenomena — with the gathering of facts. Thus they can gain no real knowledge of that which lies behind phenomena. Wagner takes what he has learned and relates it to the larger picture; he deals with the universal, as the Greeks did, not with particulars. Thus he simplifies the world: that is, he relates confused, random phenomena to the simple universal whole — the essential force that governs all phenomena.

The simplification of the world is the very purpose of art, and thus Wagner's art, like that of the Greeks, reflects universal wisdom. Wagner's art represents the rebirth of tragedy because he rediscovers the relationship between music and life, as well as that between music and drama. Music reveals the true nature of life because it represents the eternal life-force called Will. Knowing this, the wise musician returns mankind to the realm of "*right*

feeling, the enemy of all convention, all artificial alienation and incomprehension between man and man: this music is a return to nature" (Nietzsche, 1983:215). The relationship between music and drama, as rediscovered by Wagner, is that which prevailed in Greek tragedy — drama gives form to the emotion expressed by music:

> His [Wagner's] art always conducts him along this two fold path, from a world as audible spectacle to a world as a visible spectacle enigmatically related to it, and the reverse; He is continually compelled — and the beholder is compelled with him — to translate visible movement back into soul and primordial life, and conversely to see the most deeply concealed inner activity as visible phenomenon and to clothe it with the appearance of a body. All this constitutes the essence of the *dithyrambic dramatist*. (Nietzsche, 1983:223)

The dithyrambic dramatist takes the emotions inherent in music (the Dionysian chant or dithyramb) and expresses them through phenomena or drama. Nietzsche asserts that Wagner is the first dithyrambic dramatist since Aeschylus and his Greek counterparts.

Like his Greek predecessors, Wagner uses myth as the vehicle for expressing the "pure human emotion" in his music. The source of his poetic ability is the myth: the myth is based on the universal essence of the world, not on thought. The gods and heroes in Wagner's dramas act on the basis of feeling; thus their dialogue cannot be merely spoken — it must be sung. Spoken dialogue, "emptying recitative," represents intellect: the world of the theoretical man. The dialogue from the world of thought, and places it in the world of feeling. The struggles and conflicts of Wagner's mythical characters are merely events; channeled through the universal language of music, however, their struggles are seen as part of a larger whole: "Wagner's music as a whole is an image of the world as it was understood by the great Ephesian philosopher [Heraklitus]: a harmony produced by conflict, the unity of justice and enmity" (Nietzsche, 1983:242). Wagner,

like the Greeks before him, expresses the tragic but liberating truth of existence — that life, though it is purposeless and governed by a chaotic and irrational Will, is still worthwhile in its pleasure and power — through the combination of dithyrambic music and epic myth.

Wagner, through his music, will one day destroy the false optimism of the modern age and replace it with the truth, a truth that can only be revealed by art. He is the harbinger of a new age, the age of tragic men: this age will appear evil to the decadent optimist, but in fact it will be glorious because it will be more honest — an age, Nietzsche asserts, based on the following propositions:

> . . . that passion is better than stoicism and hypocrisy; that to be honest, even in evil, is better than to lose one's self in the morality of tradition; that the free man can be good or evil but the unfree man is a disgrace to nature and is excluded from both heavenly and earthly solace; finally, that he who wants to become free has to become so through his own actions and that freedom falls into no man's lap like a miraculous gift. (Nietzsche, 1983:252)

Only when tragic culture is reborn will humans be free to be human once more. Through Wagner's "art work of the future," this dream will become a reality.

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We have examined the theoretical bases of Nietzsche's love for Wagner: their common acceptance of Schopenhauer, their similar aesthetic theories, and their shared dream of the rebirth of tragic culture. But Nietzsche was not primarily attracted to Wagner for any of these reasons. If these were the sole reasons, one could accuse Nietzsche of being a "theoretical man" himself — one who based his opinions on contemplation, discourse, and dialectic. But Nietzsche's love of Wagner, in keeping with his own philosophy, stemmed from emotion rather than intellect: the emotion that swept over him while listening to Wagner's music. Wagner's music-dramas themselves were the most influential

factors in Nietzsche's unabashed support of the great composer. Their philosophical and theoretical agreements were shaky from the start, but the beauty and power of Wagner's music intoxicated Nietzsche, and thus the young philologist was slow to pull away from the Master's influence. For a more complete understanding of Nietzsche's relationship to Wagner, then, we must examine the music-dramas themselves. In them we find the key to the Nietzsche-Wagner relationship.

Nietzsche's favorite Wagner opera was undoubtedly *Tristan and Isolde*, a work that today is considered one of Wagner's finest. It was completed in 1859 and first performed in Munich in 1865. The plot of *Tristan* is fairly simple: Tristan, a vassal to King Marke of England, loves Isolde, who is betrothed to another man. The young couple drinks a love potion concocted by Isolde's mother and discover their love for each other. Their love becomes all-encompassing: it transcends loyalty, honor, and law. They cannot live without each other. Since Isolde must marry Morold, a man she does not love, there is only one solution to the two lovers' dilemma: they must die together. Accepting their fates, they drink a death potion and die in one anothers' arms.

The summary above seems rather perfunctory because there is really very little plot to *Tristan and Isolde*. The emphasis, instead, is on the inner action: the musical exposition of the lovers' changing emotional states. *Tristan* has been called a "psychological drama" because it deals solely with the inner struggles of the characters: "Wagner regarded his subject less as a drama, less as a series of actions and consequences of actions, than as the incarnation of a feeling underlying action, unchanged by it, transcending it" (Jacobs, 1974:167). The "feeling underlying action" is the passionate love of Tristan and Isolde, a force that is eternal and never-changing. This love exists from the very beginning: the love potion they drink does not create their love, but only brings it out into the open. Since there is so little plot in *Tristan*, most of the action (inner action) is conveyed by the music. More than in any other work, Wagner uses "endless melody" to depict the passionate emotions of his characters. The dominant feature of this endless melody is chromaticism: the gradual shifting of

the musical key. Chromaticism creates a mood of rising and falling — the music moves upward when the lovers anticipate their meeting, reaches a climax as they meet, and sinks downward when they part.

The key to interpreting *Tristan* is an understanding of the connection between the opera's two major motifs — love and death. Wagner makes it clear from the beginning, through musical motifs, that Tristan and Isolde's love will inevitably lead to their destruction. They know this when they drink the love potion, for they drink it believing it is a death potion: "The drink is a love potion only insofar as it is believed to be a death potion: because Isolde and Tristan have drunk death, they confess to each other a love about which they would have otherwise kept silent" (Dahlhaus, 1971:51). They seek death because they know their love is doomed: "If it is a yearning for death which is turned into love by the drink, it was from love that the yearning for death previously grew. Death was Tristan's and Isolde's only escape from a doomed love" (Dahlhaus, 1971:51). The two lovers' yearning for death is realized in the end: by dying at the peak of their love, they make it eternal. They are eternally united both in love and in death.

Tristan was Nietzsche's favorite music-drama because it was the best example of his aesthetic at work. The music in Tristan is the force of life itself — passionate and powerful. This music by itself would almost destroy us through its power, yet "here the Apollinian power erupts to restore the almost shattered individual with the healing balm of blissful illusion: suddenly we imagine we see only Tristan, motionless, asking himself dully, 'The old tune, why does it wake me?'" (Nietzsche, 1967:127). The story of *Tristan and Isolde* protects us from the primordial power of the music, while letting enough of that power through to convince us of its universality. Tristan and Isolde are, as in Greek tragedies, embodiments of Dionysus: their actions are governed exclusively by the Will, not by intellect. Since the Will is destructive as well as creative their deaths are inevitable, but possession of Dionysian wisdom is worth that price. Their love breaks all the laws of their society, but the honest freedom they possess

is more important than any artificial law. Their love, doomed though it is, makes them free. Even in death, they are victorious — victorious over all who would have them act out of slavery to duty rather than out of honest passion.

The Ring of the Nibelung, Wagner's four part Magnum Opus, was the climax of his life's work. It is about the fall of the world of law and order, and its replacement by a new world based on the unfettered will of man. The plot of the *Ring* is incredibly complex, so I will deal only with those events most relevant to the theme. I will deal specifically with the fourth and last opera of the *Ring* series, *The Twilight of the Gods*, because it is here that all the various threads of the *Ring* legend come together.

In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Siegfried is the "pure, natural man." The product of an incestuous marriage, Siegfried fears nothing, and is governed by will rather than law. He had rescued Brynhilda, the daughter of Wotan (the Lawgiver, symbol of the world of law and covenants), from a mountain surrounded by fire, where Wotan had put her as a punishment for disobedience. Siegfried and Brynhilda are lovers until he is given a love potion by the evil Gutrune, who becomes the new object of his love (because of the potion). Brynhilda discovers Siegfried's betrayal and plots his death. Her co-conspirator in this plot is Hagen, who wishes to possess the Ring of Power, which Siegfried bears on his finger. Hagen gives Siegfried an antidote to Gutrune's love potion, and Siegfried rediscovers his love for Brynhilda. As Siegfried proclaims his reborn love for Brynhilda, he is slain by another conspirator, Gunther, son of the dwarf who originally forged the Ring. Brynhilda, joined with Siegfried once more, builds a funeral pyre for her beloved and takes the Ring from his finger. The Ring, having been eternally cursed by its original owner, had brought destruction to everyone who had possessed it, and so she, with the Ring, joins Siegfried on the funeral pyre. The same curse that dooms Siegfried and Brynhilda dooms Wotan also, because he had once possessed the Ring himself. Thus Valhalla, the home of Wotan and rest of the gods, goes down in flames as well. The age of law and order is dead.

The central conflict in the *Ring* is between the world of freedom, represented by Siegfried and Brynhilda, and the world of contracts and laws, represented by Wotan and his spear. Siegfried is the product of an incestuous marriage, a "pure human" whose very existence is a violation of the law represented by Wotan. Brynhilda is a rebel also. Born a goddess, the daughter of Wotan defies her father and is demoted to human: but better to be a free human than a subservient goddess. Wotan is a Wagnerian version of God the Father: a creator whose world is based on laws and covenants, who rewards obedience and punishes defiance. The struggle between the free world and the world of law creates an irony in the *Ring*. In an earlier part of the series, Wotan gives the Ring of Power to some giants as payment for the building of Valhalla. He wants the ring back but cannot take it because he is bound by law to honor his contract with the giants. To get the Ring back, then, he must find a hero who is not bound by the gods' laws: that hero is Siegfried, the totally free human. In this lies the irony — "If disregard for the law is on the one hand the essential condition whereby alone the free hero can fulfill Wotan's 'great idea,' it is on the other hand the fateful circumstance that prevents its fulfillment; the element that promises salvation is, in a classic example of tragic irony, its own destruction" (Dahlhaus, 1971:89). Wotan needs Siegfried to obtain the ring but, as the "lord of contracts and laws," he must punish disobedience and incest.

How is this conflict resolved? Siegfried, though killed by Gunther, emerges the victor because his freedom has brought about the destruction of Valhalla. Nietzsche's view of the *Ring's* climax appears in "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth":

> . . . at last [Siegfried] emerges as clear as the sun goes under, igniting the whole heavens with his fiery glow and cleansing the world of the curse: all this the god [Wotan] — whose commanding spear has been shattered in combat with the freest of men, who has thereby deprived him of his power — beholds with joy at his own defeat, rejoicing and at one with his conqueror: his eye reposes with the light of a painful

> blissfulness upon the concluding events, he has become free in love, free from himself. (Nietzsche, 1983: 253)

Thus even Wotan joyously greets the dawning of a new age: the age of freedom. Wotan has lost his power, but he is free from his own constraints; Siegfried's and Brynhilda's deaths are not the end, but the beginning of a new world order. This is what Nietzsche saw in the *Ring* — the triumph of the tragic view of life. In the end, all the characters accept the world as it is: a world of chaos and destruction. This wisdom destroys them also — Siegfried and Brynhilda die, and Wotan is dethroned — but in the seeds of their destruction lies their liberation. Their descendents become free to live life naturally, without constraint. For Nietzsche, the dawning of the tragic age in the *Ring* paralleled the immanent dawning of the tragic age in the German culture.

But we also find in the *Ring* the beginnings of Nietzsche's doubts about Wagner. *The Twilight of the Gods* was over twenty-five years in the writing — from 1848 to 1874 — and thus Wagner had written many different versions. The version Nietzsche had in front of him when he penned the glowing analysis above was the original version, written in the early 1850's. After Wagner became acquainted with Schopenhauer in 1854, he produced a new ending. Instead of Siegfried's and Brynhilda's deaths signifying the coming of a new age, they represented, in the new version, the "futility that defeats every attempt to make the essence into reality" (Dahlhaus, 1971:103). Wotan, instead of rejoicing, is resigned to the futility of existence and escapes through the "negation of the Will." This version was a truer indicator of Wagner's own views and it must have disturbed Nietzsche when it was presented to him. Whatever misgivings he may have had, however, Nietzsche kept his thoughts to himself.

But there is even more to the story than this. The final version of *The Twilight of the Gods* was different from either of the first two. In the final version — the one we hear today — love was seen as the force that could destroy the world of law: the love between man and woman, exemplified by the love of

Siegfried and Brynhilda. The new version did not represent a shift in Wagner's views — his philosophy was expressed most truthfully in the second version. He changed the ending not for philosophical reasons, but for dramatic ones. He changed the ending to make the story work, even though it did not reflect his own philosophy. Nietzsche now had two causes for dismay — he was disappointed with Wagner's turning away from the affirmation of life, and shocked that Wagner would write an insincere ending: one that was not consistent with his philosophy. Nietzsche began to wonder whether Wagner was really a kindred spirit — this man who was now denying life and producing false art. Was Wagner a false prophet?

This was the beginning, at least outwardly, of Nietzsche's break with Wagner. The Bayreuth Festival, an event that was to be the harbinger of the new age, instead brought disillusionment:

> I had already bade farewell to Wagner as early as summer 1876, in the midst of the first festival. I cannot put up with any ambivalence; even since Wagner has been in Germany, he has lowered himself step by step to everything I despise — even anti-Semitism . . . . It was really high time to say farewell; I soon obtained evidence for it. Richard Wagner, seemingly at the height of triumph, in reality a rotting, despairing *decadent*, suddenly prostrated himself, helpless and broken, before the Christian cross. (Fischer-Dieskau, 1974:151-2)

Indeed,the Wagner of 1876 was not the same Wagner who had written *The Art Work of the Future*. As early as 1864, Wagner, in "State and Religion," had developed a new, more resigned view of art. Art was no longer the means to a rebirth of German culture but a "refuge from unalterable reality, a 'play,' a 'dream image . . . comforting us and lifting us above the sordid actuality of distress'" (Jacobs, 1974:101). Art was never going to bring about a new age; it was merely an escape from the unalterable pain of existence. By the time Nietzsche met him, Wagner had changed from the fire-brand revolutionary of his younger years to a disil-

lusioned old man, yearning for an escape from his sufferings. It was only a matter of time before Nietzsche discovered that his older friend was not the revolutionary he once was.

But here we encounter a paradox. Nietzsche met Wagner in 1868, after the publication of "State and Religion," and after Wagner was well into his Schopenhauerian "negation" period. They must have disagreed on many things from the start: surely in their conversations about Schopenhauer and the function of art in society they must have encountered disagreements. How do we account for this seemingly irrational situation? The fact is, Nietzsche's mind was split from the start. He had doubts about Wagner the man almost from the beginning, but the impressionable young philologist was too entranced by Wagner's music to sense their differences right away. As indicated previously, Wagner's music was the most important element in their relationship, and this was indeed the element that kept them together. Whatever doubts Nietzsche had about Wagner's theories were temporarily dispelled by listening to works like *Tristan and Isolde* and *The Mastersingers* — works from Wagner's earlier period that can to this very day be considered worthy of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* aesthetic. It was not until Wagner's music changed its character that Nietzsche began to denounce him openly. The first attacks came after the Bayreuth Festival, where Nietzsche heard the final version of the *Ring* for the first time. And the most scathing attacks — *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* — came after the performance of *Parsifal* (1882). This work sealed their breakup, as it directly opposed everything Nietzsche was trying to do. It was an opera, Wagner said, in which "Compassion, rooted in the deepest nature of human will, is to be shown as the only true foundation of all ethics" (Fischer-Dieskau, 1974:155). Nietzsche, who was working on the transvaluation of all values and plotting the destruction of the "slave morality" of Christianity, was appalled at this piece of transcendent drivel. But the rejection of *Parsifal* was simply the last step in Nietzsche's long road to independence. His emancipation from Wagner was now complete.

