12-1-1980

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THE GAME

This month, Dialogue once again challenges the Calvin student (and professorial) body to fun and profit. Complete this crossword puzzle and bring it to the Dialogue office by 4 p.m., December 10. The first two correctly completed puzzles will earn their owners fabulous prizes; latecomers can expect something less than fabulous.

Many of the solutions are to be found in this month's Dialogue features. Good luck!

ACROSS
1. Initials of a philosophy professor in Arizona.
4. Adopted son of Bilbo.
6. Only he has foreknowledge.
7. Adjectival suffix meaning characteristic of.
8. Can get you to the moon in an hour-and-a-half.
10. A note to follow sol.
11. As like as two of these.
16. Abbreviation of Registered Nurse.
17. What Maria calls the narrator.
20. Studied under Frank Lloyd Wright (Hint: see last issue).
21. She serves peppermint leaf tea.
21B. Favorite word of egotists.
23. Style of architecture.
26. Abbreviation of "total loss."
27. If your father was a dominee, you're one.
28. Goes with titles.
29. A whirlwind near Faeroe Islands.
30. From the Greek alpha.
32. Name meaning "beloved."
33. Thanksgiving celebration will take up this many hours.
34. An orange one in Central Park.

DOWN
1. Paul Simon and who Garfunkel?
3. A bag fastened over the front opening in men's breeches in the 15th and 16 centurries: a _______ piece.
4. Latin HOMO_______ Man the Maker.
5. Preposition.
6. Where you would find man supplying supper for the beasts.
10. A record with a lot of grooves.
13. Initials of a Milton scholar.
14. It is to laugh.
15. Abbreviation of Alcoholics Anonymous.
18. This Fish gives an enormous contribution.
19. Ontology: the study of ______ing?
20. An organ at Wellesley.
21. He is infinitely greater than Shakespeare.
25. A civilization ______ with the wind.
30. Something to grind.
32. A unit of money in Laos, equal to 1/1000 kip.
The Calvin Journal of Literary and Artistic Expression is published monthly by the Calvin Communications Board under the final auspices of the Student Senate. Subscriptions are available at $5 per year. Address correspondence to Dialogue, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. Copyright 1980 by the Calvin College Communications Board. Dialogue is printed on 100% recycled paper.

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What You Will

Countdown

At this moment, I have four weeks (728 hours) before the end of the semester. I work best if I have a schedule, so this afternoon I sat down to figure out what I have to do before the semester ends and how much time I have to do it in. 32 of the 728 hours remaining in this semester I have to work to make money so I can go to school. Out of the remaining 696 hours I will, I hope, be able to sleep 168 hours (or 6 hours a night). That means that I have 528 hours left. I figure that I will waste 3 hours a day in transportation and eating. That means that my semester is rapidly disappearing, leaving me only 444 hours. 4 hours of every day I spend talking with friends, professors, or David. This leaves me with 232 hours. Class time subtracts 48 more hours, which means I have 284 hours left. Thanksgiving celebrations will take about 16 hours (after all, my family does have some claim on my time)—now, there are only 268 hours remaining in my semester. I have 3 exams, studying for them and completing the readings should take no more than 16 hours apiece. This brings the figure down to 220 hours. I would consider myself sitting pretty at this point except for the fact that I have four papers to finish researching and writing. A very conservative estimate of the time needed to finish researching, writing, and typing these papers is 50 hours apiece. That leaves me with 20 hours left before the end of the semester. But I will need at least 24 hours in the next two weeks to produce this magazine—along with “a little help from my friends.” By this time, as you see, I have negative 4 hours, and I have not yet budgeted time for church, time to walk my dog, or time to pull myself out of a depression—which, needless to say, results from finding out how much I have to do before the end of the semester, and knowing how little time I have to do it in.

In New York

I pop into a Burger King and sit in front of a large window my intestines satisfied. Warm. The subways last night were warm. Inside the F train now is so cool. I know when the door opens what the warm air feels like. Warmed by the hot blood of well-fed businessmen and anxious mothers who make their presence known. I want to be unobtrusive. Inobtrusive. Like just my eyes. My ears. Smells, tastes, feelings. Just my eyes. Looking at the graffiti. Thick magic marker lines. Symbols. Patterns. They make a lovely grid over this silly box. The people must enjoy them. I rebel with them at this shiny bright car. At this clean neat clean society.

On the way to the cemetery (seminary) rabbinical I saw a punk kid, stoned, plinking his electric guitar (no plug) with momma sitting tan and pretty, hair done semi-blonde real neat pink sleeveless blouse with rounded edges around her round arms very tan starting to flab legs crossed with white sandals on her lawn chair, crisp lawn, brick house with drapes and clean. Neither smiled but she looked. Looked through her dark green clasping sunglasses, didn’t smile—her dentures weren’t in.

Now I smell the soggy camel in my purse pocket, a pocket for my book but it’s got my camel in it. Soggy with its burned snubbed against the subway rail wall and my sweat half refreshed. I didn’t mind that the toilet had no seat. Just sat. Just sitting. My cigarette smells like an ice cream cone. Not the sugar kind that snap off sweet and dark, the crepe fake beige white molded with seams kind the ice cream drips out of and makes soggy. Makes soggy and empty and warm.

The Burger King had plastic panels in fake skylights with light bulbs behind them. The panels were photographs of trees from below very branchy and greens with the sky and light showing through. The music (muzak) was so pulling, the music was, drawing me into thoughts of complacency—contentment with an illusion of motion. I thought so sweetly till I worried about the man in back who spied me in a mirror jazzy-bluesy music and flowing folk guitar, then surprise of surprises “Amazing Grace” in a bop big band sound. Ultra-syncopated. Dissipated.

I went to Coney Island just because I received a little white Sunday’s subway pass with pink stripes. On Coney Island I loved the ocean. Looked at all the Puerto Ricans and blacks with their dates and families and listened to drunken island music out on the pier. A toothless woman and faltering men with mikes and guitars. Gambling and fishing. Real food. Raw chicken legs in clam baskets. The tide started coming in so I climbed out into the ocean onto some rocks to smoke a too-tight joint, indulged in paranoid fantasies about not being able to return, watched the moss get covered up, threw my camel out of its red agate lips into a tidal pool and climbed sandy-assed back onto land. A patrolling police jeep four strong caught me gathering shells on the beach at sunset.
I stopped in the middle of the boulevard on Park Avenue, right there among the dog shit, poodles mostly, and heard these marvelous church chimes ringing. I turned around, like staring into the headlights of the jeep there stood Brick Presbyterian church where my friends go, neat, formidable, stronghold. I ran down the street almost soiling my shoes, I didn't care, away from that tie.