Nietzsche was now on his own, free at last from the influence of the Bayreuth Master. But he regretted the loss of his old friend

and looked back fondly to the hopes they used to share. While disillusioned, he recognized Wagnerism as an important step on the way to his intellectual freedom:

> He [Nietzsche] had set up an idol for the Germans, especially for the younger generation, and the worship of that idol included such German vices as unclarity, bombast, and clumsiness. Yet he didn't want the youth of his country growing up without knowledge of Wagner; he saw such knowledge as indispensable for any further development. (Fischer-Dieskau, 1974:209)

Thus Wagnerism was not something to be avoided at all costs, but a necessary "stage," like the stages children go through, in the process of growing to intellectual adulthood. Nietzsche always regretted that his discipleship to Wagner could not be fulfilled, yet saw that Wagnerism had been a necessary evil. In the original version of *The Twilight of the Gods* Wotan saw, in the midst of the destruction of all he had worked for,the dawning of a new age of freedom — freedom even from his former self. In a like manner, Nietzsche saw in the destruction of Wagnerism within him the emergence of his own intellectual freedom. Like Wotan, he was free from his former self.

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THE NATURE OF POLITICS:

IS THERE ROOM FOR MORALITY?

By Marc Overbeck, Class of 1988

If there is one profession in American society that the majority of citizens view as immoral, it is ironically that one in which Americans have theoretically placed a great deal of trust, an occupation in which citizens are supposed to have placed their confidence and faith. That profession is politics. At one time the politician was regarded as an honest and loyal figure; he was referred to as a "public servant." Today the politician is seen by many as a wheeler-dealer who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. This view paints the politician as a ruthless individual who has little regard for moral values.

Which characterization of the politician is right? In a sense, both are. The politician is among the most complex individuals in our society. In one sense, much of his life is secret, while in another he is always in the limelight. The relationship between morality and a career in politics is similarly complicated. Often a politician must compromise his beliefs for the sake of achievement. During his term in office, the politician often develops new standards of morality, new virtues and vices, and new values. The question, "What role does morality play in politics?" is extremely complicated. To examine this question effectively, it is necessary to look at the structures and inner-workings of all bodies considered to be connected with politics: political parties, lobbyists and interest groups, congress, and finally, the presidency.

Political parties have often been attacked for being morally corrupt. The prominent reason for this view is the belief that to

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get anywhere in politics, you must work yourself up the party ladder in order to run for a prominent office; the party will endorse you only when you have proven to be a loyal member who has worked diligently for the party. This was certainly true when political machines were in existence. A person wishing to run for office in a city like Chicago could not even hope to have a chance if he was not given the endorsement of the party boss. This meant that not only did the person have to perform services and give "favors" to the party to get its endorsement, but even once the person was elected, he still was expected to give "favors" to the party boss and leaders if he expected to keep his job.

Are the parties like this today? In some ways. With the 1980 Hunt Commission Reforms in the method of nominating the Democratic choice for President (Polsby and Wildavsky, 1984:209), more power has been given back to the party leaders (elected officials). As a result of the reform, delegate slots (uncommitted) are set aside for members of Congress, thus giving these officials a greater voice in the selection of a candidate. In the 1984 Democratic Convention, these votes were the ones which allowed Walter Mondale, a Party regular, to beat out Gary Hart for the top seat on the ticket.

What does all this mean? Since a great deal of control is now in the hands of the party leaders (elected officials), this means that a potential candidate often must make deals with some of the delegates, promise certain performance, and sometimes bend ideology in order to get the necessary delegates to nominate him. To be totally fair, however, the majority of delegates are actually selected by the populace in primaries or state caucuses, theoretically allowing potential candidates to be free from having to worry about all those professional undecideds if he can gain enough of the votes of the populace. But, in reality, because the presidential nomination is usually hotly contested, the ability to be free from worrying about professional undecideds is rarely manifested. Therefore, the people running usually have to take into serious account that large block of votes that the elected party officials are given. Thus the selection of a presidential candidate

begins to resemble in a remote way the process that those seeking political office underwent in the political machines of the early 20th century.

Pressure groups and lobbyists are not an official branch of the government, but they are directly connected with it. Members of this group are constantly in contact with politicians and the bureaucracy. Lobbyists come in different breeds. One such "breed" is Thomas H. Boggs Jr. Boggs is a partner in an extremely successful Washington lobbying firm, Patton, Boggs, and Blow. Boggs is often regarded as "the prototype of the high-powered Washington lobbyist . . . a non-malicious, Washington version of T.V.'s J. R. Ewing" (Hunt, 1983:99). But simply because he is "non- malicious," does that make him a perfectly moral person? His firm has many clients who often times happen to be on opposite sides of the fence. A member of his firm was paid to run Ronald Reagan's 1980 Midwestern-states campaign, while at the same time, another was helping organize Ted Kennedy's 1980 primary campaign. To many people, this would seem a conflict-of-interests — but apparently not to Boggs. Indeed, it seems that even the nonmalicious types are somewhat devoid of moral compass. These people sacrifice conscience for money and success.

Another Washington power broker is Frederick Dutton. Dutton is a prime example of how a person's values are sometimes changed as a result of working in the political arena. Dutton, now a well-known lobbyist for the nation of Saudi Arabia, was once a strong supporter of Israel, "uncritically pro-Israel," (Emerson, 1983:107) in Dutton's own words. But soon after having been employed by the Saudis, Dutton's views of Israel began to change. During the Awacs debate he coined the slogan "Reagan or Begin," thought by some to be slightly anti-Semitic. Dutton's case is not the only one of its kind. Quite often lobbyists find out that their personal views happen to conflict with those which they must represent. There are three things a lobbyist can do in such a situation if he is to represent the views of his client: Continue to propose those views contrary to his own and decide that there is no conflict-of-interest, resign from the position, or change his own views. In Dutton's case, the last was chosen. Dutton is but

one case among many of a lobbyist changing his values for the sake of his job, sometimes a necessary action in the lobbying profession.

The presidency is the nation's most powerful office, yet the holder of this office needs hundreds of people to help him with his work and get what he wants. The President must often make deals with people on certain positions to get his desired results, and sometimes he even has to compromise his goals. The president often has to decide between "the better of two goods" or "the lesser of two evils" in order to carry out his function effectively. He may have to allow a clause in a bill which he does not like in order to get the principal legislative item passed. Sometimes he must lie in order to protect himself, his family, or his country. The two presidents who appear to fall at the opposite ends of the "spectrum of morality" in office are Jimmy Carter and Richard Nixon. Their styles of leadership were different, and each produced different results. Carter, "as (morally) admirable a man as ever held the job (of president)"(Fallows, 1983:163), was terribly ineffective for a number of reasons. One is that he either never learned how or refused to negotiate with the bureaucracy to the extent that other presidents did. His relationship with the bureaucracy was not good. Gerald Rafshoon summed up the feelings of both parties: "He never does anything for us, why should we do something for him?" (Fallows, 1983:169) Nixon lied to the public about his knowledge of the Watergate burglary, and often had his calls and conversations taped without the other party's knowledge. Yet Nixon is regarded by most political historians as an effective president, due partly to his firm control over his staff and its never-ending power plays and morally questionable actions which did nevertheless attain results.

Congress, the largest branch of the federal government, has often been accused of being a body in which deals are made on the basis of the "*ubi est mea*?" — "where is mine?" theory. In some respects this is true. Congressmen are constantly doing favors for each other in order to get something in return. The problem seen by some with this is that congressmen will sometimes do something that they would not ordinarily do: that is,

vote a way they would not ordinarily vote or accept gifts they would not ordinarily accept. Lyndon Johnson reflects the ultimate in manipulation through favors and threats. While Senate Majority Leader, Johnson used his position to place his friends and loyal peers on prestigious committees in return for their loyalty. With their loyalty, in addition to the loyalty he got from those he had done "favors" for, Johnson was able to get his way on legislation much of the time. He occasionally fibbed about his senators. Johnson told Senator John Stenson's wife that he was personally responsible for Stenson's appointment to the Appropriations Committee and that Stenson was one of the finest senators Johnson had even known (Evans and Novach, 1983:234). In order to secure the loyalty of Senator Frank Church, Johnson saw to it that Church was named to a delegation to South America, a place Church's wife once casually remarked she would like to visit. There are countless other examples of how Johnson and men like him exploited their positions in order to get the results they wanted. Such men are the power brokers in the Congress and usually use their power quite effectively.

What is morality? Who can say for sure what is "right" and what is "wrong"? Many would consider the politician, who "wheel and deals" to accomplish his desired goals, virtuous because he places his causes above all else. Others, however, would argue that this means of attaining results is unethical, and for that reason the politician should be denounced as immoral. In politics, this difference between virtues and vices is often rather gray. A politician, if he is to carry out his function successfully, must sometimes compromise his values and choose between the lesser of two evils or the better of two goods. Systems in which persons advance through favors and loyalty have proved efficient in the past: The Daley Machine of Chicago flourished for several decades because it was such a system; Richard Nixon was extremely successful in getting what he wanted by keeping tight control over his staff, advancing his friends and "shooting down" his enemies. Lyndon Johnson proved to be one of the Senate's most efficient and powerful majority leaders by utilizing a similar system of favors and using his position to delegate committee assignments. Conversely, Jimmy Carter, although regarded

by most as extremely moral, was very ineffective as a president due to his unwillingness to use these systems in his relations with the Congress and the Bureaucracy. In addition to Carter, there have been many other "saints," probably just as many as there have been "sinners"; there are undoubtedly many morally upright people in the political arena. In addition, one should note that just because a person may change his views or compromise his beliefs in order to accomplish a more important result does not mean that we must distrust him completely. This only adds to the fuzziness of morality in politics, which appears to be inherent in the field and beyond our will or our control.

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POLITICAL CARTOONS: THE CONCISE COMMUNICATOR

By Lindsay Partridge, Class of 1986

One of the most interesting communication phenomenon in today's society is the political or editorial cartoon. These cartoons are widely read and command a loyal following, as is evidenced by the publicity and relief that was expressed by the return of "Doonesbury" to the daily paper. Editorial columnists could only be envious. This paper attempts to provide an understanding of how and why political cartoons have become a dominant and powerful communication form in today's newspapers. These cartoons are often preposterous, hilarious, and outrageous, but they also serve as a concise conveyer of editorial opinions. The first objective of this paper is to define and provide some background information about cartoon in an effort to construct a general framework for the analysis of how cartoons are effective in communicating ideas. Then this paper will conduct an analysis of how opinions are conveyed to readers by comparing their communicating techniques to the ancient canons of rhetoric and by studying why cartoons are perfectly suited for communicating ideas in the modern, technological age. Following a study of theoretical concepts, an attempt will be made to apply these concepts to a specific cartoon. This case study will feature the cartoon strip "Doonesbury" by Garry Trudeau and his treatment of the Carter and Reagan administrations. Finally, an evaluation will be conducted which examines the advantages and disadvantages cartoons bring to the mass media. This evaluation will be conducted in order to determine if cartoons, as a communication tool, are beneficial to society.

Before analyzing how a cartoon is effective in communicating ideas, the meaning of a cartoon must be defined and its

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development as a form of communication must be understood. Obviously, the political cartoon is a unique communication method. It functions as a synthesis of a written editorial and the six o'clock newscast. Specifically, it is more of a narrative form of literary expression than an art discipline (Tubau, 1976:26). In its basic form the political cartoon is a drawing that simplifies and exaggerates and is capable of satirical, witty, and yes, humorous commentary (Harrison, 1981:43). While the cartoon can be funny, it is not a comic strip. A comic strip's purpose is to entertain readers, whereas a cartoon seeks to express an idea about society in the process of entertaining its audience. With this distinction in mind, the word "cartoon" in this paper means the political or editorial cartoon — not the ones found in the Sunday comics.

Cartoons have been drawn for centuries, but the first cartoon in America was produced by Ben Franklin who, in the 1770's, urged the colonists to fight for liberty in his cartoon, "Join or Die" (Alder, 1980:74). One hundred years later, Thomas Nast demonstrated the power and scope of cartooning as he and his drawing pen exposed the corruption in New York's Tammany Hall, causing Boss Tweed to remark: "I don't care what they write about me, but those damn pictures — people understand them!" (Harrison, 1981:14).

Cartooning followed the example of Nash, one of social critic and watchdog, until the post-World War II era, when a new breed of cartoonists emerged to establish subtle wit as a permanent technique in cartooning. These men included Bill Maudlin, Paul Conrad, and Herbert Block (Herblock), and they, in turn, influenced a new generation of cartoonists, from the Vietnam War era, who dominate today's editorial pages. By adding more humor to the stinging style of Nast and the cunning wit of Maudlin, Conrad, and Herblock, new caricaturists like Tony Auth, Jeff MacNelly, Pat Oliphant, and Garry Trudeau — among others — increased the popularity of their vocation while building loyal followings for themselves (Alder, 1980:74).

Other forms of communication are not able to treat subjects as cartoons do, and for that reason, people enjoy and appreciate

them. MacNelly describes his profession like this, "Political cartoonists violate every rule of ethical journalism — they misquote, trifle with truth, make science fiction out of politics and sometimes should be held personally liable. But when the smoke clears, the political cartoonist has been getting closer to the truth than the guys who write opinions" (Alder, 1980:74). It may be debatable whether cartoonists are getting closer to the truth, but it cannot be denied that cartoons can state or imply ideas that other forms of media cannot or will not touch. The opinions that cartoonists reveal are not heard on the nightly news or read in the newspapers, but rather they are the same type of opinions (whether factual or not) that are voiced in uninhibited conversations across America. Therein lies their power and charm. Editorials speak to the public from a superior position, but cartoons speak and laugh along with their readers. Editorials are a lecture by a stern professor while cartoons are part of our family discussions.

Today the importance of the cartoon is universally acknowledged; their primary function is to not merely fill space. Also the cartoon is more than art. Rather, it is a serious literary form. As Ivan Tubau, a Spanish cartoonist, states: "The political cartoon is a literary form. Although expressed fundamentally through drawing, it is much closer to the narrative form of expression than the plastic arts. Today cartoons occupy a privileged place in the best pages" (Tubau, 1976:26).

Having explained and defined the concept of a cartoon, next we will consider how the cartoon is effective in communicating ideas to their readers. This form of discourse will be examined by using the criteria of the five classical canons of rhetoric. The classical canons include invention, disposition, style, memory, and delivery. By using this standard criteria of rhetoric, a better understanding of the discourse can be gained. Basic to understanding the analysis by canons is the notion of an enthymene. An enthymene is an idea that touches the values and beliefs of its audience, but in an implicit way. The idea does not expressly state the implied values and beliefs, and, therefore, the reader must work harder to understand the message. The message

relates to some preconceived value of society that is understandable to the public, making it possible to supply the missing term. By forcing the reader to supply the missing term, the message is more powerful and lasting.

The first canon is invention, or the source of an idea. Classical theorists employ the tool of topoi, a pseudochecklist of ideas, to provide subject ideas. Four main topoi exist in cartoon — political commonplace, literary/cultural allusion, personal character traits, and situational themes.

Political commonplace is a topic which is normally associated with the political arena. These include elections, defense and foreign policy, the economy, social issues, etc. In cartoons, topoi of the most basic form are political commonplace.

The second topoi is literary/cultural allusion. Here the subject of the cartoon is compared to a legendary or mythical image (fiction or non-fiction). An example of this device would be comparing Lee Iacocca with Jesus Christ — as Christ is the savior of the world, Iacocca is the savior of the Chrysler Corporation. Often, as can be ascertained from the example, the present day subject is exaggerated in comparison with the historical figure. One obstacle in the path of the cartoonist is that the audience must be familiar with the literary/cultural allusion, personal character traits, and situational themes.

Personal character traits serve as the third category of topoi in cartoons. They are popularly conceived images of a public figure that are accepted by the public. To be effective in graphic discourse, they must exist in reality. An example would be Ronald Reagan as a strong leader.

Lastly, the fourth topoi is a situational theme. Periodically unexpected events, such as scandals, give rise to the dominant focus of the news for several days, but are forgotten in time. The event may have an immediate effect, but no lasting impact. Examples of this topoi are "Billygate" and Reagan's radio bombing joke.

From this storehouse of ideas cartoonists work to construct enthymenes which touch the values of readers, but through techniques of the other four canons.

The second canon, disposition, is the arrangement of ideas and how they are presented in the framework of the actual cartoon. The main structural forms that are used are contrast, commentary, and contradiction. Contrast involves comparing two images, and image and the written element of the cartoon (text), or two texts. The author wants to show that one person, idea, or image is inferior to something else.

By using commentary a cartoonist shows a political truism applicable to the present. Commentary ties in closely to the topoi of political commonplace as is shown in the typical election cartoon in October depicting two tired runners nearly collapsed at the finish line. On the other hand, contradiction is distinguished from contrast by its intent. In contrast the focus is to invite attention, but contradiction uses the clashing of ideas to express disapproval — usually hypocrisy.

The third rhetorical canon is style. Style is how the image or idea is actually created. There are six stylistic techniques which are used. First, the use of line and form work to create tone and mood for a cartoon. Darker penstrokes create a more ominous image (i.e., Paul Conrad of the *Los Angeles Times*), while shading serves to present contrast in a cartoon (Herblock).

The second technique is the relative size of the objects. A smaller object appears to be weak and unrespected while a larger objects creates an impression of power, greed, and oppression. On the other hand, the stylistic technique most common in cartoons is exaggeration or amplification of features. An artist will exaggerate a known and distinctive feature of a subject (usually a person), and, in time, this amplification becomes a symbol for that person. Examples are Reagan's hair, Carter's smile, and John Anderson's glasses.