And now in Central Park, this dude comes up onto the rock in black polyesters and orange T, his tennis shoes nicely worn. No socks, a gold bracelet matching the gold stripe on his shoes. Creeps up quietly (my purse is still here). Disturbed look. Trying to court? Hell doesn't bother me. He's got a pack of Kools but he doesn't smoke them. Oh this rock is so big and smooth, rough and warm. Lots of litter but I take mine with me. Left ear pierced hole and a left pocket clipped pen he must not be left hand—God did I run! So exhilarated, 8th and 42nd. Ran. RAN as I'd imagined whores running from their pimps, sliding down the metal subway stairs in my slippery jeans and twinkling tennis shoes, grasp the handrails, running through the pissfilled underpass, looking around shaking every tendon I bought peppermints.

I accidentally—no—I heard the music, drawn by the noise and looked up. One window with a green brocade, lots of junk, had messages scrawled in a drugged state with Egyptian letters about Jesus, yes about Jesus, and also about Abol or Adal someone not even in the book.

“The allegories are incredible!” They're watching The Prisoner in the next room. I said I'm not into TV right now. What I want is to eat my peppermints in private. I'm just hostile because they finished my cheese. My own thoughts more important to me, more valid for the present, perhaps even more worthwhile to the universe than a tape of someone else's ingenious but inultimate puzzle of the world.

I stopped to talk to a 53-year-old man who spends his days yelling down the posh east side meaning fuck you all. Yells and hands out tracts and yells. For five minutes he didn't realize I was looking at his eyes. I wanted to give him a tie, blue and gray silk. The pattern says “Fuck You” like other ties have little golf clubs, leaves, whatever.

Karin, this girl in my office, she'll look at my eyes but I can't tell if she sees me. Karin is a Brooklyn grown squash, does her hair, wears make-up and jewelry, has atrocious grammar (like me), ends every sentence with “that's alright” or “OK,” all condescending (as she has been condescended to all her life). Calling her grandmother and being maternal, putting on all the affectations of affection and me being entirely uncertain as to its depth or even presence beyond learned imitation. She's too busy with her job to think about whether she's bored with it. I'm too bored to be busy with my job.

An animal show is on. Animals. “Their mannerisms are so funny” about dogs. Fuck the dogs I say. I avoid the dishes to pretend I'm in a theater watching Fellini's Rehearsal. Alone at the beginning, luminous purple screen, front row red sat in the middle. Once the film starts I find out that none of the actors are musicians; quite disconcerting, unsynched sound. Why relive unsynched sound?

A huge blue fly, friend of mine, drinks from my tupperware cup, my carefully preserved tupperware texture reflecting green on its blue skin. Of course it's skin. Providence. Skin like thin plastic gloves. I love to wash dishes.

Providence even in which store on First Avenue I went in to buy a notebook. Christian Reformed decor. What a rush! But even more was riding outside the subway between the cars in the air outside griming my glasses. I don't like poetry read on TV to middle class whore-boys by black kid actors with perfect diction and shiny white agents with clashing odors and greasy five o'clock shadow. Reality! Why is it so goddamn hard for people to see! The annoying thing about this particular show is that it comes so close in some way. Never rounded. Well rounded. Like a fly.
The House that

...more human proportions—a house. In November, 1978, David became the owner of a condemned, partially burnt-out, two-story (plus attic), end-of-the-century house in the Grand Rapids Heritage Hill district (bounded by Lafayette Ave., Union Ave., Michigan St., and Pleasant St.). David has long been interested in buildings. Growing up between Grand Rapids' two Frank Lloyd Wright houses, he was inspired from an early age to draw the homes in his Heritage Hill neighborhood and make cardboard models of his house designs. When neither career nor educational plans jelled after his freshman year at Calvin, rehabilitating a house presented itself as a worthwhile project.

The Heritage Hill Foundation, an organization that reclaims abandoned houses in the area, gave David his house...
percent grant/ten percent loan for obscure reasons. This money, allotted to him on the basis of his income, was to be used for the restoration of essential structural and maintenance deficiencies such as foundation and roof work, eave rebuilding, carpentry, plumbing, heating, wiring, etc., a total of twenty items in all.

It was assumed that David would contract out most of the work. However, a roofing contractor’s shoddy and incomplete workmanship prompted David to work more closely with contractors, and to do much of the work himself. This slowed things down, but David was assured of having the job done well, besides deriving a sense of personal satisfaction from the actual labor.

Without previous experience, David set about reconstructing his house. One of his major concerns was to repair a section of the basement foundation’s southern wall which was on the verge of collapsing. Unfortunately, the wall caved in before it could be repaired. David was up to his knees and elbows in mud. Engaging the services of fellow Calvin student Andy Abma, who is experienced in concrete foundation pouring, David rebuilt the base of the wall. Finally a contractor was taken on to do the official masonry and restore the foundation’s original fieldstone facade.

David also rewired the entire house, and installed a new green furnace with shiny metal ductwork. Crumbling plaster is still being replaced with drywall; other tasks such as stripping and refinishing woodwork, fixing floors, weather sealing, replacing windows, miscellaneous carpentry, kitchen cupboardry, and installing a shower, are still on the agenda.

Originally, the Heritage Hill Foundation put David on an eighteen month schedule by which time he was to have his house and property restored to good order. However, because restoration of many of the twenty items listed on his contract proved to involve much more extensive work than had been anticipated either by David or the Foundation in their original appraisal of the house, and because of numerous other ambushes, this schedule has been thrown off kilter. An example of such an unanticipated problem is the kitchen. When David started to remove the ceiling tile and the linoleum flooring, he discovered the room had once been ablaze. David was forced to replace and fortify charred beams in the ceiling as well as unstable, blackened floorboards.