Another rhetorical style device is the location of the object with the frame. Usually, an object in the upper half of the frame

projects a more favorable image, as it may indicate superior stature. A fifth device is the relationship of the verbal text to the image. Verbal texts of two types are common in cartoons. The first uses words or slogans that are commonly attributed to the subject while the second uses language that helps explain the visual image (caption). The text serves to comment, explain, or reveal something about the cartoon.

The last style — the image created — is, in many respects, a synthesis of all the above. It may be likened to Gestalt psychology where the idea expressed is greater than the sum of all the individual parts. This concept is very abstract, but it basically signifies the overall impression received by the reader.

Memory, the fourth canon, seeks to activate already known facts and apply them to the current situation. The enthymene is basic to the canon of memory as the memory of the reader serves to supply his interpretation of the cartoon. As Garry Trudeau explains: "The challenges are considerable, to create compelling fantasy — and to invite the reader to involve himself in a new reality set up as a sustained metaphor for his own" (Harrison, 1981:66). In cartooning the author begins with some tangible discourse — oral or written — about a particular subject. Next an idea for a cartoon is selected, and lastly the idea is transferred into a visual image. Often the visual image triggers a different response in the reader. This situation occurs due to the diverse personalities and backgrounds of the readers; in fact, what happens is that the intended enthymene of the author is not completed by his audience. Cartoonists work to prevent misinterpretation by channeling the reader's interpretation into the cartoonist's line of thinking by the use of mnemonic devices.

Mnemonic devices work to activate the memory of the audience by relating past deeds, current status, or a character flaw of the present cartoon subject. A good example of this technique is found in Pat Oliphant's cartoons from 1980 that link Ted Kennedy to Chappaquiddick by always presenting a fish in the cartoons. Oliphant sought to make a statement about Kennedy's character — that is, he wanted to be sure that his readers interpreted his intentions correctly.

The last canon is one of delivery, yet its application to cartoons is different from its use in oral discourse. In oral discourse delivery means tone, pitch, and volume of voice, but in cartoons it analyzes the general effect. Consider, for example, how a cartoon is "delivered" to an audience. First, where is it located in the newspaper? *The New York Times* believes cartoons have no place on the editorial page, but the *Los Angeles Times* finds it perfectly acceptable. If the cartoon is buried within the comic section, readers probably will not distinguish it from the several others. On the other hand, if the cartoon is on the editorial page, it stands unique from every other article on the page, and the reader's attention is drawn to the cartoon. Second, is it one frame (the usual technique) or in several frames like in "Doonesbury"? The impact may be more powerful on the reader if he has to consider four frames instead of the usual one. The delay may heighten the anticipation, and once the message is received, it leaves a lasting impression in the reader's mind. Last, how does the reader receive the message internally. Probably as R.P. Harrison proposes: "Cartoons juxtapose incongruous visual elements and pair unexpected verbal and non-verbal combinations in such a way that they are decoded together, suddenly" (Harrison, 1981:66)

That idea is consistent with the notion of enthymeme, and its application to the five canons is crucial to understanding how cartoons function as a communication medium. The canons of rhetoric are virtually timeless in analyzing changing forms of communication, but the canons are inadequate to explain how this form of communication is effective for a given society. To understand why cartoons are effective in today's world, we must turn our focus to cartoons in the modern technological society.

Today's society is governed by the quick, visual image, and cartoons are perfectly suited to capitalize on this communication trend. From the television news to newspapers, like the *USA Today*, the modern mode of communicating messages places a high premium on messages that are swift, concise, and eye-catching. Throughout history cartoons have developed along with other forms of communication, and, as the mass media came to

depend more on the visual image and non-verbal cues, the cartoon was able to take advantage of this trend. Its quick, attention-grabbing style typifies this new era, and its humor adds an undeniable appeal for readers that are saturated by news of gloom and despair (Harrison, 1981:22).

The advent of television as a major cultural influence has another effect on cartooning. Television has made public officials more recognizable, and because of this change, cartoonists have been able to use these people more often in their cartoons, compared to 50 years ago. This trend also demonstrates that cartoons are unable to use abstract ideas, but rather they must rely on concrete messages (Beringer, 1983:104). Also, Bill Mauldin has witnessed another effect of television on cartoons. He states: "Television news, while upstaging the front section of newspapers, has driven readers to the editorial pages. The customer knows what happened — he saw it on the tube long before the presses rolled — but he doesn't know why . . . Today's editorial cartoonist has a perfect audience" (Beringer, 1983:109).

The next segment of our analysis — how and why cartoons are effective in communicating — features cartoonists and their views concerning their profession. Few cartoonists today express a particular ideology, and almost all cartoonists are not specifically Democratic or Republican (Alder, 1980:74). While their views on politics may remain neutral, they will take a position when asked to comment on the effect of cartoons. Some see their profession having a modest influence, like Tony Auth. "The assumption is made that we are powerful," says Auth. "I sincerely believe that what we do is to contribute one particle a day in a vast torrent of criticism, analysis, viewpoint, and argument that everyone is subjected to" (Alder 1980:83). Others hold a more arrogant opinion, such as young Jack Ohman, who says, "I don't sit down at the drawing table with some grand mission to indoctrinate the American people to my philosophy...but I don't think Jerry Falwell reaches as many people as I do" (Gelman and Young, 1981:80).

Others react to their jobs like Mike Peters. He says Maudlin once told him, "If you make them mad, you make them think."

As an example, Peters adds, "Not many people can remember editorials about Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War, but they can remember the David Levine drawing of LBJ lifting up his shirt — and underneath is the scar of Vietnam on his chest. If visuals are good, they'll always be remembered" (Sanoff, 1981:56). Some of his cohorts express their frustration of being too simplistic in analyzing complex issues. Don Wright explained his cartoons of Carter this way: "There's no sense of dialogue or fair play in a cartoon, so I leave the impression that I'm picking on Carter. I'm aware there's a great deal more to his problems than I can depict in a cartoon. But I have no way of making this clear" (Alder, 1980:53).

We have examined some of the theoretical concepts that assist in explaining how cartoon messages are communicated to an audience. Next we'll consider how these techniques apply to the cartoon strip "Doonesbury" by Gary Trudeau, and specifically how the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter are portrayed.

In this case study, the objective is to determine the methods Trudeau uses to portray the two presidents, and then to discuss how he presents the presidency in general. We will consider three things: firstly, the source of "Doonesbury" cartoons or the canon of invention as applied to the presidency; next, an analysis of stylistic devices, in order to understand how the image of each president is created; and lastly, the typical mnemonic devices that Trudeau relies upon to convey his message about the presidents. From this analysis of each president, I will then compare the two examples to provide a basis in analyzing how "Doonesbury" depicts the presidency, and the implications Trudeau may have on his audience.

Before analyzing the examples, some background information concerning "Doonesbury" may prove helpful. First, as has already been noted, "Doonesbury" is an atypical political cartoon in that it relies on a series of four frames to convey a message, as opposed to the traditional single frame. Second, this cartoon is not a "pure" cartoon in the view of critics. "Doones-

bury" depends upon captions to communicate ideas to readers, and purists would argue that the only true cartoons are those without captions that rely entirely on the visual impact (Tubau, 1976:85). Third, "Doonesbury" is popular — probably the most widely read cartoon serial today. Even Trudeau's 21-month hiatus from January 1983 to September 1984 failed to dampen his fans' enthusiasm. It has been estimated that "Doonesbury" averages 27 million readers a day in over 700 newspapers across the nation (*Newsweek*, 1982:102), and, because the cartoon is widely read, the impact is much greater on society than that of most other cartoonists. Lastly, "Doonesbury" is controversial which, to a certain degree, may account for its high readership and popularity. Most recently Trudeau has been criticized for his 1980 election series entitled "In Search of Reagan's Brain," and before the 1984 election some newspapers refused to print "Doonesbury" cartoons that featured Reagan talking with God.

The source of "Doonesbury" cartoons originate from either personal character traits or situational themes. Of the four cartoons entered as examples (see figures), two feature character traits, and the other two involve a situational theme that arose during each administration.

In figures 1 and 2, personal character traits are demonstrated. In the first, Carter is shown as an ineffective leader as he surrounds himself with the people that are politically illiterate (i.e., Roland). Also this cartoon illustrates Carter's down-home personality — who else would associate with someone who tells "Pollack jokes" other than someone with an unsophisticated personality. Reagan's character traits are exploited by Trudeau by implying in figure 2 that Reagan is so old that he is incapable of seeing the world in a realistic manner. This charge was levied against Reagan in the 1980 campaign.

Situational themes prevail in the third and fourth figures. In the third, Trudeau is satirizing Carter for his image-making that was associated with his campaign and the early days of his administration. Carter was being labelled a media candidate that relied on symbols to create a favorable impression of himself; this

charge is the basis of the cartoon. The fourth example shows the early days of the Reagan administration were marked by public disagreements between members of the Reagan cabinet. This particular cartoon Alexander Haig and Casper Weinberger arguing about the direction America should pursue in foreign policy. An interesting note about situational cartoons is that the controversy depicted can barely be remembered by someone reading the cartoon a few years later.

Trudeau's stylistic techniques are unique to cartooning, although fairly simple. "Doonesbury" is unique in that it relies much more on text than other cartoons, but Trudeau also uses the more traditional stylistic device of exaggeration.

"Doonesbury" is unusual in that public officials are never shown; instead, Trudeau uses symbols and captions to represent the individual. For instance, no "Doonesbury" cartoon has a caricature of Reagan, Carter, or any other prominent public official. In these cartoons, except for figure 2, the president is represented by the White House, and their images are created by the virtue of the text. Due to the non-appearance of officials, "Doonesbury" must use captions, spread throughout four frames, to convey the message.

The most basic stylistic device used in cartooning is that of exaggeration of a feature. Obviously, if no features are drawn, the usual method of exaggerating Reagan's hair or Carter's smile is not available. Instead, Trudeau uses symbols and exaggerate them to create an effect. In figure 4, the White House is protected by sandbags, much like a battlefield headquarters, thus amplifying Reagan's supposed war-like demeanor. The mail box and broken fence in figures 1 and 3 depict and exaggerate the image of Jimmy Carter as a "good ol" country boy."

I believe the overall message Trudeau is trying to present is that public officials shouldn't be taken too seriously. He uses mnemonic devices to steer his readers toward his conclusions. In the Reagan cartoons he usually includes some reference to Reagan's movie career, implying that an ex-movie star as president

is comical. Trudeau tarnishes the presidential stature of Carter by creating an image of Carter as a simple country farmer, out of place in the fast-paced, sophisticated lifestyle of the nation's capital. By creating this image, Trudeau practically dares his readers to take seriously a peanut farmer as the supreme executive of the country.

By looking at both Reagan and Carter cartoons, certain conclusions can be drawn about Trudeau's attitude toward the presidency. First, presidents are human beings, not the immortal men that live in history books. He says that these men have everyday problems like all people and struggle to accomplish their goals despite their inadequacies and while making these attempts, they more than occasionally commit hilarious follies. Second, Trudeau points out that Americans put too much faith in their institutions and are mistaken in believing that the institutions of democracy are infallable. Trudeau's message may contain some elements of truth, but in order to convey this message, he must exaggerate and take some liberties in creating an image. While the "Doonesbury" cartoons are unusual in their methods of portraying subjects, they suffer from the same basic contradictions of all cartoons: Cartoonist are able to communicate in a unique manner and provide needed humor, but they also trivialize important events and taint sacred institutions with their satirical wit.

The art of cartooning as a communication device has several advantages incomparison to other mass media forms, but it also has some liabilities. Cartoons are beneficial because they are entertaining, concise, informative, and have the freedom to offer a unique perspective on society. On the other hand, cartoons can be detrimental. They are almost libelous, disrespectful to the leaders of society, and, perhaps most troublesome, they are often grossly inaccurate.

Readers are able to enjoy cartoons as a source of social criticism because of their humorous caricatures, and, because they are entertaining. The entertainment value of cartoons has another consequence, as the impact of cartoons is much greater than other forms of communication because they are easier to remember.

Besides being entertaining, they also offer messages that are simple and concise. Obviously the retention level is higher if the cartoon is simple and concise (Harrison, 1981:58), especially when compared to the lengthy editorials of today that are composed of complex arguments.

Cartoons are informative, but in a different sense than other journalistic forms. Peters explains, "We all (cartoonists) picture ourselves as the little kid looking at the naked emperor. That's our greatest gift to society. Because when someone says something pompous, when they're telling a lie, a journalist reporting the quote cannot say: 'Hey that guy's a liar.' But the cartoonist can say: 'Wait a minute. That guy's not wearing a stitch on his body" (Alder, 1980:83). A considerable amount of freedom is required to enable cartoonists the flexability to communicate their ideas. As Ivan Tubau says, "Without a certain degree of freedom, the political cartoon and the social caricature could not exist — at least not in a legally authorized publication" (Tubau, 1976:26). Some people even suggest that other areas of journalism are jealous of cartoonists because they are able to make outrageous drawings that would otherwise look foolish in print.

Some people indeed do see the freedom allotted to cartoonists as counterproductive. They believe that journalistic ethics should be applied evenly, not allowing the cartoonists the exception of being libelous. Several years ago, the *Washington Post* remarked in an editorial, "There cannot be one standard for news pages and another for the comics (cartoons)" (Harrison, 1981:34).

Leaders fear cartoons for several reasons. First, they can depict them in a very unflattering manner; second, they simplify complex issues into a single metaphor; third, cartoons are understood even by those who may not be literate or politically aware (Harrison, 1981:34). Cartoonists today get the majority of their material by exaggerating the follies of leaders. This belittlement of our leaders worries Jonathan Moore, director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He says, "I despair sometimes at the tendency to keep harping on this sense of inadequacy and incompetence in our political leadership.

The United States is a worldwide leader in the production of self-criticism and self-doubt, and every day a new belittlement is blazoned across millions of editorial pages; where does legitimate criticism begin to shade into nihilism?" (Alder, 1980:85).

A summary of these arguments is provided by the authors of *Communication to the Quick*. They write, "the cartoon is communication to the quick, and it has all the advantages of speed and all the dangers of haste. It simplifies and exaggerates, so it has all the advantages of clarity, and the disadvantages of distortion. It is humorous, with all the advantages of amusement and the dangers of diversion" (Harrison, 1981:12).

Are political cartoons effective in communicating messages, and if so, is this medium worthwhile or detrimental to society? Cartoons are probably the most effective communicator in the newspaper today, due to their simplistic format and humorous, entertaining style. The majority of readers merely skim their papers, and usually don't take time to read a whole story, but instead will take ten seconds to glance at the editorial cartoon of the day. Unfortunately, the very elements that make a cartoon effective at communicating are the source of its problems. Cartoons, by their simple and exaggerated nature, can only superficially analyze an issue, and sometimes cartoonists compound this problem by abusing their almost absolute freedom of expression in treating subjects unfairly and inaccurately. This problem is effectively countered if readers realize that cartoons merely reflect the opinion of the cartoonist. Also, if his opinions are too far from society's standards of good taste and fairness, newspapers will refuse to print the cartoons. So a method exists to check a cartoonist that oversteps his boundaries — economic considerations serve to silence a malicious cartoonist or at least tone down his attacks.

On the other hand, cartoons benefit society because they entertain, create an awareness of issues, and may cause readers to investigate an issue further. Society is bettered if something serves to inspire people to make an effort to understand our complex world — and cartoons serve this function in society.