When David got the house it was sided with ugly cracked asbestos shingles. He tore off this once fashionable finish to expose the thin clapboard slats which lay beneath. He has also replaced many of the cedar shingles on the gables, and plans to paint and stain the exterior in natural earth tones.
David removed tacky wood panelling which partially enclosed the large front porch, replacing it with clean-lined wooden pillars. He hopes to add a complementary wooden railing. This would restore the porch, which was added to the house before 1935, to its original appearance.

The house, rated “architecturally significant” by the Heritage Hill Foundation, is constructed in the “shingle style.” Prominent in the late 1800’s and found especially on the east coast, the style is characterized by broad gables (usually shingled), and emphasized overhangs. On David’s house the broad heat-trapping overhangs combine with large south-facing bay windows to make it particularly receptive to passive solar energy.

Perhaps one of the most attractive architectural details is the turret on the north side which contains the main stairwell and suggests castle-like majesty.

Over the course of its ninety year lifespan the house’s original floorplan has not remained completely intact. Several changes were made with walls and doorways in the kitchen/diningroom area on the ground level to allow for the inclusion of that “modern convenience”—the indoor water closet. On the second level a back bedroom which protrudes several feet was added. It was poorly done, however, and the extension now threatens to break off at the slightest provocation. David has so far thwarted such an undesirable secession by supporting the floor beams from the underside with several temporary compressor columns. The roof was also extended to accommodate the changes.

David has, in his turn, made several modifications on the house. He believes that his alterations do not jeopardize the architectural style but, rather, enhance it. On the main floor he has opened up the livingroom to include the space of a front sittingroom. This creates a large, bright room with both east and south bay windows and a central brick fireplace and

chimney flanked by a majestic oakwood mantle. David has in mind an even more drastic structural revision but, so far, he has realized it in drawings only. David is toying with the idea of taking out the floor of the bedroom directly above the livingroom leaving only a peripheral walkway trimmed with a wooden
balustrade sweeping around and down the staircase to the floor below. The effect could be truly magnificent, especially if the balustrade were made of oak to blend in with the oaken floor and door and window trim. In his most inspired moments David considers continuing the upward thrust of space through the attic, to the roof. The floorplan allows access to this space from most of the rooms of the house creating a spatial focal point. Light would flow in through large south windows on the first and second floors and all three gabled attic windows. The cathedral effect would compensate for the loss of a bedroom and a fan system could be installed to prevent the space from becoming a thermal chimney drawing all the heat up into the attic.

David finds such conceptualizing about this house much easier than the reconstruction itself. "Most of the time, it's just work. The art comes out in the drawings and the ideas that I get most of the time don't come to fruition... sometimes they do." A frustration with the concrete aspect of the project is evident. Dealing with bureaucracy, working within the limitations of an older sagging structure, watching funds trickle away, and surveying the sheer amount of labor required sometimes excites the hermit crab instinct to abandon the shell and move on. David says he hopes someday to design—not build—a house of his own from scratch; this would give him a chance to indulge in more of the spontaneity of drawing, without having to worry about shovelling mud. Still, for the time being, David is one crustacean that isn't going to be just moving in and moving out.

—Margaret Dijkhuis
Attic Greek, circa 725 B.C.

Primitive? Naive? Perhaps even incompetent? In fact, this drinking cup recovered from an Athenian grave of the eighth century B.C. ranks among the most valuable fossils of Greek art; for it records the awakening of an aesthetic which would long dominate the imagination of Western man. All its essential features present themselves in embryonic form: abstract intricacy, ordered clarity, dynamic balance, varied repetition. It is a paradoxical style of inventive traditionalism, capable of wedding comedy with tragedy, banality with virtuosity.

Most of all, as Greek art consistently would, it puts before the viewer a universe centered in man, and man heroic in his contests. Whether duelling (left), performing with the lyre (right) or supplying supper for the beasts (center), his grandeur, his struggle, his memory are of the essence. Like its contemporary, the Iliad, this vase sets forth in formulaic splendor a universe of incident in thrall to memorable man:

Akhilleus now came up like a fierce lion
that a whole countryside is out to kill:
he comes heedless at first, but when some yeoman
puts a spear into him, he gapes and crouches,
foam on his fangs; his mighty heart within him
groans as he lashes both flanks with his tail,
urging his valor on to fight; he glares
and bounds ahead, hoping to make a kill
or else himself to perish in the tumult.
That was the way Akhilleus' heart and spirit
drove him...

(Iliad 20.164-174, R. Fitzgerald, tr.)

—Ken Bratt
Patrides: I wish I could be as cosmic as all that.

Baker: What I had in mind was something like this: many of our readers may have seen your lecture in which you spoke on the Athenian ideals embodied in the Acropolis; on the other hand, you are a scholar of Milton and the seventeenth century and have written a book, *Milton and the Christian Tradition*. Can you see a link between these two traditions; what brought you from your Greek background to your interest in John Milton?

Patrides: I'm interested fundamentally, of course, in literature. And I suppose if you're delving in the background, why it is I am interested in that, as well as in Greek civilization, I suppose, basically, what I would begin to consider is the nature of the Greek church; yes, I suspect that's how I would have to begin ultimately. To be a member of the Greek Orthodox church is to be a member of a church that has never denied its classical past and that tends, in fact, to accentuate it by way of the fathers of the Greek church. Not much is known about the fathers of the Greek church in the West (notwithstanding the fact that many people are likely to quote St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. John of Damascus). But in writing in Greek, of course, they also were conscious of the fact that they were heirs of the classical civilization. So one finds the style of someone like St. John Chrysostom in imitation of certain modes of articulation which are common to ancient Greek literature. The classical Greek rhetoric, for instance, forms very much a part of the stylistic pronouncements of the Greek fathers of the church—and yet, they're Christian. In other words, there the style is classical, the mode of thinking is expressly Christian. And one takes a great deal of pride in that, in the Greek Church. I don't mean, obviously, to pass any judgment whatsoever on other churches such as the Catholic one, it is perhaps not accidental that, unlike the Catholic church, the Greek church has never defined pride as the cardinal sin. To have done so would have been to negate much of the classical tradition. I cannot think of Plato being anything else but very proud and, therefore, subject to eternal damnation. So that is the remote background.