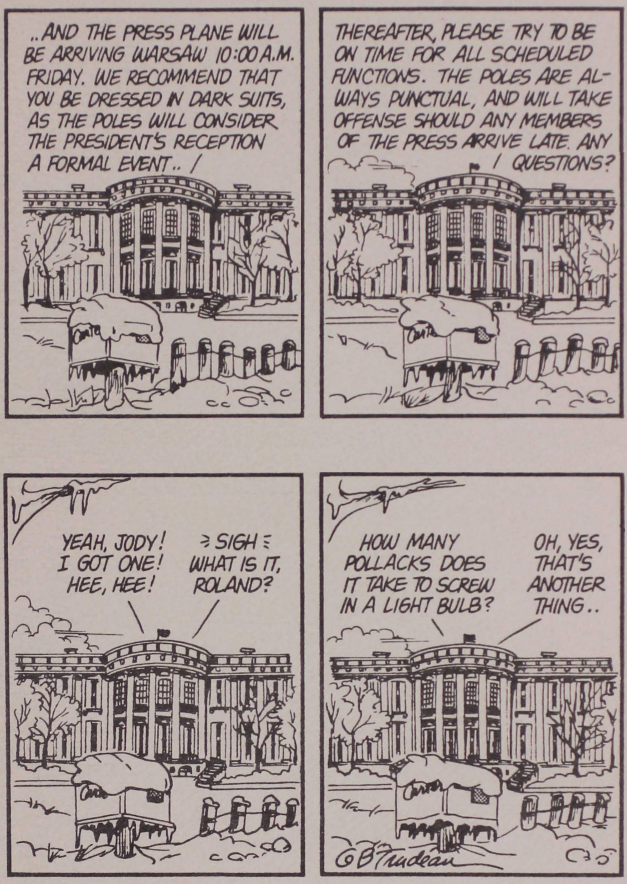

Figure 1. From *"Any Grooming Hints for Your Fans, Rollie?"*

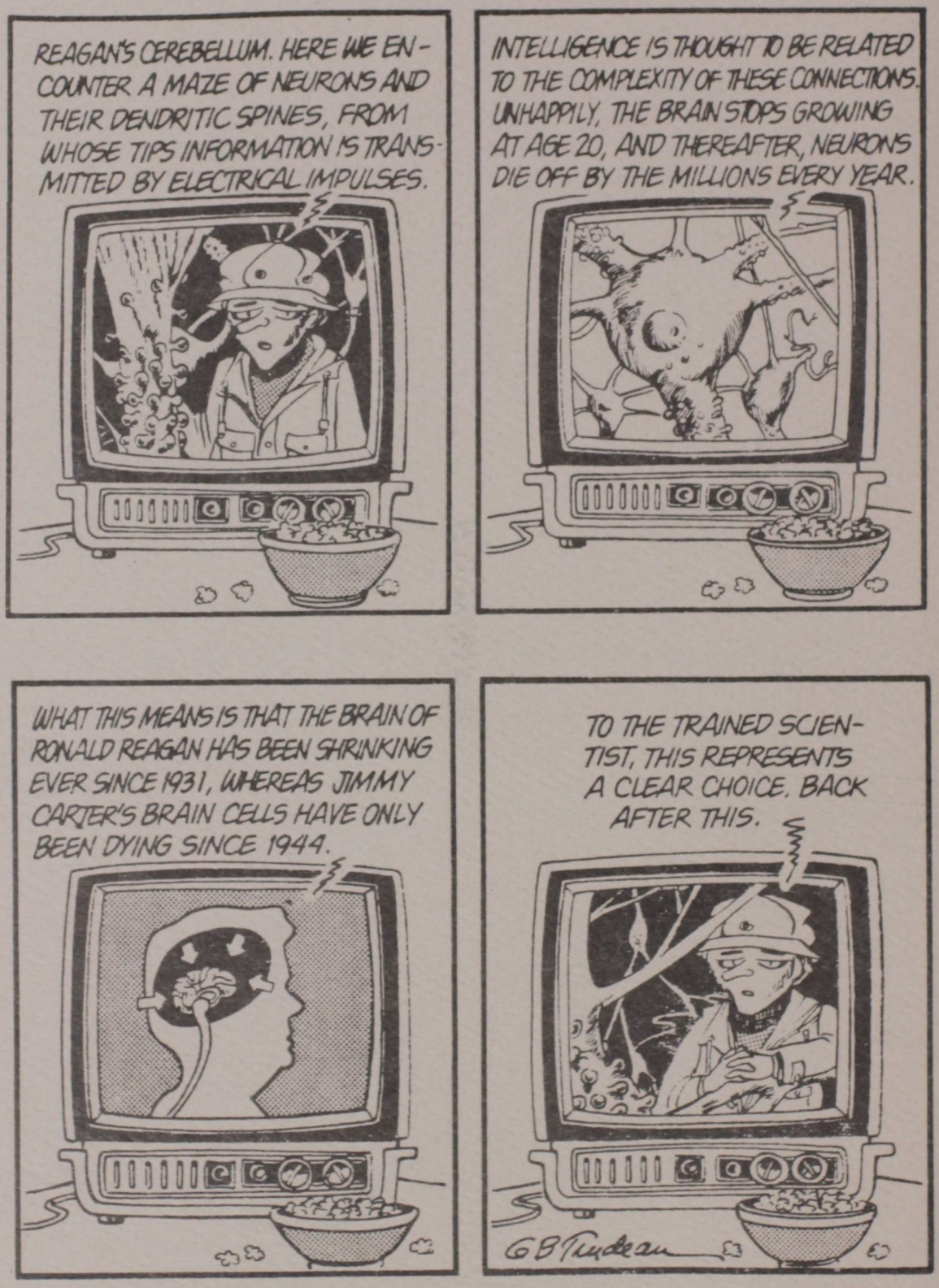

Figure 2. From *In Search of Reagan's Brain.*

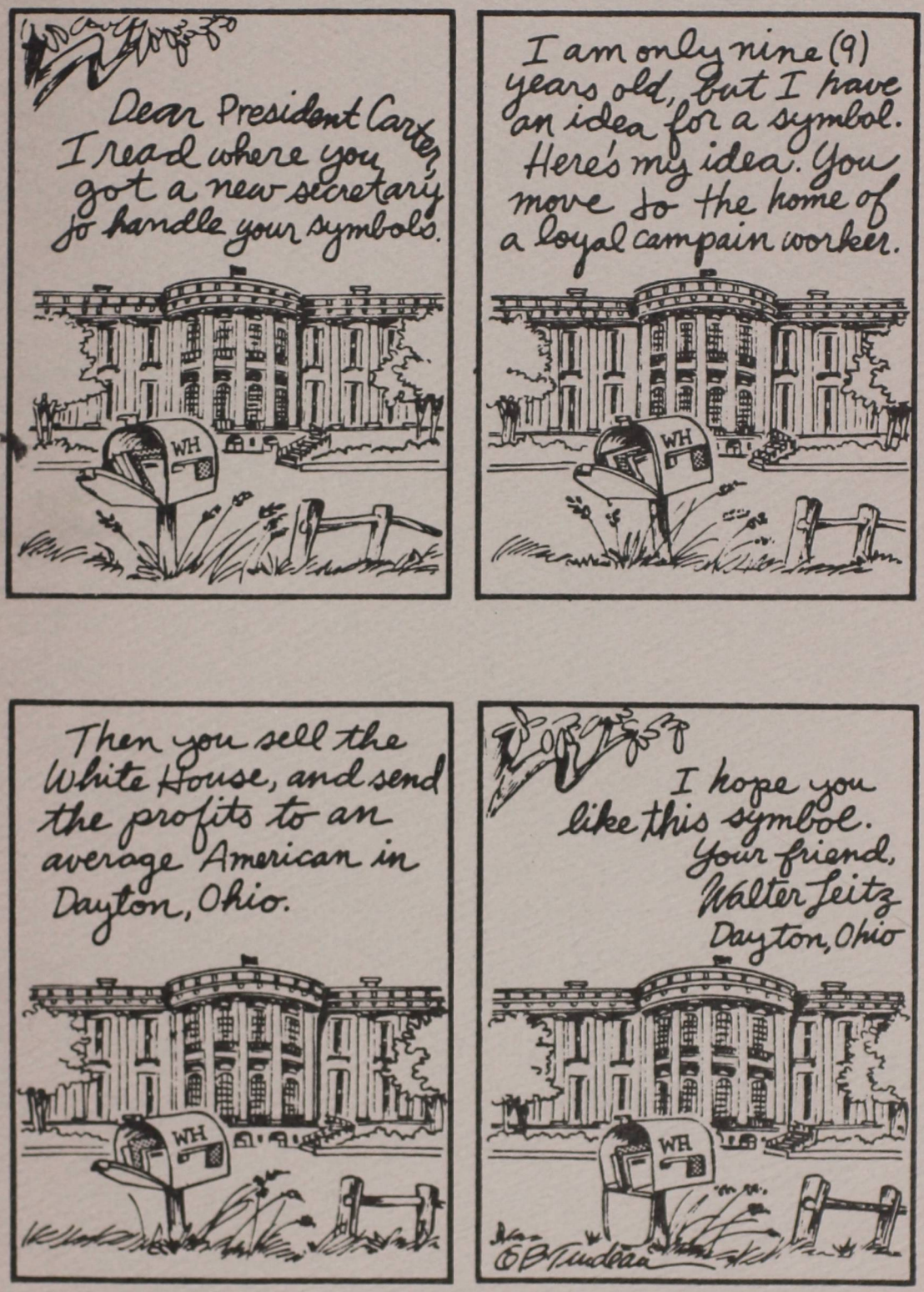

Figure 3. From *Stalking the Perfect Tan.*

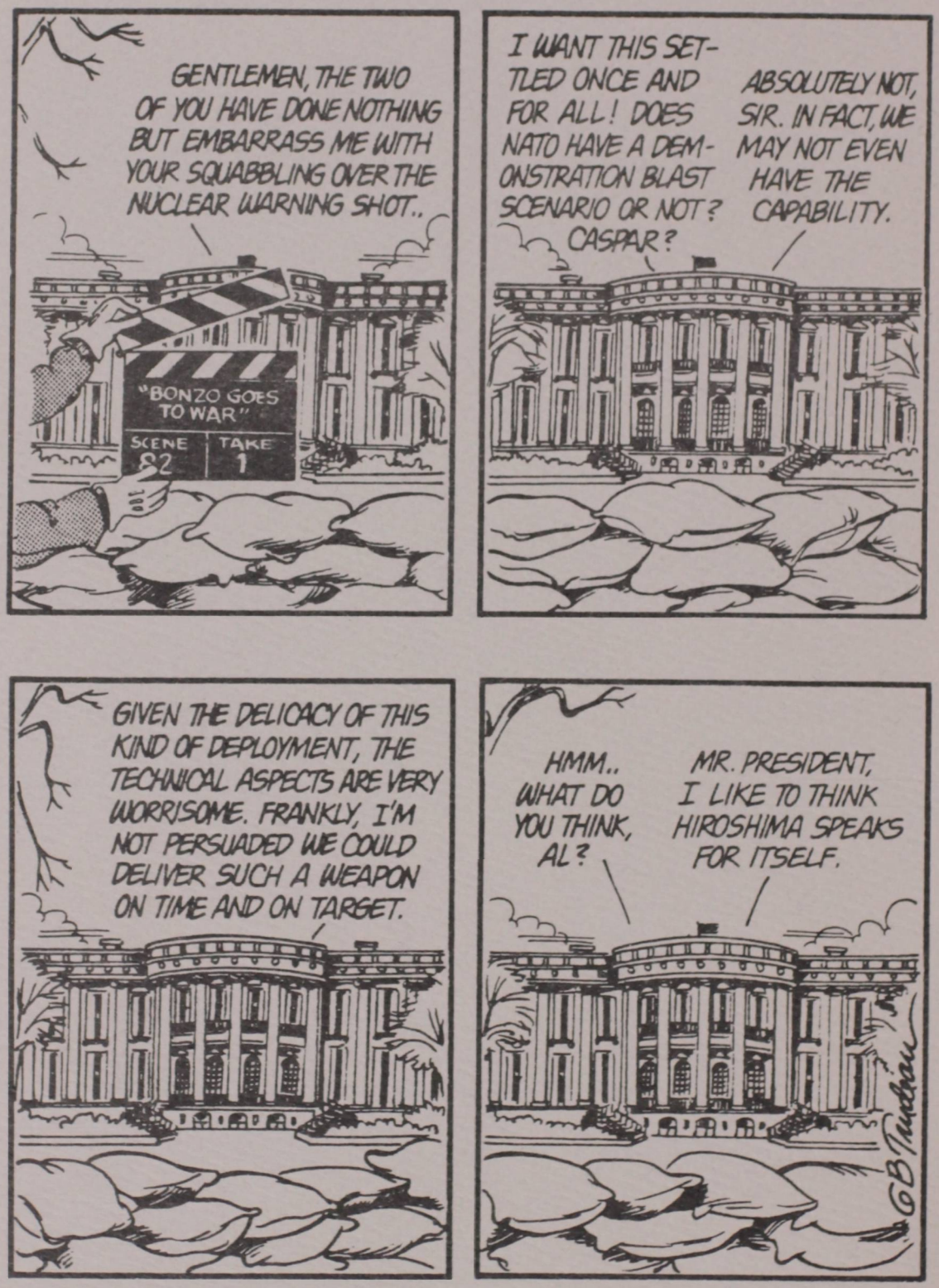

Figure 4. From *Unfortunately, She Was Also Wired for Sound.*

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AN ELECTRON MICROSCOPIC STUDY OF SPLEEN FROM MOUSE (*Mus musculus*)

(Sliced Mice' Spliced Spleen)

By Beth Russi, Class of 1985

The spleen is a major blood filtering organ composed of lymphatic tissue suspended in collagenous and reticular frameworks. Filtering in the spleen occurs via an unique structure in which lymphatic tissue and blood mix in the pulp of the organ. Macrophages remove particulate matter and aging blood cells from the circulation by phagocytosis. The worn out red blood cells are broken down and hemoglobin is reused to manufacture the bile pigment bilirubin which is then released to the blood and carried to the liver. Iron is also conserved from the hemoglobin and liberated into the blood to be carried to red bone marrow where new red blood cells are formed. The spleen is also the body's main source of circulating antibody as plasma cells arise from B–lymphocytes in response to blood-borne antigens.

The collagenous framework of the spleen consists of the capsule, the hilus, and continuations of the capsule into the organ called trabeculae. The capsule and the trabeculae are composed of dense connective tissue and smooth muscle cells. The collagenous fibers of the trabeculae continue as reticular fibers in the pulp. Elastic fibers in the trabeculae connect and can replace some of the collagenous fibers. The trabeculae provide support and convey blood vessels throughout the spleen. The reticular framework along with all the other cells present form the splenic tissue which is divided into "white pulp" and "red pulp." White

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pulp is lymphatic tissue which forms a sheath around the arteries. Elastic fibers are interspersed with the reticular fibers as the meshes of the framework are filled with free lymphocytes. Red pulp consists of venous sinuses and splenic cords to form a spongy network. Reticular fibers form the framework for red pulp in which lymphocytes, free macrophages, plasma cells, and all the elements of circulating blood can be found (Bloom and Fawcett, 1968). The greatest phagocytic activity of the spleen, is concentrated in the cords of the red pulp. In all vertebrates except rodents there is also phagocytic activity in the ellipsoids which are the reticular cells and macrophages surrounding the arterial capillaries (Fulop and McMillan, 1984).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the composition of the spleen using an electron microscope.

Materials and Methods

A mouse was stunned by a blow to the head and the spleen was exposed. A 2% glutaraldehyde-cacodylate buffer solution was dripped on the spleen in situ. The organ was excised and diced to one millimeter cubes. Initial fixation with two percent glutaraldehyde in cacodylate buffer was carried out for two hours at 4 C. Post fixation with 1% osmium tetroxide-cacodylate-sucrose solution took place at room temperature for one hour. Fixed tissues were dehydrated in a graded series of ethanol. Block staining with 5% uranyl acetate was initiated in first 100% ethanol for fifteen minutes and washed with the second 100% application of ethyl alcohol. The tissue was infiltrated and embedded in Spurr's epoxy resin. Gold to silver sections were cut with glass knives in MT-2B ultramicrotome and stained in aqueous lead citrate for thirty minutes. Sections were studied in an AEI EM-6B operating at an accelerating voltage of 50 kv.

Results

Reticular cells and fibers constitute a large portion of the spleen (Figures 1,2,3,7). Some reticular cells of connective tissue

are phagocytic (Figure 7) and others are non-phagocytic (Figure 4). Erythrocytes are prevalent throughout the tissue (Figures 1,2,4,5,7,8). They are decomposed by free macrophages (Figures 2,8) and conserve ferratin molecules (Figure 8). Particulate matter is also removed by the spleen's filtering system (Figure 5). The red pulp carries all elements of circulating blood in its meshwork including plasma cells, monocytes, lymphocytes and erythrocytes (Figure 7). Epithelial cells surround venous sinuses (Figures 6,8).