When I was confronted by English literature, it was, I might even say, love at first sight. There was something about it that attracted me, but it was most ly stylistic. The subject matter did not impress me very much. I remenber my first confrontation with Milton; I thought it was perfectly funny that someone would dare to compete with Homer. But, in many ways, precisely because I started with that very negative approach, and given my almost instinctive respect for the rhythms of the English language, I was profoundly impressed—when first I gave Milton half a chance to speak for himself. And, it was a wonderful, accidental confrontation. I say it was accidental because it was thanks to one of the most brilliant teachers that I had at Kenyon College, Charles Coffin. I'd taken a course from him in Milton only because my supervisor thought that it would be very good for me. I was not very pleased about it, but it happened. And when it happened, of course, it changed my life.

Suddenly I realized that through Milton I would be able to touch on many loves, many affections in my life. He knew Greek, of course; he knew the Greek fathers, and he considered himself to be a Christian certainly. (I think he was.) He was a
superb poet. Therefore, with every reason, he could claim to stand in the direct line of descent from Homer.

That, then, is a long-winded way of trying to suggest an answer to your question; the connection lies in these different experiences that I’ve had.

Baker: As a Milton scholar, drawn, as you say, from a very different background through an “instinctive respect for the rhythms of the English language,” can you put Milton’s work in a context that would make him accessible to a modern reader, specifically here at Calvin; can you.

Harper: You want, in effect, an apologia.

DeJong: … for the study of Milton.

Baker: In effect, but you can manipulate the question as you will.

Patrides: I think I know how I would at least begin to answer this. It would only be a beginning, a tentative one perhaps: to increase the level of one’s experience, to broaden one’s experience, cliché-ridden though the phrase is, I know. But what I more specifically have in mind would revert back to my fundamental conviction—hardly partial to me, but generally acknowledged—about the imperfection of man. Paradise Lost (and Milton’s poetry generally) is not nearly an aesthetic whole to be appreciated only by dilettantes like ourselves, but, finally, it addresses itself to an analysis of the motivation that underlies, a deviation from the ways of God. One can rephrase it, I suppose, and say, a deviation from certain ideals, from the pursuit and attainment of those ideals. What is it, finally, that obliges Satan to move away from those ideals? What is it that almost necessitates Adam and Eve’s deviation from those ideals? That kind of analysis is carried out with, I would add, enormous sympathy on Milton’s part. It is usually Shakespeare one claims as having a comprehensive and sympathetic soul, and so he does of course, we won’t deny this. But, when I come to some parts of Paradise Lost centered on Adam and Eve and see the gradual way that, almost unwittingly, man surrenders or compromises certain very high principles that he has, allows himself to be torn away from the highest ideals—that, I think is where I would begin to place the emphasis in discussing Milton’s greatness. Take the case of Samson Agonistes, as an example. I would resist as dangerous the temptation to read that play autobiographically. That he sympathized, of course, with his blind protagonist, there is no doubt, but, more importantly, as a creator of poetry, he ought to be able to sympathize with his characters, otherwise he would not be a great creator of poetry. One need not be blind in order to sympathize with a blind man, any more than one needs to be a total sinner beyond redemption in order to sympathize with a sinner who is beyond redemption, such as Satan. Milton possessed a marvelous and comprehensive and sympathetic soul toward the plight of man, imperfect as he is, aspiring toward his goals, toward his ideals but ultimately declining from them in spite of himself. I am reminded of St. Paul’s statement “that which I would do, I do not, and that which I would not do, I do.” It is, if you wish, a summary statement of human experience. St. Paul, there, addresses himself, it seems to me, to the predicament of the human psyche, and so does Milton through his characters, through his own personality in the poem. And, to that extent, I think though the story itself may be regarded as quote-unquote obsolete, nevertheless, as a myth, it retains its remarkable force. And it is in the realm of myth finally, but a myth which is not external to ourselves, which becomes an experience within our souls—that the battleground is constantly, on a daily basis, precisely what Milton externalized through his particular characters. And in that respect, the cosmic ambition which is involved there (because, in using Adam and Eve, he certainly wants to speak in cosmic terms), he is infinitely greater than Shakespeare.

Harper: Hm!

Baker: Whew!

DeJong: That’ll do it.

Baker: It’s hard to know where to go from there, but perhaps, as a Calvinist, I can move to Milton’s own Calvinism, or lack of it. It seems to me that one of the things that can open Milton’s poetry up to readers at Calvin would be a shared religious perspective. On the other hand, there have been charges that Milton propounds heterodox doctrines, even that he is a heretic. The question, then, would be, is Milton a Christian, a Calvinist? What do we share with him?

Patrides: So far as his prose is concerned, any number of claims can be made and, I think, more often than not, they would turn out to be pejorative and adverse—quite rightly, too. There is a streak of parricide in Milton, a monomania almost, which surfaces, not in spite of himself because, in many ways, it reflects quite accurately his personality. In his polemical prose fight against the Anglicans and the Anglican establishment, when he lets go, one would not wish to be in the immediate neighborhood of the barrage that emanates from Milton. His prose theological treatise Of Christian Doctrine: I myself have
never really enjoyed reading that, never. I had to read it, only because it is part of Milton's total performance. But it is not, certainly, the work that I would take down from my shelves on a night when I wished to enjoy myself reading literature. In other words, what I'm aiming at is that partisanship which is innate to Milton's normal psyche has been transcended in his poetry. I suppose, now, I'm almost beginning to touch the mystery of the creativity of a poet. And there I must withdraw, of course, because I don't know what happens in that process. What I do know is the result, because the result is before me. And the result elicits one's enthusiastic response, my personal enthusiastic response, precisely because there is an effort, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the poet to go beyond the mere partisanship which is present in his prose. I differentiate, sharply and categorically, between his prose and his poetry.

Harper: That brings up all kinds of critical questions, many of them bio-critical.

Patrides: The effort of so many scholars, you see, to equate his statements in prose with those in his poetry, literally drives me up the wall, because there is such total difference in the performance. There are some exceptions in his prose too; *Aeropagitica* for instance. Marvelous piece of work! But then it is not an accident that there he behaves almost like a poet; that is to say, he leans over backwards in order to accommodate the long tradition that he feels he has inherited. But where is the evidence for that in his polemical prose, in this theological treatise? He rejects it outright. It is extreme Protestantism, extremely articulated, and, to me, singularly un-attractive.

Milton, in his prose, might be compared to parts of Luther in this respect. Luther spoke in such extreme terms; he was given of course to extreme utterances very frequently, especially when individuals did not measure up to his particular vision. Well, the peasant revolt, of course, was the celebrated instance of that. And his adverse reaction—that's to make an understatement, that it was an adverse reaction—to them occurred when he should have considered, of course, that if we are all fallen, the peasants' revolt was a demonstration of the fallenness of man, the fallen state of man. But this did not occur to him because he was touched personally, like Milton. You see again, when touched personally he responded violently. But they were at their best, when they came to create literature, in the case of Luther and of Milton both.

In Milton's poetry itself, there is something about the metaphoric structure of *Paradise Lost*, the superb metaphors that begin to open up that poem in directions that even the narrator himself may be blind to—and we're not punning here. Because, even in the most difficult speeches, the pronouncements of God in Book III, there's a remarkable balance that Milton is trying to attain. And fundamentally, it is the kind of language that moves outwardly, that begins to suggest much more than what appears to be cold, doctrinal, final utterances.

Baker: Given this non-partisan balance that Milton achieves in *Paradise Lost*, can we conclude that Milton did, in fact, achieve his ambition to write the great Protestant epic? And if so, given this rather proud ambition and the fact, as you mentioned, that pride is the cardinal sin in Western Christianity, can we see this exalted aim in Milton as one source for the claims that Milton trespasses the conventions usually in force in his culture and his religion?

Patrides: I suppose consciously, no doubt, he must have wanted to write the epic of Protestantism. So much for his ambition. The actual practice, of course, can be very different depending on how one looks at the aesthetic experience that is *Paradise Lost*. But in terms of the man's experiences, it is interesting to contemplate, *vis-a-vis* the question that you raise, the way that the narrator behaves in *Paradise Lost*. It has always seemed to me the ultimate wonder, in many ways, that he begins in Book III of *Paradise Lost* with the request, "Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born! Or of th' Eternal coeternal beam/ May I express thee unblamed?" Already, hesitation is beginning. "since God is light,/And never but in unapproached light/Of bright essence increate! / Or hear'st thou . . . pure ethereal light / Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee / Bright effluence stream, / where fountains, who shall tell? before the sun/ Before the Heavens thou wert...." He now has, increasingly, a tremendous sense that, in rising up to heaven, he is going to duplicate the Satanic experience; that is precisely what Satan had done and what condemned him to Hell. There is an overpowering fear here, and it reverberates through the opening invocation to Book III, especially when he talks about his blindness and seeks desperately for illumination, tries, in other words, to consider himself "unblamed" for having done so. You see, to rise up to heaven as boldly as, one assumes, Milton does, is to reproduce ultimately the Satanic, the demonic, experience.

So there is the tremendous pride in his abilities. He knows his abilities; Milton was always cognizant of his abilities, alas, but, at the same time, he is conscious of the fact that he is trespassing. And it's that tension, I think, which I see at the core of *Paradise Lost* and which makes it such a very human document; the constant battle of the poet with his material.

Baker: It almost sounds as though you're extending Stanley
Fish's thesis that Milton reminds the reader of his fallenness over and over in *Paradise Lost*, by tricking him into "fallen," warped misinterpretation of innocent language. It almost seems that, whereas Fish portrays the narrator as innocent, you include him among the fallen with the reader.

Patrides: Well, no. Certainly Stanley Fish's contribution is enormous, and I think it influenced all of us, but, at the same time, I would certainly not claim, as Stanley Fish does, that Milton is laying a number of traps for the reader, into which the reader is going to fall. Rather, the poet is fully conscious of, and wishes to make the reader fully conscious of, the dangers inherent in the enterprise that he's undertaken. So it is done with full consciousness, not in an endeavor to trap me into a sudden and abrupt realization of my fallen status. Milton simply accepts from the very outset, and wants us to accept, that we are fallen. And by "fallen" one means, if one wishes to take it out of the realm of theological discourse and put it in twentieth century terms, that we are imperfect. And if the history of the twentieth century has demonstrated anything, it is precisely that. So, in those terms at least, the imperfection of man is, I think, central to Milton's conception of the reader's presence in the poem. It is not a trap certainly, by any means, if only because the opening invocation to Book I of *Paradise Lost* makes clear, he simply wishes to remind us all of the story which, in any case, we all know. Therefore, so far from the poem being a trap, we as readers, are placed in the unique position whereby we are able to look at the action of *Paradise Lost* from the divine standpoint. Because only we, the poet and God know the whole story from beginning to end.

Harper: Of course, we are invited to look with the eyes of Satan at this pair in Paradise within each other's arms: "O Hell! What do mine eyes with grief behold?" and so on.

Patrides: We enter the Garden of Eden in the company of Satan. . .

Harper: Yes, we do. There's no escaping that.

Patrides: . . . and, as his malevolent shadow falls on the Garden of Eden, so does ours, because we are representatives of Satan too. We're his disciples in many ways, in the sense that we are fallen. So, in many ways, we are tainting the poem by our presence in the poem. That's the negative side of the poem. The positive side is, of course, that we are invited to behave as if we are gods ourselves, because of our foreknowledge of the entire action (and only God possesses foreknowledge), because of our omnipresence in the action, and, ultimately, because of the total conception that we have of the story before the story gets under way.

Harper: That's a good point about the foreknowledge.

Patrides: It's a unique position within which Milton places us, and Stanley Fish, of course, will not acknowledge this, because it damages his particular interpretation vitally, in fundamental respects. But the parallel here, obviously, is the way that dramatic irony functions in Sophocles. There, the foreknowledge of the audience was quite simply the fact that they knew the myths. And Milton does something similar, of course, not only, indeed, in *Paradise Lost*—we obviously know the story of Adam and Eve—but in *Samson Agonistes*. He wants us to know the story in advance, in order to appreciate the very opening line of Samson and the dramatic irony, where Samson is talking on a secular plane and simply says "A little onward lend thy guiding light." He addresses, of course, the little boy on whose shoulders he's leaning as a blind man, but, looked at from a different point of view, already the prayers are under way in line of *Samson Agonistes*. And we, as readers, again with our foreknowledge of what is going to happen eventually, can see that this is a prayer, even though, on the secular plane, it is simply an utterance of a man who seeks assistance from a boy. That kind of thing, you see.