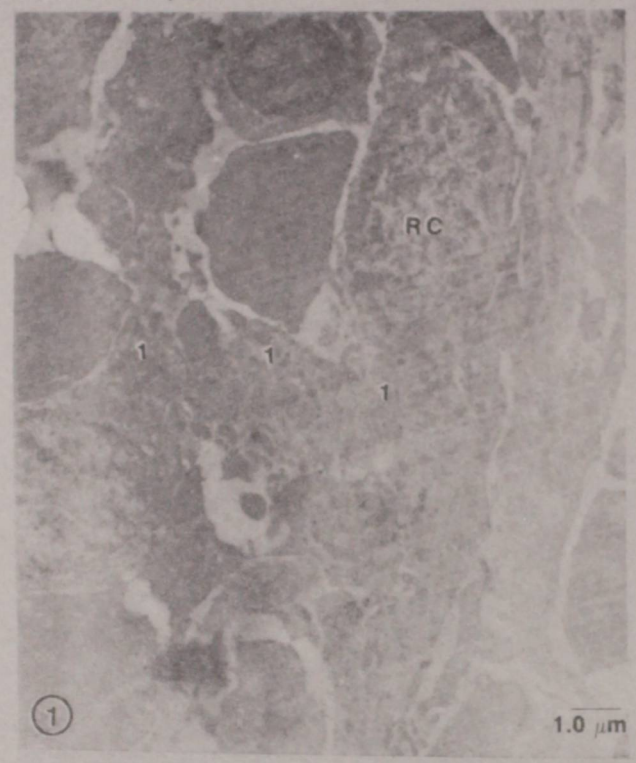
Analysis of Figures

Figure 1. Reticular cells (rc) have long cytoplasmic processes (1) which come close to other reticular fibers and cells in the network. (8,750 x)

Figure 2. Free macrophages (m) are located in the red pulp. The dense bodies (D) are partially digested red blood cells. Erythrocytes (E) are prevalent in the red pulp. (8,750 x)

Figure 3. Reticular cells (rc) are in close contact with reticular fibers (rf) which form the basic framework of the spleen. (17,300 x)

Figure 4. Erythrocytes (e) and lymphocytes (l) lie within the framework of surrounding reticular fibers. A non- phagocytic reticular cell (rc) has no dense bodies within its cytoplasm. (9,000 x)


RC
1
1
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m
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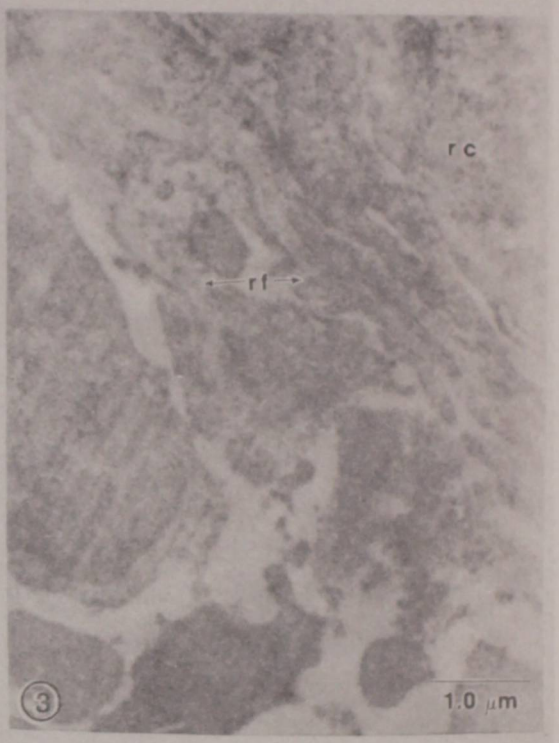
rc
rf
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rc
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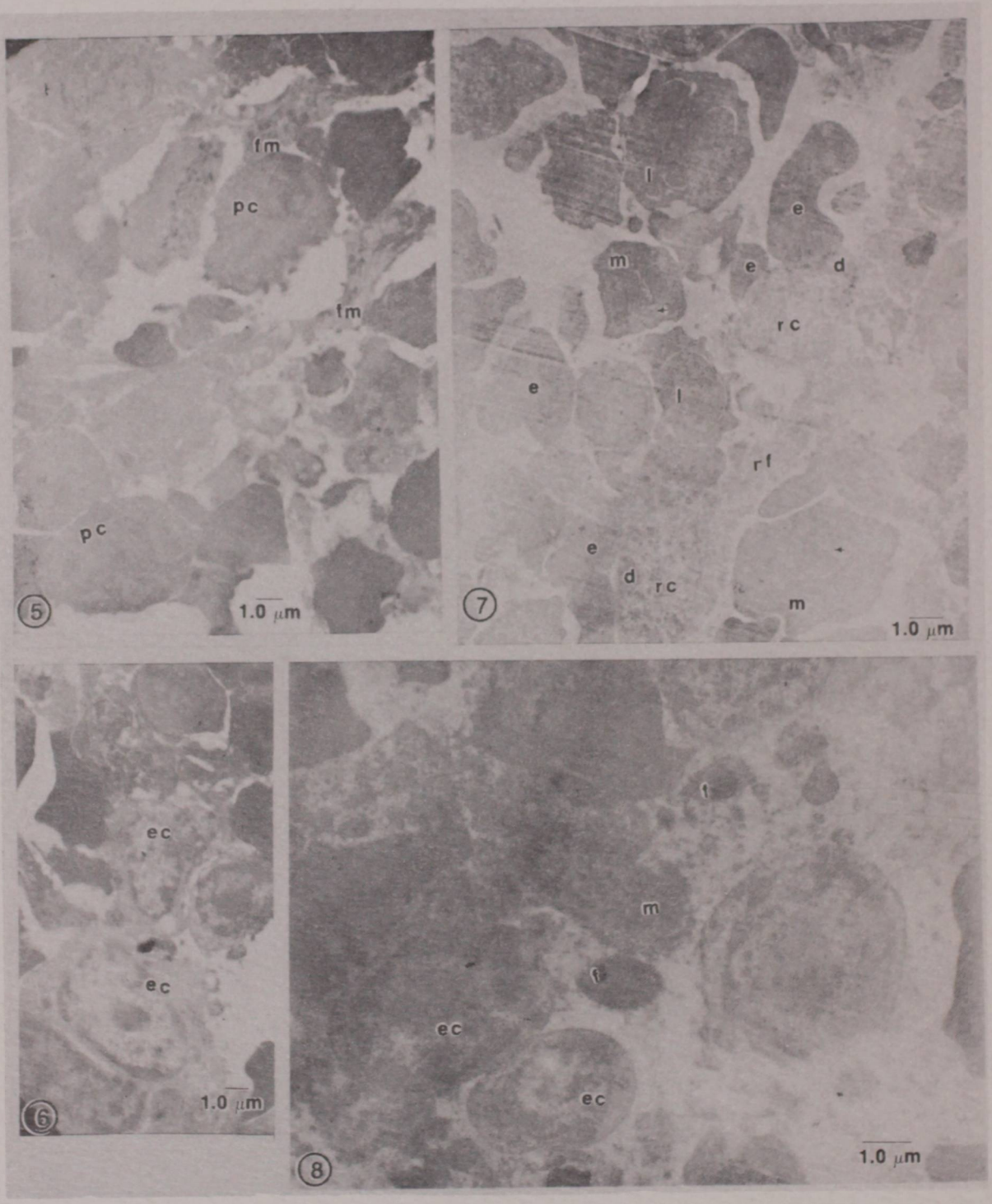
Figure 5. Particulate matter (darker spots) is phagocytosed by fixed macrophage (fm). Note the plasma cells (pc). (5,000 x)

Figure 6. Epithelial cells (ec) define the venous sinuses in the red pulp. (5,000 x)

Figure 7. Overview of the red pulp of the spleen includes erythrocytes (e), phagocytic reticular cells (rc) with dense bodies (d) in the cytoplasm, monocytes (m) with characteristic indented nucleus (arrowhead), and lymphocytes (l). (5,500 x)

Figure 8. Epithelial cells (ec) surround venous sinus. Free macrophage (m) phagocytose red blood cells and release conserved ferratin molecules (f) to circulating blood. (10,000 x)


fm
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Discussion

The histology of the spleen is studied most often by light microscopy because of the large ultrastructure and visible division of red and white pulp at the light microscopic level. In this study, the division between red and white pulp was difficult to note because of the lack of ellipsoid configuration in the rodent and the large framework surrounding and ensheathing the arteries. Reticular fibers and reticular cells of connective tissue are very prevalent throughout the spleen providing the basic pulp framework. Some of the reticular cells are phagocytic, while others do not serve that function. Reticular cells have long, slender cytoplasmic extensions and ensheath the reticular fibers. Studies by Fulop and McMillan (1984), in which reticular stains were used under a light microscope, showed that reticular fibers are condensed around blood vessels, ellipsoids, and pigment nodules, but form a loose interconnecting network around the sinusoids.

Free and fixed macrophages present in the red pulp are similar to fixed macrophages of lymphatic tissue. Macrophages of the spleen are the most active blood filtering cells in the body, but the liver, because of its size, is the most important organ from the viewpoint of total phagocytic activity. The macrophages engulf particles and older erythrocytes and digest them conserving iron and releasing it to the blood stream (Blume and Fawcett, 1968).

The spleen also provides defense for the body. In infections, local inflammation of the organ, anemias, and leukemias, the tissue of the spleen undergoes myeloid metaplasia where myelocytes, megakaryocytes and erythroblasts develop within the red pulp. Myeloid elements develop from the lymphocytes and primitive reticular cells present. The lymphocytes are produced by the spleen in the white pulp and migrate to the red pulp where some become monocytes (Blume and Fawcett, 1968).

This electron microscopic study failed to capture any trabeculae which are characterized by a comparatively large structure composed of smooth muscle cells and elastic fibers. The trabeculae with the capsule form the framework which suspends the

reticular fiber framework. The venous sinuses which are surrounded by epithelial cells were hard to denote. The sinusoids may collapse when the tissue is dehydrated. Venous sinuses are the hub of controversy concerning circulation through the spleen. Epithelial cells may not be flush against each other, but may leave a small corridor through which the blood enters the sinus. The venous sinuses empty into the veins of the pulp. "Open" circulation proposes that the arterial capillaries release blood into the pulp which then moves through these channels into the sinus. "Closed" circulation proposes that arterial capillaries open directly into the lumen of the venous sinuses (Blume and Fawcett, 1968).

This study examined the structure of the spleen and noted the prevalent existence of reticular cells and fibers forming a framework to support the red blood cells, macrophages, monocytes, and lymphocytes present to a great extent in the pulp. Phagocytic action was observed as decaying red blood cells were present in the cytoplasm of the macrophages. No support for either closed or open circulation through the venous sinuses is provided by this study.

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THE SOWER — MILLET'S AND VAN GOGH'S TRAGIC AND COMIC PERSPECTIVES COMPARED

By Sarah Kirk, Class of 1986

Often, in the history of art, we find genius responding to genius — a later artist responding to the works of an earlier master. Such examples are the works of Millet and van Gogh, specifically *The Sower* — a title for paintings by both men. Yet, from a critical perspective, the analysis of Millet's influence on van Gogh, although apparent in both paintings, is only one art historical point of view, only a partial explanation. Each work stands as an individual creation by its respective artist. In fact, each work can be interpreted separately from the other by examining the individual talent and perspective of each artist. This does not make the comparison less legitimate; it only suggests that the art historian take a different critical perspective using different tools of analysis.

Unique tools of critical analysis are provided by textual literary criticism. That is, we can see Millet's *The Sower* as a tragedy and van Gogh's *The Sower* as a comedy. Obviously, the visual arts do not have tragic and comic plot structures traditionally associated with language — words, sentences, paragraphs. However, if we examine tragedy and comedy, as defined by Hayden White in his *Metahistory,* I believe we can analyze the "plot" structures of both paintings using line, color, and form — the "language" of the visual artist. By setting the paintings side by side and applying White's tools of artistic criticism, we can see each painting in a new light. Thus, we can compare Millet's and van Gogh's paintings not only as a case study of influence, but also

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as works with differing apprehensions of reality — tragic or comic apprehensions of life.

First, let us examine White's definitions of tragedy and comedy. In White's view tragedy is a focus on the ultimate conflict of two opposing forces (for example, man and nature). The denouement is short, and the final view of man's life is "dark." White states, "The reconciliations . . . at the end of a Tragedy are much more somber [than in a comedy]; they are more in the nature of resignations of men to the condition under which they must labor in the world. These conditions . . . are asserted to be inalterable and eternal . . ." (White, 1973:9). The mode of explanation, then, is "mechanistic" — based on laws that are determined. Thus, fate and causal determination are the laws that bind the tragic vision.

On the other hand, White describes the comic vision as transcending the fear of fate (White, 1973:120). Indeed, "Comedy is the form which reflection takes after it has assimilated the truths of Tragedy to itself" (White, 1973:94). The mode of emplotment for comedy is a series of small conflicts — a chaos of forms — which end in a reconciliation of man with men, of men with their world and their society. Therefore, the central theme in comedy is the notion of reconciliation. The mood is optimistic, and the ideological implications are that we inhabit ". . . the best of possible historical worlds, or at least the best that one can 'realistically' hope for, given the nature of the historical process . . ." (White, 1973:28). Thus, a comic perspective hopes to end in a harmonious condition where we can reflect on the apparently tragic conflicts within the world. White states: ". . . the Comic vision of the world process asserts not only the primacy of life over death in face of any given Tragic situation, but also knows the reason for that assertion" (White, 1973:131).

Can historical criticism, in essence, literary criticism, be applied to the visual arts? The key is in White's notion that the historian, like the artist and poet, prefigures his world. That is, a piece of art, whether it be history, or painting, reflects the mind of its subjective creator. Thus, White's categories of comedy and

tragedy are tools that we can use to discuss forms of art in a variety of mediums.

From my perspective, Millet presents a tragic "emplotment" of the world. Millet's *The Sower* is dark. Man and nature, together, create this darkness through their opposing forces. Here we have the tragic conflict between two overpowering forces. We cannot help but notice this conflict as we sense the strong "Michelangelesque" stride forward of the man, and the downward movement of the hill upon which he strides. This is not the passive field sowed and reaped by the nineteenth-century French peasant. Millet gives equal importance to both landscape and human figure, which unites these two forces in a central crisis or conflict. The art historian Robert Herbert supports the importance of two central forces in Millet's *The Sower*:

> Millet was the first artist in the nineteenth-century to give equal importance to both elements of his composition, so that his landscapes produced a new type of figure, and his figures, a new kind of landscapes. Nature and man are interdependent. Each acts on the other, neither is just an accessory. . . . Millet opened out his spaces as he reached for the vastness of nature, which spread beyond his frame to suggest infinitude. In *The Sower*, for example, man makes his eternal gesture against a hillside whose high horizon evokes the rotundity of the globe. . . . (Herbert, 1970:46)

Man and nature are, obviously, the two forces that, in their opposition, are magnified. Thus Millet presents to us a tragic "scene."

Also, in Millet's *The Sower*, there is a resignation of man to his eternal conflict with nature. Millet tries to reconcile man and nature through the canticle of work. The sower is open to his environment; he does not struggle with nature in this final reconciliation, but he accepts his fatal opposition to the land on which he must live. This is a fatalistic or deterministic view that is inherent in such a tragedy. In this fatalistic perspective, Millet presents

his sower as *the* sower, not as *a* sower — a universal generalization that is not a personal symbol. Thus, the conflict between sower and field is not a symbol representing many layers of meaning or conflicts, but one ultimate, overpowering conflict that is universal to mankind.

Millet, as a determinist, did find a resolution to the conflict of man and nature. But the resignation of peasant to soil is not a happy ending. Mario Amaya discusses Millet's fatalism:

> Millet never intended to change the sad plight of the poor farmer but only to depict the realities of his life . . . without prospect of hope or change . . . he was no reformer in the moral sphere. If anything, he was a Determinist, whose philosophy held that there was no choice to make. Millet established in his art a dialogue between man and implacable fate. He was essentially a pessimist who believed that fate and history were apolitical forces that kept the peasant in his weary place. (Amaya, 1976:59)

There is only one resolution for man because the opposing forces are so great. The outcome must be obvious, for there is no real solution to the conflict except that man resigns himself to his fate. Millet shows the sower in a struggle with obdurate nature, which only reluctantly yields to "dogged" effort — a dialectic in which nature stands for fate, and therefore one which embodies Millet's sense of the meaning of life. Thus *The Sower* is a tragic picture of man in conflict with nature.

The technical elements of Millet's *The Sower* enforce a tragic emplotment. The color is of the soil — for both land and peasant. The dark, dusty brown of the earth almost absorbs the sower's feet as a part of the soil. We sense a unity of the resignation of man to nature. Indeed, Millet's *The Sower* seems to be painted with the actual soil which he sows. The paint, according to Gautier, is "so dry that no varnish could quench its thirst" (Denvir, 1976:22). This sense of brooding ferocity is so marked that it is difficult at times to decide whether *The Sower* is a metaphor of life or of death (Denvir, 1976:22).

However, the setting sun, filtering in from the horizon at the far left of the picture, gives rich roses, lavenders and grey-blues to the sky. This renders the peasant's face darker by contrast. Herbert suggests, "And through that very contrast [the sunlight] evokes ideas opposite those of sunlight: approaching winter, brooding darkness, fatality" (Herbert, 1976:78). The sower, like the sun, is unified by color in the painting to his opposition, nature. Yet the sower, in the contrasting warm and cool colors created by sunlight, is also recognized as an opposing force to nature.

The sense of identity with the earth is reinforced not only by the color, but by the composition. That is, the sower seems to portray "man working with nature" as he strides across the land, flinging the seeds towards the earth. Yet, there is a violent gesture, a proud raggedness, which seems to be painted with the earth that the sower is planting (Tomson, 1905:66). There is a battle of life in this field between the sower and the land that cannot be discounted in Millet's painting. Robert Herbert describes how Millet depicts the form of the sower in his opposition to the land. He writes:

> On an autumn day, at sunset, a young peasant strides diagonally down a slope to our right. The sun comes from the left, catching the cheek, hand, wrist and thigh, and seems to push him onward. This thrust of the form and the force of the light are counterbalanced by the rearward motion of outstretched arm and leg and by the harrow being dragged into the sun by bulky oxen, in the right distance. . . From the sky comes another sense of menace, the crows — symbols of darkness — which rattle down to steal the grain. (Herbert, 1976:78)

It is this thrust of the hip, and the outward fling of the sower's arm, that give the form power, and in this power, a countervailing force to the land. The peasant, in battered hat and ragged straw boots, is not in harmony with nature, but only in a solemn

resignation, as shown through similar colors and weary form, to his tragic entanglement with nature.