DeJong: You might have addressed this before somewhat, but I'm really interested in knowing how you deal with being a native Greek and British scholar and an American citizen and having to look at seventeenth century poetry from this whole background. What advantages or disadvantages does this give you?

Patrides: I suppose, probably, this question fundamentally addresses itself to my conception of what happened in the seventeenth century. I think it's a remarkable period. In science, certainly, it is, as a matter of course, described as the century of genius, but, equally, the same appellation is merited on behalf of the humanities. One forgets, of course, that the seventeenth century encompasses all of Shakespeare's major tragedies. It begins with them, you see, and then it advances and terminates expeditiously in the direction of Milton. In the political domain, and the social, the upheavals that not only England but the continent also underwent really make that period the turning point from one world view to another. I'm pressing no judgment about either world view. I'm merely pointing up the remarkable excitement that takes place in the transition. I think one must bring a certain sympathetic response to Christian claims in order to understand not only the orthodox but the unorthodox—the much-maligned, down-trodden small sects that, for some (what appears to us on occasion) extremely fanatical reason, fought authority. But it was done because of a
certain cluster of beliefs that ultimately goes back to a
communion of ideas that, in one form or another, we all share.

The social upheavals concerning the position of women in
society: there again, the seventeenth century is the turning
point.

DeJong: You appeal to our common beliefs in the way we as
Calvinists or Greek Orthodox, look at seventeenth century. I
wonder how the great differences between us shape your vision
of the seventeenth century differently.

Patrides: Clearly, some aspects of my own particular beliefs and
upbringing, notably the mysticism of the Eastern Orthodox
Church, would be utterly irrelevant to this particular purpose.
But the heritage of the classical tradition that I mentioned be­
fore, which is innate to the Eastern Orthodox church (I believe
in all humility), fortifies my ability to sympathize with the
confluence of the Christian and the pagan in Milton, for in­
stance, and in some other great poet-scholars of the period. I
can sympathize with this because that is such a necessary part of
my particular church but also because, so far as Calvin is con­
cerned, we're becoming increasingly more cognizant of late
that, in point of fact, in Calvin (and not necessarily in Luther),
one is confronted with one of the most formidable humanists of
the sixteenth century. This involves, in other words, a tradition
in Calvin, and therefore in Calvinism, of expanded horizons
which were not apparent in Luther. Now, I must also adjust
my vision slightly about Luther, in this respect that, obviously,
when he confronts Erasmus, in the celebrated debate for free
will, he is annihilated by Erasmus—in intellectual terms, in
logical terms, in stylistic terms—but, it would seem to me also
that what ob­
tains there in Luther is a
strategy which I
find infinitely
attractive: to
appear to be the
blundering in­
dividual in the
presence of a
mighty scholar
in order to
suggest that
sometimes the
folly of a man is
much better
than the wis­
dom of a super­
man. So that
the stylistic tac­
tics of Luther
should not have
been dismissed
out of hand as
merely contem­
tible. After all,
Luther is one of
the most sup­
reme stylist in
Western
literature. He
is, let us not for­
ger, the
author of the
German Bible.
And when I say
the author, I mean just that. He conditioned the Germanic
language; he created the Modern German language.

It seems to me what has entered the European stage with
Calvin is an extraordinary appeal to logic which, oddly en­
ough, is very logical. I suppose what I have in mind here is the
adoption of certain premises which are pursued, which are
taken to the logical conclusion. So it would have been largely
whether one wishes to accept those initial premises or not. If one
does, then one can follow Calvin; if one does not, then one
cannot follow. But what is impressive, so impressive to me, about Calvin, is the extraordinary range of the man as a
humanist. It is the Christian humanism also, finally, of Calvin
that begins to establish a tradition within Protestantism that
reaches its fruition in the seventeenth century. And let's not
forget that when one talks about Anglicanism of the turn of the
century in England (late sixteenth century beginning of the
seventeenth century), they were all Calvinists. True, it may not
have been, as it were, Calvinistic Calvinism; it may have been
Bullinger's Calvinism, but it was Calvinism that emanated out
of Geneva. Later on, of course, by the late seventeenth century,
Calvinism does decline in England.

Harper: Well, it was tainted by a relationship with Knox, I
suppose, almost more than anything else.

Patrides: It's guilt by association in many ways, yes, that
condemns Calvinism at its worst; but, at its best, the Heinrich
Bullinger Calvinism reigns supreme in England from the late
sixteenth century all the way through to the restoration period.
That's again where I would place the emphasis about the
common elements that we share.

Harper: You...
Patrides: Sorry, Tom, just a second. Every Christian tradition obviously will have its particular set of commitments. Catholics obviously—there is no point in trying to argue with a Catholic about the absolute supremacy of the people because for a Catholic to negate that would negate so much of what is Catholicism. In the same way, there is no point in arguing with me about the mysticism of the Eastern Orthodox church (Oh, not that you want to, I'm not speaking personally obviously. I should say "there's the point for one to") because to remove that, you see, is to remove an indispensable dimension of my experience within that church. So, I emphasize the great deal which is in common to the different churches rather than the differences.

Harper: But wouldn't your background equip you, though, to have a bit more insight into, not the mysticism, but almost the Scotism of men like George Herbert? Looking for the callow principles within their nest and that sort of thing? That's impressed me for a long time—that many of the seventeenth century figures are not anywhere near the harsh rationalists that the term "metaphysical" might imply.

Patrides: And there, interestingly, as in the case of Herbert, I simply begin, not with a respect for the poet—I do confess that I did not understand Herbert, I had no sympathy for him. . .

DeJong: Read Izaak Walton.

Patrides: Well, that's exactly what I did. I began, in other words, to love the man, not the poet. And I began, obviously, to reflect what is it about the man that attracted so many generations of readers? Is it only Walton; is it perhaps not also Herbert?

DeJong: I think it's in spite of Walton myself.

Patrides: Well, of course, ultimately. . . then, to keep myself familiar with Herbert, I began to go back to his poetry, and, quite frankly, it's my students who finally opened my eyes, in the sense that they began to ask embarrassing questions. I used to put Herbert on the reading list, and they kept saying "why?" I didn't have the answers in the beginning, so they began to supply the answers, simply because as we went through a poem, slowly, we found the answers. Yes, don't underestimate the fact, you see, that teachers learn a great deal from students. It's not an accident that so many books by scholars are dedicated to "my students in seminary three-four-five" and that kind of thing. It's very common. Students mistakenly assume that we know everything. No, it's evolutionary, it's cumulative.