The sower, his face hidden in shadow, and eclipsed by his wind-tattered hat, wears the face of the universal peasant. Charles Smith writes, "He was not portraying the Barbizon peasant, not even the peasant as peasant, but as symbol of humanity. . . . The faces of his peasants are not only not individualized, but are usually without expression" (Smith, 1953:68). Thus we see that Millet depicts *the* sower and not *a* sower in his painting. From the unity of color, to the juxtaposition of forms, to the embodiment of man as generalized in a peasant figure, there is in every aspect of *The Sower* the artist's extreme sense of helplessness and despair at man's fate. Millet's instinctive pessimism, his fatalism, and his humanitarian feelings are cast over the figure. Millet shows the eternity of man's burdensome life, the tragedy of two mighty forces: man and nature (Herbert, 1970:48).

Millet wrote in his letters that "life is tragic" (Denvir, 1976:20). Indeed, the melancholy of his nature and art produces a sense of tears in all that he has painted. Millet was born on a wild and ragged coast among a people that were a God-fearing race, but could face death with strength (Cartwright, 1896:4). Millet was filled with the awful sense of a serious, majestic nature, and the littleness of man. Yet there was a natural order of things in the peasant's burden of daily toil. When Millet wrote of Watteau, he said that Watteau's "theatrical little world" distressed him; "I used to say to myself that all this little troupe would go back to their box when the spectacle was over, and lament their cruel destiny" (Cartwright, 1896:51). Art, for Millet, "[was] a mill that grinds- a battle. Suffering is what gives the artist power to express" (Cartwright, 1896:79).

In Millet's letters we find perspectives of a tragic world that he expresses so well in his *The Sower.* He writes, "The calm and grandeur of the forest are tremendous, so much so, that at times I find myself frightened. I do not know what the trees are saying to each other. It is something that we cannot understand, because we do not speak their language . . ." (Cartwright, 1896:104-5).

Nature and man are in conflict; they speak different languages. However, man and nature are unified in one sense, through their final resolution — their dependence upon each other. Millet writes of the "sad dream" in which he sees the peasant awakening to his plight as the tragic man:

> You are sitting under a tree, enjoying all the comfort and quiet which it is possible to find in this life, when suddenly you see a poor creature loaded with a heavy faggot coming up the narrow path opposite. The unexpected and always striking way in which this figure appears before your eyes reminds you instantly of the sad fate of humanity — weariness (Cartwright, 1896:106).

The faggot is man's burden — a tragic burden — which he accepts as a necessity of life. Millet, in *The Sower,* emplots a tragedy of man and nature and is able to express this through dark, brash brush strokes that create great tension between color, composition, and form.

Van Gogh's *The Sower,* in contrast, transcends Millet's fatalistic perspective; van Gogh presents a comic vision of man in all his surroundings. The emplotment of a comedy, as stated earlier, includes many conflicts and tensions. These tensions take on many forms in van Gogh's painting: The peasant-figure and the looming tree, the sower and the sun, the tree and the sun, the sower's hand and the seeds it scatters, the straight line of the horizon and the circular edge of the sun, and, finally, the tension among the colors. However, there are not overpowering, opposing forces, as found in Millet's painting. By juxtaposing a number of conflicts, van Gogh shifts the focus from conflict to the final, harmonious grouping of all elements.

From van Gogh's perspective, man is not resigned to nature, but, in his surroundings, his figure is one of many elements. Therefore, *The Sower* by van Gogh is optimistic in tone. The bright yellow sun encompasses all in the painting, not through its sunlight, but through its presence in the work as a conglomeration

of everything in man's world. Van Gogh thus transcends Millet's pessimistic tone in a reflection on the conflicts, and a synthesis of those conflicts. Plasschaert, in 1898, compared Millet to van Gogh according to their French and Dutch sensibilities. He wrote:

> Millet wanted synthesis, but couldn't avoid the disadvantage of the synthetic . . . . He tried to express the deepest motives common to all in a single character in a fixed pose. Vincent, on the other hand, might have wanted a synthesis, but this was not his lasting wish . . . . Van Gogh lacks Millet's classic calm, but Vincent is so wondrously full of living beauty and truth that he always reaches anew to the deepest sources of emotion. (Zemel, 1980:37-38)

It is this "open" ending in van Gogh's *The Sower* which gives us warmth and vitality. It seems that van Gogh realizes man's final resolution will be "good."

Van Gogh's *The Sower* celebrates human emotion over human form. There is a bursting of emotion, through color and line, into the exterior world. Thus, we have a comic perspective in van Gogh's painting that focuses on one final reality of peasant and land, and their surroundings as transformed in art, that will reach a good, explosive resolution. This warm and better world will result after one reflects on the conflicts explicit in life. Indeed, as H. R. Graetz states, "Against the everlasting negative stands the positive of the work . . . life is complicated, and good and bad by themselves exist no more than black and white in nature" (Graetz, 1963:98). The sower, as a symbol of rebirth and the autumn sunset, as a representative of death, is opposite, yet complementary — a union beyond opposites (Lubin, 1972:17).

As contrasted to Millet's *The Sower,* the technical elements of van Gogh's *The Sower* enhance a comic emplotment. There are many distinct colors in van Gogh's painting that are juxtaposed to each other. The intense, yellow sun is warm next to the cold, blue fields and the dark green sower and tree. The apple-green sky, with pink clouds, warms up to the sun. Likewise, the man

and tree are united in their similar coloring. Here we have the autumnal intensification of colors — the vehement contrast of yellow and brownish-green. The pure colors and non-pure colors awaken man to the submerged currents of the world (Schapiro, 1980:80). We find realities of emotion and expression, not of visual realism. Through vibrant colors, van Gogh reaches past the tragedy of man's feet as tied to the soil he sows, and releases man and his world to the overriding unity of feelings and reflection.

The optimistic tone of van Gogh's painting is explicit in the affinity between all elements. Meyer Schapiro comments, "In van Gogh's conception of man and tree, there is a mysterious affinity in colour, silhouette, and direction, like an unexpected rhyme which unites otherwise unconnected words and gives a greater resonance to both" (Schapiro, 1980:80). We see that the forms found in van Gogh's painting are expressive through their affinities and not through any countervailence, as found in Millet's painting. The sun, tree, and sower are each placed independently of the other, yet each is enhanced by the other through our reflection upon the form that these single elements take in relation to each other. Indeed, we do not find the tragic "mechanistic laws" that unite form to form, but instead there are comic "organistic ideas." Each form in van Gogh's painting lends itself to many different relationships within *The Sower*. The focus in *The Sower* is not on the struggling form of man against nature, but the focus is on the balance of color, forms, and lines throughout the painting — the peace and harmony found in a magnified resolution, the comic world. Again, Schapiro writes of this optimism: "Decisive for the mood of the work is the vision of the distant colourful world through the dark neutralized tones of the foreground objects, and the position of the gigantic sun between them" (Schapiro, 1980:80).

We also may describe van Gogh's *The Sower* as a comedy by interpreting each element as symbolic. Graetz discusses the significance of van Gogh's symbols and believes that the sower, himself, is the image of humanity. Also, the tree is the symbol of struggle, the sun is the symbol of love, and the seeds symbolize life. Important in this painting are the relationships, then, between

man, tree, sun, and the horizon. The sower's head and a young shoot of the tree are both silhouetted in the sun. The sun, as the herald of love, suggests the hope needed for living elements to survive. Here, also, man and nature are compelling in their conjoint movement. The contour of the sun and the line of the horizon (the life-line) go through the sower's head. Thus the sun and horizon cause a dynamic impact of simultaneous contrast and union of nature and man. Each element, distinctly unique in itself, gives way in this painting to a unity which forms an optimistic picture — a comic picture — of resolution.

Van Gogh wrote letters to his brother, Theo, which often speak to his comic perspective. Vincent wrote to Theo during the years surrounding his painting of *The Sower,* and what we find is a very serious outlook on life. For Vincent, "To paint peasant life is serious" (Barr, 1935:2). In this serious peasant life, he viewed beauty in the outer world of the peasant, as expressed through his vibrant use of colors. Vincent made studies of earth and sky, and then added "Bold figures." Indeed, van Gogh sees Millet's work as *the* resignation. He writes that Millet paints peasants as, "knowing how to suffer without complaining" (van Gogh, 1982:326). This tragic resignation of peasant to earth is practical, but not true for van Gogh. He writes, "life and the world are full of unsatisfactory relationships," and, although "the world says 'Too good to last,' I say, 'Good lasts'" (van Gogh, 1982:530). Van Gogh is optimistic — for him, "things turn up again and again" (van Gogh, 1982:530).

Van Gogh's painting is intimate as well as optimistic. The sower, on one level, represents van Gogh. Near the end of his life, he writes, "People will only see the exaggeration by use of color as a caricature. If we are painting a peasant, we want to show that in the end what we have read has come very near to being part of us" (van Gogh, 1982:7). We find that the sower is a symbol, on many levels in Vincent's painting, representing Christ, humanity, peasants, or Vincent himself. This allows for many different conflicts to be suggested between man and nature in *The Sower.* Yet the outcome, the overall synthesis of *The Sower,* is the strongest element in the painting. As van Gogh states,

"Millet gave the synthesis of the peasant . . . then have we in general learned to see the peasant now? *No,* hardly anyone knows how to pull one off" (van Gogh, 1982:4). Van Gogh uses color arbitrarily in order to express himself forcibly; indeed, van Gogh uses color to suggest some emotion "of an ardent temperament." Van Gogh derived some of his optimism through his study of Japanese prints. He understood the Japanese philosophy that man and nature should exist as one. This is van Gogh's final solution for man, for by living as a part of nature, man "will be gay and happy." It is this magnified resolution of man and nature in harmony that man must place his hopes, and it is this resolution that is presented in van Gogh's *The Sower.*

Van Gogh transcends Millet's fatalistic, tragic view, and prefigures in his painting a comic emplotment of life. After Vincent became mentally ill, he wrote, "My dear boy, the best we can do perhaps is to make fun of our petty griefs and, in a way, of the great griefs of human life too. Take it like a man, go straight to your goal" (van Gogh, 1982:140). Thus we see that Hayden White's tools can be applied to the visual arts. By seeing Millet's *The Sower* as tragedy and van Gogh's *The Sower* as comedy, we can clearly perceive part of the artist's mind and can therefore envision the artist's impressions of the world. Millet's and van Gogh's impressions are different. Although van Gogh directly "copies" Millet's *The Sower,* his world view, as expressed in the painting, allows us to see the basic differences of the paintings and the artists.

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DICKINSON'S POETRY AND TWAIN'S *HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

— A STUDY OF HOPE —

By Mia Nicholson, Class of 1987

American literature often stresses that man's nature is fundamentally evil. This sentiment has the effect of shrouding hope with darkness. Many American works, however, reveal a core of hope capable of transcending the grimmest fears. The poems of Emily Dickinson are full of references to hope, containing a feeling of inner joy. In contrast, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is not brightly lit with hopeful thoughts, and, at first analysis, appears completely despairing. When carefully compared, however, Dickinson's flame of hopefulness illumines a fainter flicker of hope in Twain's novel. American writers, such as Twain and Dickinson, maintain their individual hopes with care, realizing that hope is what allows them to survive. Without hope one cannot avoid despair and bitterness. In varying degrees, Emily Dickinson's poems and *Huckleberry Finn* illustrate this American trait, through beauty, admirable characters, and original spiritual thinking.

Dickinson's poetry directly speaks of hope. In one poem she defines hope's nature as undying and undefeatable, even in the most perilous environment. Hope lives in the soul and cannot be stifled.

> "Hope" is the thing with feathers
> That perches in the soul-
> And sings the tune without the words-

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And never stops - at all -

(Dickinson, 1961:34)

Furthermore, Dickinson realizes that other people continue their lives, even in adverse conditions, because of the "little bird" of hope's unconquerable ability to protect them.

And the sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

(Dickinson, 1961:34)

This particular poem is most clearly representative of Emily Dickinson's sense of hope. Her definition of hope can be compared to Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Under careful inspection, elements of Dickinson's hope are found in Twain's novel.

The main characters of *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck and Jim, are vessels of the rare humanity that Twain sees left in his world. His last vestiges of hope are harbored by these characters, who are continually bombarded by the vices of those they meet. Though the two are not completely immune to the influence of others, there is an indestructible foundation of goodness in Huck and Jim. After being dominated and abused by two deceptive and cruel bums who pretend to be a king and duke, Huck remains incapable of hardening his heart towards them. When the pair are tarred and feathered by an angry crowd for their deceptions, Huck feels compassion for their predicament. He is above the brutality and senselessness of crowd behavior. He says of the incident:

> . . . it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals, it seemed like I couldn't ever feel any hardness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awfully cruel to one another. (Twain, 1979:221)

Huck's reaction is forgiving, kind and humane. From this attitude the reader experiences a revived sense of hope towards the ultimate state of human nature. Once more it seems possible that man may not be irretrievably evil. The hope for redemption from such a fate is embodied by Huck. His goodness and innate sense of morality provide hopefulness. Huck does not conform to an accepted sense of justice, but trusts his individual conscience.

The admiration for individuality in *Huckleberry Finn* parallels a similar admiration in Dickinson's work, especially for religious individuality. Both Huck and Emily Dickinson follow unorthodox religious beliefs, adapting Christianity to their own ideas of faith and ethics. It is their individuality that makes them freshly convincing and sincere. Their rejection of dogma for individual, independent thought is inspiring. For example, Emily Dickinson describes her own personal worship, creating a natural setting of unity, superior to the ritual and organization of the church. She writes,

> Some keep the Sabbath going to church -
> I keep it staying at home -
> With a Bobolink for a Chorister -
> And an orchard for a Dome -
>
> (Dickinson, 1961:66)

Dickinson shapes a richer world for worship than the planned atmosphere of the church. She expresses a continual communion with her own God and heaven instead of a weekly homage. The impression left is that, for Dickinson, heaven is not just a final destination, but part of the journey. Furthermore, the journey can be pleasant, beautiful and unrigid, with an atmosphere of daily hope for the present and the approach of death. She does not lead her readers to despair or fear, but creates a peaceful serenity.

> God preaches, a noted clergyman-
> And the sermon is never long,
> So instead of going to heaven, at last-
> I'm going all along.
>
> (Dickinson, 1961:66)

Dickinson's "little bird" of hope, discussed earlier, would be at ease in this poem, as the author is maintaining hope without a struggle. Dickinson is comfortable and confident.

Though without such confidence, Huck's rejection of standard Christian mores for his own conclusions regarding ethics also inspire hope. The reader sees Huck rising above the accepted morality of people to follow his intuitive reasoning. He agonizes over his decision to return Jim as a runaway slave or to leave him to freedom. To return Jim would relieve the sense of guilt he feels for aiding a runaway slave, which is considered a sin by his society. Instead, Huck follows his heart and lets Jim remain free. Huck truly feels that his decision damns him, yet he follows the choice because he knows that Jim will benefit. He finalizes the decision by saying to himself, "All right then, I'll go to hell" as he tears up a note he has written that reveals Jim's whereabouts (Twain, 1979:209). The noble nature of this gesture cannot be overestimated. Huck denies himself the comfort of following what he thinks is righteous for the welfare of a friend. The loyalty and sacrifice Huck demonstrates exceeds that of his fellow man. Twain harbors hope in rare but hardy souls like Huck. Those who think for themselves and follow standards because they have painstakingly explored their own souls, instead of blindly accepting principles, redeem mankind from worthlessness. Hope for ultimate goodness is contained in individuals like Huck. Though rare, his type will always exist, persevering just like the "little bird" of hope.

Clearly, Dickinson's poetry and *Huckleberry Finn* correspond more closely than is immediately apparent. Both are sustained by hopefulness, whether it is strong or rather faint. The spark of hope is there, repelling complete despair. Hope's inimitable nature guarantees some meaning to life, opposed to entropic decay. The valuable commodity of hope is stored in different things, such as people with innate integrity like Huck, or original spiritual thought and worship. By whatever means, however, hope is preserved. This core of hopefulness provides an incentive to continue life because there remains the possibility of finding joy in life and death, or redemption of the human condition from evil.

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DIDEROT'S PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSE TO MADNESS

Tracey Rizzo, Class of 1985

In his book, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason,* Michel Foucault examines various responses to madness during what he calls, "the Classical Age." He considers his work the "archaeology of silence," suggesting his intent to search for the roots of the now-closed dialogue between reason and unreason. In the Preface, he summarizes his claim:

> In the Middle Ages and until the Renaissance, man's dispute with madness was a dramatic debate in which he confronted the secret powers of the world, the experience of madness was clouded by images of the Fall and the Will of God, of the beast and the metamorphosis, and of all the marvelous secrets of knowledge. In our era, the experience of madness remains silent in the composure of a knowledge which, knowing too much about madness, forgets it. (Foucault, 1973:xii)

Foucault tries to identify what happened between the end of the Renaissance and the advent of modern psychology. The madman, who had a positive identity until the Renaissance, became a phantom removed from history as well as from the present. Foucault suggests that for the world of reason madness had no existence beyond that of disease. Philosophically, it was ignored.

Madness was ignored because it challenged the authority of reason. In an age that sought to universalize reason, unreason

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had to be annihilated, according to Foucault. The philosophers of the Age of Reason saw this as their task. They claimed that reason governed the universe and was empirically exhibited in the laws of nature. Likewise, man, as a product of nature, was inherently reasonable. The enlightenment philosophers sought not only to cultivate reason in man, they sought to elevate and objectify reason in the world. Foucault traces the development of what he calls a "conspiracy of silence" that had its roots in the intellectualism of the Enlightenment. Dialogue with unreason was terminated in the Age of Reason.

Implicit in Foucault's discussion is the confusion in the 18th century over the meanings of the terms madness and unreason. These terms are equally ambiguous in French, for *déraison* and *folie* seem to be interchangeable. Foucault defines madness as unreason's empirical form, suggesting that unreason designated that realm where dreams, imagination, and intuition also dwell. Madness is one type of unreason, though neither term can be defined without referring to the other. Foucault, in showing the various faces of madness, broadly defines it as "scission," "non-being," "division," and "negation." He argues that madness is much more than that which is confined in the asylums. Madness is, perhaps, the act of confining itself.

For Foucault only one enlightenment thinker acknowledged the voice of unreason and madness: Denis Diderot. Diderot's most vivid character, Rameau's nephew, is mad. And Foucault says of him, ". . . this was the first time since the Great Confinement that the madmen had become a social individual, it was the first time that anyone had entered into conversation with him, and that, once again, he was questioned" (Foucault, 1973:200). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Diderot was able to confront unreason as a philosophical dilemma as well as a social and physiological reality. The form of *Rameau's Nephew* is a dialogue; the content is a confrontation between reason and its opposite. Neither side is victorious; Diderot provided no resolution. Rather he demonstrated his ability to listen to and then to accept both perspectives.

This claim provides the stimulus for the present paper. I intend to interpret Diderot's works from a non-traditional viewpoint. Typically, Diderot is cast as the man of Reason, the *philosophe* who championed the rational aspect of man. A careful reading of Diderot's works clearly reveals the diverse and experimental nature of his thought, which resulted in his ability to see the relative legitimacy of multiple perspectives on reality. By constructing a typology of madness based on a close reading of Diderot's major works, I wish to offer a reinterpretation of his thought — one which emphasizes his willingness to take madness seriously, to analyze it philosophically, and to engage it in dialogue. Thus, while Diderot was the epitome of his age, he was also its greatest exception.

In this paper, I will first consider Diderot as a philosopher, highlighting the apparent dichotomy within his life and thought, a scission which caused him at once to glorify reason and to accept its opposite. I will then examine what I see as Diderot's definitions of madness. Finally, I will consider Diderot's view that truth is accessible to the perspective of madness, and his understanding of the ethical consequences of such a claim.

Diderot provided the enlightenment with its monument, the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts et des metiers.*

> In truth, the aim of an *encyclopedia* is to collect all the knowledge that now lies scattered over the face of the earth, to make known its general structure to the men among whom we live, and to transmit it to those who will come after us, in order that the labors of past ages may be useful to the age to come, that our grandsons, as they become better educated, may at the same time be more virtuous and more happy, and that we may not die without having deserved well of the human race. (Barzun, 1964:277)

While outlining the nature of the work before him, Diderot revealed a number of things about himself and about his age. Indeed, here he defined himself through his age. He was the

philosophe, the 18th century's man of letters. In explaining the conception of the encyclopedia, Diderot revealed his faith in the power of knowledge and of reason. His view that men could be perfected once armed with knowledge is typical of his age. As a moralist and a humanist, Diderot proclaimed his love of humanity and his faith in progress. As did his contemporaries, he believed in a higher ethical standard and foresaw the betterment of society once that standard was recognized and adopted. Implicit in Diderot's faith in moral and intellectual progress was his reverence for posterity. Not only would future generations be better because of the *Encyclopédie*, they would recall its creator's greatness and significance.

But that Diderot was a divided man can be seen in many of his works. This scission can be interpreted as a struggle within himself between equally strong, opposing forces. At once he was rational, tempted to elevate reason, and he was passionate, tempted to succumb to the inclinations of his sensibility. His logic, when exercised to its fullest, led him to atheism and materialism, and sometimes to amoralism and determinism. Yet his heart yearned for the realization of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. In a letter to Sophie Volland he wrote: "It infuriates me to be enmeshed in a devilish philosophy which my mind is forced to accept but my heart to disown" (Diderot, 1972b:7). And the dilemma works the other way. His sensibility, or passionate nature, led him away from reason. Jacques Proust suggests, "It is his sensibility which agrees often with that which his reason condemns."[1] That with which his sensibility identified and that which his reason condemned is unreason.

In the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot argued that to be mad was "to depart from reason with confidence and in the firm conviction that one is following it." And he suggested further that "veritable madnesses are all the derangement of our mind, all the illusions of self-love, and all our passions when they are carried to the point of blindness, for blindness is the distinctive characteristic of madness" (Foucault, 1973:104). For the man of the age, the man who worshipped reason, madness meant blindness to the light of reason and truth. It meant error. However, Diderot said more.

He pointed out that our passions could be intensified so much that we could become mad. Because he grasped his own nature, Diderot could articulate a form of madness somewhat alluring to himself, the madness of extreme sensibility.

Thus, as a *philosophe* Diderot both typified and contradicted his age. He elevated reason, but then he questioned reason's exalted stature. He experimented with madness philosophically only to call for its suppression. He found that both reason and unreason led to truth, and in his writings he trod both paths. He recognized the power of passion and of logic and suggested using each to balance the other. His philosophy, though at times extreme, was a philosophy in search of limits.

Jacques Proust claims that "for Diderot, there are at least two degrees of unreason. One is, so to speak, absolute, irreducible to any clear meaning within the discourse of reason. The other is relative."[2] Diderot, seeking to explain the causes of variant human behavior, made a distinction between physiological or inherent madness, its absolute form, and non-physiological or acquired madness, its relative form. According to his mechanistic philosophy, physiological madness is a result of an unusual combination and arrangement of molecules. According to his humanism, acquired madness was the result of a passionate nature intensified. Causally then, Diderot identified two basic types of madness, though he further distinguishes forms of unreason within these categories.

Diderot considered religion one extreme form of acquired unreason. The nature of the religious life makes one more susceptible to unreason, and as an extreme type of acquired madness, religious zealotry represents a complete denial of reason. Like many of his contemporaries, Diderot identified religion as the force which had corrupted humankind, the force which had darkened people's minds to the light of reason. "Sire," he wrote, "if you want priests, you do not need philosophers, and if you want philosophers, you do not need priests, for the ones by their calling are the friends of reason and the promoters of science, the others the enemies of reason and the favorers of ignorance;

if the first do good, the others do evil" (Kemp, 1963:214). Here again, Diderot's remarks both typify and contradict his age. All the *philosophes* opposed religion, but none sought to explain why religiosity was madness. Only Diderot attempted to understand the perspective of unreason.

Because Diderot was an empiricist he could not see how reason could justify belief in the unbelievable, in that which cannot be proven. Of necessity, the religious person denies his reason. Diderot sarcastically asked the deity: "How could I suspect that in order to guide myself through the darkness into which you have plunged me, I ought to have begun by blowing out my lantern, my sole torch, this feeble candle-end, this poor little reason with which you have favored me?" (Kemp, 1963:213) Reason appears as light and knowledge, as the paramount perception of reality. Religion appears as darkness and mystery.

Diderot's novel, *The Nun*, is implicitly about unreason and madness. It is largely based on the memoirs of a woman, whom Diderot names Sister Sainte-Suzanne, a former nun. Diderot depicted the unnatural atmosphere of the convent illustrating the different forms of madness his characters experienced. The madness of the convent was implicit in the irrational nature of the Faith; life in the convent is one of unreason's empirical forms. He suggested that this life perverts the mind as well as the passions for those nuns endowed with religious zealotry; for there reason is the enemy, and the mind infected with reason is possessed by the devil.

Sister Sainte-Suzanne is not irreligious, but she is not a zealot. She detests the life of the convent, which was forced on her by her family, and questions the sanity of the institution. In the first convent she lived in, she was viewed as sinister because she asked questions, demanded explanations, planted thoughts in the minds of the other nuns. She tried to escape and petitioned for release, thus exhibiting her rebellious nature. As a result, she had to undergo a series of tortures. Diderot implied that the mortification of the flesh was an act of unreason, an act of anti-reason seeking to suppress the mind. His description of her tortures con-

jures Renaissance images of madness alluded to by Foucault: death, the Fall, the Apocalypse. The madness of cruelty and superstition typically associated with religion by the *philosophes* exhibits itself in this convent.

Diderot discussed very different forms of madness when he depicted the second convent in which Sister Sainte- Suzanne was placed. In the first convent, his characters become hysterical and melancholic because their passions and reason were suppressed. Here their emotions reign unchecked by reason. A pivotal character, the Mother Superior, contained within herself the proclivity toward extreme sensibility. She remained able to function (she had not become completely mad) as long as she could seduce her nuns. Again, it was Sister Sainte-Suzanne who caused her to question her behavior. Through the discourse of reason, Sister Sainte-Suzanne convinced her that her actions were blasphemous and repugnant to God. Deeming herself an accomplice of the devil, the Mother Superior lost all traces of reason. In her convent unreason had existed free from constraint until the voice of reason, the authoritative voice, cast judgment and confined, even destroyed its freedom. The Mother Superior was not mad until she became constrained. It is the act of confining, of judging, which reinforces the authority that reason attempts to exercise over unreason. Even Sister Sainte-Suzanne links madness to constraint. "Where is it that nature, outraged at constraint for which she is not designed, breaks down the obstacles put in her way and in a frenzy of madness throws the working of our bodies into a disorganization beyond all curing?" (Diderot, 1972b:102).

The constraint to which the zealot aspires causes madness. Diderot wrote in the *Philosophic Thoughts*: "To attempt the destruction of our passion is the height of folly. What a noble aim is that of the zealot who tortures himself like a madman in order to desire nothing, love nothing, feel nothing, and who, if he succeeded, would end up a complete monster" (Crocker, 1966:2). One who can observe religious vows — necessarily destroying both passion and reason — is not human, but is a freak of nature. Humans, for Diderot, are both reasonable and passionate, requiring the balance of each by the other in a constant and fluid tension.

This zealotry for rejecting reason and suppressing the passions can be construed as an enthusiasm for destroying enthusiasm. A second form of acquired madness, a second enthusiasm against enthusiasm, is the "insane idea of becoming wholly reasonable" — reason reified and objectified with an accompanyng fervor for crushing the forces of "unreason." The passions, as well as religiosity, were deemed enemies to reason by many of the *philosophes*. Once again, because Diderot vacillated between two opposing views, he was both inside and outside his intellectual tradition. He subscribed to the cult of reason when in the *Encyclopédie* he wrote: ". . . anyone who refuses to use his reason, thereby forfeiting his status as a man, ought to be treated as an unnatural being" (Crocker, 1966:45). Diderot, like many of his contemporaries, believed that reason was outside nature. He further affirmed the power of reason to discover objective truth, and in his article, "Natural Right," he continued,

> whoever refuses to seek the truth has forfeited his right to be called a man and should be treated by the rest of his kind as a wild beast: and that once the truth has been discovered, whoever refuses to conform to it is either insane or morally evil. (Crocker, 1966:42)

Yet Diderot also realized the irony of the cult of reason. Dr. Bordeu comically illustrates the point in *D'Alembert's Dream*: "We walk so little, work so little, but think so much that I wouldn't rule out that man might end up being nothing but a head" (Diderot, 1966:180). Diderot knew that too much reason would become unreason. He recognized that many of his contemporaries had become consumed by reason and he praised the one notable exception: "O, you (Voltaire) who still possess all the fire of your genius at an age when others have nothing left but cold reason!" (Crocker, 1966:92) He urged humans to use their reason to check their passions and vice-versa. One must seek perfection by balancing the temptation to be over-powered by reason with the temptation to stray away from it.

Because religious zealotry and wholly reason are two forms of acquired madness, humans, through an exercise of the will, can resist them by resisting extremes. However, Diderot also pointed to inherent or physiological forms of madness. For him, the brain is the nerve center of the human being. All sensations are received through the nerves, or threads, and transmitted to the brain which then discriminates between them. In some beings, the relationship between the nerve-center and the threads is different from that of the majority, resulting in madness. In *D'Alembert's Dream*, Mlle. de L'Espinasse and Dr. Bordeu wrestle with this theme. Bordeu suggests:

> If the nerve-centre or truck is too vigorous in relation to the branches we find poets, artists, people of imagination, cowards, fanatics, madmen. If it is too weak, we get what we call louts or wild beasts. If the whole system is flaccid, soft, or devoid of energy, then idiots. On the other hand, if it is well balanced and in good order, the outcome is great thinkers, philosophers, sages. (Diderot, 1966:211)

According to this wisdom, differences among people can be reduced to the same principles which differentiate the species. Physiological variations and abnormalities cause madness; they also cause genius, while a "well-balanced" system produces the philosopher.

In the "Letter on the Blind," Diderot, through the voice of Saunderson the blind man, explained that the existence of abnormalities in nature necessitated that morality be relative. For, after all, "I have never doubted that the state of our organs and of our senses has a great influence on our metaphysics and our ethics and that our most purely intellectual ideas, if I may express it thus, are very dependent on the structure of our bodies . . ." (Crocker, 1966:16).

If Saunderson was right, then madness, as a physiological reality, has its own place in the natural order of things, and thus

attains a positive existence. As Bordeu concluded, "Nothing that exists can be against nature or outside nature . . ." (Diderot, 1966:230). The madman's interpretation of reality, then, is as legitimate as the man of reason's, and the madman should have an equally powerful place in nature. To call for the suppression of madness is to force nature to turn against herself.

In the *Elements of Physiology*:, Diderot again explained the relationship between the mind and the sensations. "We are like actual instruments whose strings are the passions. In the madman they are too high, the instrument screeches: they are too low in the stupid person, the instrument is barely audible" (Fontenay, 1982:215). When the mind and the senses are closely related, madness approaches and stupidity becomes more distant. Hence, it would seem that one can only reach genius, the opposite of stupidity, by heightening the relationship between the mind and sensations, by moving toward madness.

The relationship between madness and genius fascinated Diderot and, in spite of the danger of one losing one's reason, Diderot was glad to be a "sensitive soul" and admired sensibility in others. "Happy is he who has received from nature a sensitive and mobile soul! He bears within himself the source of a multitude of delightful instants that others are ignorant of" (Crocker, 1966:194). The more intense the sensitivity, the more exciting the delights. Because he views the world from his soul and his passions, he cannot make his view correspond with that which his reason tells him is true. When Diderot said that his mind had discovered what his heart could not accept, he admitted that his sensibility was not in accord with his reason; his sensibility, in this instance, had become unreason.

Thus, for Diderot, the genius is one who is capable of extreme passion and extreme reason, and who knows how to use one to the advantage of the other. The genius is by definition creative and, "a little cracked" (Tollemache, 1893:105). The genius is born; he cannot be made. His physiological makeup determines the intensity of his genius, though his concomitant madness can be acquired or inherent.

Diderot, because of his own genius, understood the workings of the unreasonable mind. He saw in it a logic, often less fallible than the logic of reason. Foucault elaborates on this notion of the logic of madness and acknowledges the uniqueness of Diderot's awareness of it. Diderot told Sophie, "madness, dreaming, and the disorder of conversation consist of going from one subject to another by way of a common attribute. The madman does not notice that he is changing subjects. What a lot of men are like this madman, unbeknown to themselves! Perhaps I am too, as I write this" (Diderot, 1972b:85). Though Diderot lightly called himself a madman, he seriously recognized his occasional drift into the realm of unreason.

This occasional drift into the realm of unreason, this understanding of imagination, dreams, and creativity, enabled Diderot to write his masterpieces about unreason — *D'Alembert's Dream* and *Rameau's Nephew* — and also played a most influential role in the shaping of his aesthetic theories. Arthur Wilson points out, that even before he began the series of the *Salons*, Diderot had declared that art "demands something of the enormous, the barbarous, and the wild" (Wilson, 1972:529). If barbarism for the 18th century was blatant unreason, its presence in art was even more so. For Diderot, however, the arts provided a point of entry into the realm of unreason. Rameau's nephew in one of his many exhortations exclaims: "It is the animal cry of passion that should dictate the melodic line . . . ," and "the cry of animal instinct or that of man under stress of emotion will supply them (acting techniques)" (Diderot, 1966:105).

Though in the *Salons*, Diderot did not strongly suggest that unreason ought to influence art, he did argue that the artist needs to be able to touch the realm farthest from the reasoning of the mind. He wrote about art's duty to elevate the soul — not the mind, for it is logic which elevates the mind — to the contemplation of the most abstract virtues. Reason can lead the mind to virtue, but it is the soul, i.e. sensibility, which must verify its existence. And the soul can only find virtue through unreason, with art as its guide. Diderot proclaims that good art is made

only when the thread which runs through all of humanity is identified.