DeJong: So how do you teach Herbert?
that a religion is ultimately an intellectual exercise. That is, I can
go so far with the Institutes of the Christian Religion and no
further. Beyond that, I need the enormous circles that will
weave themselves around a body of doctrine that will enrich it,
in other words, make it poetry. And that's why, perhaps,
Milton's poetry attracts me so very much, because it is poetry,
and it is not that kind of militant prose that I was alluding to
earlier.

Baker: But even beyond the absence of ritual. The mysticism
you speak of, in contrast to Calvinist rationalism, seems to get
no consideration in our Calvinist tradition. I remember
Plotinus getting scant sympathy in one of my philosophy
classes. What does it do to the religious experience to assume its
ineffability, right at the start, as the underpinning or the...what
would you call it? the superstructure? It's not a rational thing; its
around it, it impinges on the edges. . . .

Patrides: Yes, it's neither above or beyond or around. It's
somewhere there. It's really conflated with the logical; it
coexists with it, and I don't think one can discern the precise
lines of demarcation anymore than one can, of course, in
Plotinus. (And he was very fortunate to be rendered into that
superb translation in English; it reads beautifully and it
corresponds with the Greek.) Superb stylist! Plotinus' style is
wonderful, logically, of course. A mind of steel almost, knowing
exactly in what direction he will move and yet fully cognizant of
the fact too that logic is insufficient. In the final phrases of the
Enneads, finally he leaves it all in the realm of "the flight of the
alone to the alone." My God! what a summary statement—of a
philosopher!

Harper: Paul, don't be too hard on your coreligionists. The clue
to the Calvinists that I know, the older ones, lies in their un-
conscious affinity for the Hebrew concept of Torah, the mystic
apprehension of the law. My grandfather was a beautiful case in
point; the man was a Hebrew of the Hebrews while being ex-
tremely Dutch, but his grasp of the law was as a mystical grasp;
similar to that which I've known among orthodox Hebrews,
very much like it. I used to hear him praying early in the
morning. He'd pray for fifteen minutes before he went to work,
in Dutch, out loud, in the kitchen at home. I could hear him. I
could grasp just enough of what was going on. And what he was
doing was adjusting the day in terms of the law—always the law,
always the law.

Patrides: And its not only forensic though, it is prophetic.
Because I do remember the first time I started reading into the
history of the development of Protestantism, and the first book
I read on Calvinism was very extreme. That is to say, it quite
simply set forth all the doctrines of Calvinism. And I was
frankly appalled. I said, "There is no human being on this planet
who could possibly credit these." Then, of course, I reflected, as
I went on to read the history of the development of Calvinism,
that rather than being abruptly annihilated, Calvinism spread.
It affected, for a whole century, the whole of Northern Europe,
so, obviously, there must have been something there which
appealed to the most formidable minds of the period. So, what
was it? These books on the history of the development of
religion never tell you these things. But the facts were there,
because Calvinism continued to exist after Calvin. Then I
thought that if he, at least, was mad, did it mean that every-
body else also was mad? Well, clearly not. The answer should
have been sought somewhere else. And it seems to me, if one is
going to talk about the presence of mysticism in Calvinism, it is
that remarkable sense of election. If that is not mysticism, I
don't know what is. It is devoid of ritualism, true; but it does
partake of that conviction, which is prophetic, which goes back
to Isaiah as prototypical of the prophetic impulse, the complete
conviction that I have been elected in the eyes of God, and then,
instead of resting on my laurels, I go out to confirm God's
election of me. It's remarkable.

Harper: To reflect in one's behavior the gratitude one feels for
having been elected.

Patrides: That's not logical; it's mystical.

Harper: But that's precisely what the core of Calvin's Institutes
is.

Patrides: And it explains, then, the spread of Calvinism.

Baker: Yes, and it always seemed to me that the basic do-
ctrines of Calvinism—even Christianity—are actually a tension
of logical irreconcilability that is resolved into a balance in the
faith.

"Hades" or "Screaming Death" by Michelangelo, detail from
Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel.

Patrides: Yes, questions that do not lend themselves to answers
anyway, because, logically, one must say that God has created
evil. Milton is perfectly right. There is no other way: if one is
going to grant the omniscience of God and His omnipotence,
there are no two ways of accepting it; there's no either/or, and
Milton knows this. And therefore, as a poet, he must make his
Satan credible. How's he going to do this? Through the poetry.
But, he adds, Satan only has the poetry, and that's not good
enough.
Republican Southern Comfort

With the 1980 presidential election a little more than a month past, political analysts are now assessing the significance of Ronald Reagan's landslide victory. The basic question is whether the shift of partisan allegiance of such groups as Catholics, Southerners, and blue-collar workers evident in the 1980 election reflects primarily (1) a personal repudiation of a specific president, (2) a continued alignment of Democratic partisan ties within the old Democratic coalition, or (3) the culmination of a major political realignment which has been evident within the American electorate over the last two decades.

At first glance, it may seem plausible to view the 1980 presidential election as first a personal repudiation of a sitting president. Certainly, during the past two years, the public assessment of the Carter presidency was primarily negative. From this perspective, therefore, the magnitude of the Reagan victory must be viewed as a protest vote against the perceived domestic and foreign policy failures associated with the Carter administration. Consequently, any erosion of Democratic support in the 1980 election among those social groups traditionally voting Democratic is a temporary, passing phenomenon related to the uniqueness of the 1980 presidential candidates.

On further reflection however, it becomes clear that the 1980 presidential election should be viewed as more than a rejection of a specific president. The weakening of partisan loyalties within the Democratic coalition of blacks, Jews, Catholics, Southerners, and blue-collar workers has been increasingly evident over the past several presidential elections. For example, since the mid-1960's, there has been a growing inversion of the relationship between class and electoral choice from the prevailing pattern of the New Deal era. The same is true in partisan voting among Catholics and, to some extent, in partisan voting among Southerners. The 1980 election reflected only a further weakening of Democratic ties among such groups—a weakening which is part of a process which began more than a decade ago.