Music, theatre, and poetry as well as the visual arts, intensify the sensibility of all who can be moved by them. The poetic and artistic genius is the key. Diderot described the sensation that enables the genius to communicate.

> The poet feels the moment of enthusiasm coming upon him, it follows a period of meditation. Its onset is heralded by a quivering that begins in his breast, then flows deliciously and rapidly out to his extremities. Soon it is no longer a quivering, but an intense and lasting fire that sets him aflame, makes him pant, consumes him, kills him — but also endows whatever he touches with a soul and life. If this fire were to flame even higher, then phantoms would multiply before his eyes. His passion would be raised almost to the point of madness. (Crocker, 1966:92)

The creative genius can abandon reason temporarily, consequently adopting the perspective of unreason at the moment of inspiration. He leaves this world and ventures into another darker corner of universal nature. He returns and expresses his experience in the language of the senses, so that some others may vicariously partake of this other world, this world of unreason. But, the creative genius runs the risk of never returning.

Foucault makes much out of madness and its relationship to art at the close of his book, writing about what Diderot struggled to articulate nearly two centuries before: ". . . by the madness which interrupts it, a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, provides a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself" (Foucault, 1973:288). Diderot claimed that for those able to sense what lies beyond the physical substance of the work, art offers entry into the ignored realm of unreason. For Foucault, the work of art provides that opening and reminds one that another world exists which mocks the attempt to universalize the authority of reason.

Foucault also argues that in the Classical Age madness was thought to convey the proximity of the apocalypse. Art, in its portrayal of madness, could reveal the mystery of the obliteration of the world. Diderot also associated unreason with the apocalypse, though for him they were united in the feminine. "The symbol of woman in general is that of the Apocalypse, on the forehead of which is written: 'mystery'" (Wilson, 1972:615). Diderot associated unreason with woman because of her intense sensibility. He linked woman to other forms of extreme sensibility: "(In woman) no connections are closer than those between ecstasy, visions, prophecy, revelation, exalted poetry, and hysteria" (Crocker, 1966:312). By naming visions, prophecy, and revelation he was referring in part to the madness of religiosity. His novel, *The Nun* is not about the madness of priests, it is about the madness of nuns, of women.

Heather Arden adds that Diderot was quite unlike his contemporaries in his appraisal of the value of unreason. "Madness has been relegated to the rank of illness or monstrosity. Contrary to this tendency, Diderot joined with a disappeared tradition and discovered in the madman a neglected means of arriving at truth. . . ."[3] Because Diderot could understand unreason, he sensed, as Foucault suggests, its ability to know what reason cannot know. Madness has access to the cosmos, to mystical and mythical.

Samuel Richardson, one of Diderot's favorite English authors, used the voice of madness to explore hidden truths. His characters were able to see beneath the outward appearances of their circumstances; they solved the mystery. Diderot, for example, saw truth embodied in Clementina, the heroine of Richardson's *Grandison*. "But why is Clementina so interesting in her madness? Because she is no longer the mistress of her thoughts, nor of her feelings, and if anything shameful were hidden in her mind it must needs appear. But every word she says proves her candour and innocence, and the state of her mind prevents us doubting the truth of all she says" (Tollemache, 1893:289). Clementina speaks the truth, she has lost control of her emotions, she is

morally unaccountable, she is a woman, she is mad. She has acquired madness because her passions intensified so much that her judgment could no longer hold them in abeyance.

Diderot used unreason as a literary device in his own works as well. The most notable example is *D'Alembert's Dream*. Mlle. de L'Espinasse calls the doctor because she fears for D'Alembert's health. When the doctor asks what D'Alembert has been saying she replied, "the sort of nonsense you only hear in the madhouse" (Diderot, 1966:172). What did D'Alembert say while dreaming? The dream communicated Diderot's philosophy of materialism. As the dreaming D'Alembert hypothesized about the origin of the cosmos and the evolution of life, things not ascertainable empirically, Mlle. proclaims him mad, while Bordeu, the scientist, recognizes the truthfulness of all he said. Diderot himself admitted to Sophie that the work "is the height of extravagance, but at the same time it is the most profound philosophy. It is quite cunning to have put my ideas into the mouth of the dreamer. You often have to dress up wisdom as folly in order to gain admittance for it" (Diderot, 1972a:63).

In *Jacques the Fatalist*, Jacques and his master agree that dreams reveal hidden truths. The master tells Jacques about presentiments and their relationship to truth, especially when conveyed during the dream.

> Jacques: And as for these presentiments?
> The Master: I laugh at them but I confess that I tremble the while. There are some that are so striking! We've been rocked on these stories since the cradle. If your dreams had worked out five or six times, and you dreamed your friend had died, you would hurry to his place in the morning to see how things stood. But these presentiments that are impossible to forget are, above all, those which come up at a time when something is going on far away from us, for they have a symbolic air about them. (Diderot, 1959:69)

Diderot commented on the truth of madness even more concretely in his "Refutation of Helvetius." In other works he discussed madness in its philosophical and abstract forms. Here he pointed out that discoursing with the "inmates of our asylums" would reveal much about the mind. Diderot charged:

> And you [Helvetius] don't even mention the insane, yet insanity is a phenomenon that would have led you if you had considered it aright, to conclusions quite different from the one's you have drawn. The inmates of our asylums have the ability to see, hear, smell, taste and touch things no less keen than your own as you sit home in your study, but they reason quite differently. Why did you not ask yourself the reason for this? It is a question that would have added more than one essential chapter to your book [*On Man*]. It might even have led you to the true origin of the differences between minds and led you to search for the ways, if they exist, of repairing the flaw in a vital organ, in that feeling, thinking, judging, dulled, darkened and shattered mirror to whose decisions all our sensations are submitted. (Crocker, 1966:296)

Thus it is desirable to gain access to the realm of unreason: much can be learned anew, much can be understood. Let art, dreams, or intuition lead the way. Or let woman. Elisabeth de Fontenay suggests that partaking of that which is specifically feminine can lead even men into the realm of unreason. "Desire, music, and pleasure touch on the specifically feminine, of which we know that it is split, cracked. And men — a blind man, a musician, even a man of learning — provided that they speak of madness, will be able to participate in that enigmatic and anticipatory womanhood" (Fontenay, 1982:145). To whom is Fontenay referring? The blind man, the being who, deprived of one sense, develops a sense of things beyond. And, according to Foucault, blindness was the notion most closely identifiable with madness. Diderot himself offered us Saunderson, the blind man who reveals truth in the "Letter on the Blind." The musician, the crea-

tive genius who is able through his art to understand unreason; the man of learning, even one who attempts to universalize reason, can understand reason if he can "speak madness." Who speaks madness and truth, who is able to be feminine and philosophical, creative and destructive, amoral and virtuous? Rameau's nephew is all of these things. Diderot's philosophical response to madness is consummated in this, his masterpiece.

Rameau's Nephew is a satire in dialogue form. It is a conversation between the philosopher and the nephew, a fool and madman. Diderot speaks of himself in the first person, though one can never be sure where in the discussion lies the real Diderot. It is most likely that Diderot plays both parts, that both voices are his. *Rameau's Nephew* was his opportunity to express his various and contradictory thoughts on many subjects, but the issue of madness overshadows the whole conversation which is in effect a conversation between reason and unreason. In the person of the nephew, madness can speak once again during the Age of Reason. Diderot as the voice of reason seldom judged whether reason or unreason was more correct; he offered each as a legitimate perspective. Diderot also illustrated the ambiguity surrounding the supposed line of demarcation between reason and unreason, by allowing the philosopher and the fool to change places; each on occasion, identifies with the other's position.

At times it appears that the nephew's madness is inherent, at other times it appears to be acquired; but, in either case, Diderot has portrayed him as mad. Foucault has suggested that in the 18th century the madman was stripped of his history, was denied a past, present or future existence. History only tells the story of reason. Upon this suggestion, Elisabeth de Fontenay adds, "If we must indeed call madness or unreason that common indifference to the tragic linearity of historical time and the serene circularity of cosmic time, the Nephew is a great madman" (Fontenay, 1982:240). He is indifferent to history because he has been excluded. The nephew exclaims, ". . . to hell with the most perfect of worlds if I am not of it" (Diderot, 1966:43). The nephew's logic leads him to indifference. Why recognize the authority of reason? His indifference to any authority leads him to postulate

a relative morality, a morality which Diderot necessarily arrived at when he undertook serious dialogue with unreason. In the "Letter on the Blind" Diderot explained that morality must be relative because everyone's senses are different. "How different is the morality of the blind from ours! And how different again would a deaf man's be from a blind man's; and how imperfect to put the matter kindly — would our own system of morality appear to a being who had one or more sense than we ourselves!" (Crocker, 1966:17). Is it possible that Diderot regarded madness as the additional sense?

The philosopher agrees with Rameau that it is better to exist in this world and be satisfied that to aspire to the best of all possible worlds. "Let us therefore accept things as they are. Let us establish what they cost us and how much they bring in, and leave alone all the things which we don't know enough about either to praise or to blame" (Diderot, 1966:43). Though the philosopher at times accepts relative morality, he never lets go of his belief in virtue and never agrees with the nephew's catechism. The nephew proclaims that all of the philosopher's elevated aspirations are vanity. Virtue does not exist in this world. Only good food, wine and women are worth living for. Beyond that "All is vanity." The philosopher is wrong about the virtuous life because, according to the nephew, happiness is not the same for everyone and because "no happiness lasts." To chase after virtue is to be a hypocrite, ". . . society would be great fun if everybody did what appealed to him" (Diderot, 1966:64).

While the nephew argues for relative morality he realizes that laws and nature delegate justice under certain circumstances. Here, he sounds like the philosopher.

> Everything in this world has its just desserts. There are two public prosecutors: one is always awaiting, and punishes crimes against the society, the other one is nature. And this one knows all about the vices which escape the law. You indulge in debauchery with women: you will get the dropsy. You live a dissolute life: you will get consumption. (Diderot, 1966:91)

And yet the nephew refuses to talk about virtue. That nature punishes and rewards various lifestyles does not indicate the existence of a higher order and does not inspire one to do good. For the nephew, "The simplest thing is to resign yourself to the equity of these judgments and tell yourself it is reasonable . . ." (Diderot, 1966:43).

The nephew's logic, as well as the ethical standard he derives from it, is much like the philosopher's. The philosopher notes this, but warns the nephew that he is inconsistent; does he subscribe to an ethical standard, or does he praise crime? The philosopher is disgusted that the nephew admires the criminal. For the philosopher criminality cannot possibly be acceptable. However, in an obscure letter to Francois Hemsterhuis, Diderot departed from the philosopher's views and again explains how the temptation to give into sensibility can lead to vice: "Sensibility carried to the extreme may well be the basis of the greatest suffering and the excuse for all sorts of injustices . . . I would have committed many bad deeds, perhaps even heinous crimes, had my judgment not restrained my sensibility" (Wilson, 1972:627).

Whenever Diderot discussed sensibility and the passions, he emphasized the need for restraint — restraint which can only be provided by reason. The key to survival is control. Diderot's philosopher wanted this for his daughter. He tells the nephew, "since nature has been unkind enough to give her a delicate constitution and a sensitive soul, and expose her to the same troubles in life as if she had a robust constitution and a heart of bronze, I shall teach her, if I can, how to bear these things with fortitude . . ." (Diderot, 1966:57). Life is easier if one can avoid extremes.

As the nephew and the philosopher discuss genius, they decide the genius himself would be better off mediocre, though the world would be less rich. According to their discussion, the genius is almost always a bad man. Why bad? Because he is extreme, out of balance, because he is intense about the one thing he was meant to be. The nephew cautions, "men of genius are pernicious and if a child bore on his brow a mark of this danger-

ous gift of nature, he should be thrown to the wolves." The philosopher goes even further, "I agree with you that men of genius are frequently peculiar or, as the saying goes, 'great wits are oft to madness near allied' . . ." (Diderot, 1966:39). They talk about Racine, who, though a creative genius, was a rogue. The philosopher is glad to have Racine on any account, while the nephew thinks he would have been better off a merchant. Again, they have changed positions. Genius appears to be more valuable to the philosopher than virtue. Fortunately for him, the two are not necessarily opposed; Voltaire, for example, was both genius and a man of virtue.

Though the nephew is unbalanced, mad, he speaks the truth. The philosopher, now a narrator, keeps expressing his amazement at the truths the nephew reveals. He certainly utters the truth about society, for only he has the vision to see it for what it is. "Sometimes I was astonished by the rightness of this clown's judgments about men and characters" (Diderot, 1966:81). Later the philosopher is surprised that the nephew is able to offer creative renditions of the innermost human sentiments. The nephew "mimicked a man being annoyed, outraged, touched, issuing orders, supplicating, and extemporized speeches of anger, sympathy, hatred, and love. He sketched the characteristics of the various passions with amazing subtlety and truth" (Diderot, 1966:115).

The nephew is a mechanist, perhaps even a determinist, and he holds Diderot's view that physiology causes many instances of variant behavior. He talks about his son's future. "If he is destined to become a good man, I shan't do him any harm. But if the (paternal) molecule meant him to become a ne'er do well like his father . . ." (Diderot, 1966:108). Whatever his son becomes, the nephew will feel no responsibility; nature determines the course of human behavior. The Diderot of the *Encyclopédie* would not have gone this far, but he was convinced that the physical makeup of a being exerts the greatest influence over his behavior. Hence he accepted the perspective of madness which has its roots in natural fact. The madman who is so made makes no choices about his actions; the nephew felt that neither he nor his son could make such choices either.

If madness is not physiologically caused, it is acquired. The zealot who denies reason is mad; the man of reason who hates unreason and suppresses it is mad. Madness related to sensibility can be inherent or acquired. Diderot, as the philosopher commented on the nephew's madness and exclaims, "Unhappy man, to have been born *or* to have fallen into a state so vile!" (Diderot, 1966:51). Neither the philosopher nor the nephew know the cause of his madness. But they do know it stems from a proclivity which results in his extremely passionate nature.

The nephew's aesthetic ideas have already been alluded to. He claims that art must arise from the emotions and the more animalic qualities of man. He also surprisingly agrees with the philosopher who claims that "every imitative art has its model in nature . . ." (Diderot, 1966:97). In fact when the philosopher admits that he cannot define the concept "tune," the nephew articulates clearly what sort of imitation it is. The madman better understands art because he himself knows the realm of unreason.

Later in the conversation, the subject of aesthetics reveals the further similarity between the views of the philosopher and the nephew. It is the nephew who discusses the True, the Good, and the Beautiful as objective entities. For him, art fails if it does not seek to embody these values. In some of Diderot's earlier writings, and in the *Salons* especially, Diderot said that good art will provide an understanding of the human condition. Diderot hoped that art could provide entry into the world beyond.

The nephew has been regarded by critics as feminine. Elisabeth de Fontenay likens him to Mother Superior in *The Nun*. And what they have in common, reveals much about Diderot's philosophical response to madness. The Mother Superior and the nephew offer a "new relation":

> There is an identical power in the nephew and the mother superior to impress themselves, to mix speech and mime, an identical way of passing immediately to action the better to fail, of sinking into incoherence and losing one's reason in the

> process. But losing that reason willing to accomodate things as they are is perhaps to attempt — between self and reality, desire and law — a new relation that the age is still not able to tolerate. (Fontenay, 1982:145)

The new relation is, at one level at least, the reopening of the closed dialogue between reason and unreason. It is the attempt to communicate with unreason, to accept its perspective, to validate its existence. This new relation attempted by the nephew and the Mother Superior is something more than mere exchange between reason and unreason; it is the superiority and the authority of unreason, exercising its will over reason.

Diderot, by creating *Rameau's Nephew,* hinted that such a relation was possible; he was, after all, a thought experimenter. He was equally, however, a man of his age; he would never have tolerated the full subjugation of reason. His is a philosophy in search of limits, a philosophy which called for balance, not subjugation or annihilation. His works communicate with unreason, and present it as an alternative perspective on the world. They explore the relationship between reason and unreason, and attempt to examine madness in its various forms as a natural and positive reality. Because his age sought to confirm and annihilate madness and denied unreason its existence, Diderot, the epitome of the age, the Encyclopedist, was also the greatest exception to the intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment.

NOTES

1 My translation of "C'est que sa sensibilité s'accorde bien souvent avec ce que sa raison condamne" (Proust, 1979:437).

2 My translation of "Pour Diderot, il y au moins deux degrés dans la déraison . . . L'une est pour ainsi dire absolue, irreductible à toute transcription dans un discours raisonnable. L'autre n'est que relative" (Proust, 1979:433).

3 My translation of "La Folie a été releguée au rang des maladies ou de la monstruositie. Contrairement à cette tendance, Diderot renoue avec une tradition disparue et decouvre dans le Fou un moyen négligé pour arriver a la vérité . . ." (Arden, 1975:211).

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