However, it is not clear whether the weakening of the Democratic loyalties within the New Deal coalition reflects merely the dealignment of such groups with the Democratic Party or whether it is part of a larger process of realignment of some of these groups with the Republican Party. This need not be the case. It may be that no new partisan loyalties are being forged to replace old partisan loyalties. Certainly, Americans may have become more inclined to ignore party labels in arriving at their electoral decisions.

Moreover, some of the changes which have occurred in our political system over the last several decades may have significantly affected the ability of our governmental system to meet contemporary challenges. It may well be that, under the present circumstances, no mortal can adequately govern to satisfy the general expectations of the American people. Future presidents, then, regardless of their partisan affiliation or political philosophy, will probably become the scapegoats for the feelings of political discontent and frustration evident among the American people. Therefore, from this perspective of dealignment, the American electorate will continue to exhibit considerable volatility in political preferences for some time to come—as long as the American people do not develop new partisan loyalties to replace the old. Thus, one-term presidents may become the rule, rather than the exception.

However, there is sufficient, though perhaps not totally convincing, evidence to suggest that the 1980 election, like the 1932 election, may well mark the culmination of a new partisan realignment in American politics. The Senate results make the point even more compellingly than Ronald Reagan's electoral vote landslide; namely, that the 1980 election reflected a profound and general turn to conservatism in this country. The circumstances of the Senate races show that something much deeper was involved than disappointment with Jimmy Carter. While some special explanation can be advanced for each of the Democratic losses, the sheer number of them makes it evident that a much broader trend was at work.

The movement to the right began long before the 1980 election. The conservative winds began to blow out of the West and the South in 1964. At first it was barely noticed because Barry Goldwater, a conservative out of the West, was badly beaten by Lyndon Johnson. Goldwater won six states—five in the Deep South and his home state of Arizona. Four years later, Nixon's Southern strategy won five states of the old Confederacy in addition to his Western base. While George Wallace, as the American Independent Party candidate in 1968, won five more Southern states, Democrat Hubert Humphrey won only one—Texas. The once solid South was becoming accustomed to voting for candidates other than Democrats. In 1972, Nixon failed to carry only one state, Massachusetts, against his more liberal Democratic rival George McGovern.

However, the aftermath of Watergate created circumstances that led to a temporary halt in this conservative, generally

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The Democratic party captured the presidency only because “lock” on the Western and Southern states which gives them an advantage under our present electoral college system, while it was Carter was a Southerner and a professed fiscal conservative. By contrast, it now appears that the Republicans have developed an overwhelming political base. This GOP base becomes more evident when we analyze the results of the eight presidential elections from 1952 through 1980. Arizona has voted Republican in all eight presidential elections. California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, South Dakota, Wyoming, Indiana, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Virginia have voted GOP seven times. And Florida, Kentucky, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, Ohio, and Wisconsin have voted Republican in six of the last eight of the presidential elections. In contrast, no state has voted Democratic in each of the last presidential elections. None has done so even seven times. Only West Virginia has gone Democratic in six of the last eight presidential elections, and only Arkansas, North Carolina, and Massachusetts have done so five times.

Moreover, looking ahead, industrial states of the Northeast and the Midwest, such as New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, and New Jersey, will because of population changes lose Electoral college votes starting in 1982. The Southern and Western states like Texas, Arizona, Tennessee, Florida, Oregon, California, and Washington will gain an advantage. Placed in a larger perspective, the power shift becomes even more dramatic. The Electoral College votes of the Frostbelt states outnumbered the Sunbelt states by 41 votes in the 1960 presidential election. By the 1980 presidential election, the Sunbelt states led by four Electoral College votes—but it would lead by 26 votes in the 1984 presidential election.

Along with the regional shift of power that has been taking place in American politics other changes which have hurt the Democratic Party have occurred. The traditional constituencies of the Democratic Party have grown thinner in the industrialized states of the Northwest and the Midwest. Ironically, this waning of Democratic support among its traditional consti-
Maria

She likes early morning best. Often she slips out of bed and walks to the lake's edge. The sand underneath her feet is cool in the night air. At times it is damp. She patters to the edge of the dock and dabbles her feet in the water. Other mornings she lies on her stomach, her breasts yielding to the plank's hardness, and studies her reflection with a child's earnestness. In the distance across the lake, white light brims the dark pine forest. The morning breeze has not yet begun to blow around the promontory. The lake is deep and serene. There is great silence under its surface.

My room is directly below hers. By now I am accustomed to the sound of her feet upon my ceiling. I am often awakened by the evenness of her step. I think I do not actually awaken, but am awake already. Once, I stepped out beyond the kitchen from where I watch her and followed her out to the sand. She stood at the water's edge; the tiny ripples nipped the fringes of her nightdress. Her brown hair hung in masses past her shoulders, parting at the neck. She stood motionless in the half-light of morning, like a deer at water, and I could not see her clearly. I called her name once, but she chose not to hear me. "Maria," I called, "why do you come here? The mornings are cold." But she did not speak to me. My foolish heart began to thump wildly. I dared not to walk past the line of sparse grass in the sand. Then the morning chill laid siege to my bones. She is a young woman, I, an old man... 

Since then I stay in bed until the sun is well up in the sky. I used to be an early riser and would chide Maria whenever she slept long. Now it seems good to stay in bed. When first I stayed in bed, Maria came into my room to see if I were ill. I patted her hand and said that old men had the right to change their minds. "But Paka," she said, "you see best in early morning light." That is true, but an old man's eyes fail, and that is true also. Now she chides me for sleeping long, and it has become a joke between us.

After breakfast, I get out my paints and begin my day's work. Lately, I have not painted well. I have seen the lake too many times. The late morning light chases the mists and shadows.

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David Krosschell

There are no corners left to move me. The geese are fewer and do not stay long. The deer drink at the edge of night.

Maria walks quietly around the house. She has not noticed that I paint little. Sometimes I look around the corner of my door and see her looking through the window at the lake or at the sea of ferns. Once, when she was standing in that manner, she turned her head and saw me watching her. She smiled and said, "It is only Maria, Paka." I moved back into my room, thunderstruck. "I know it is you, my child," I said aloud. Her face had been very calm.

There comes a young man to visit her at morning tea. He walks down the beach with long strides from a cottage halfway up the promontory. When she sees him in the distance, she runs to meet him.

Inside, she serves us peppermint leaf tea and buttered toast. He sits in the wicker rocker and talks. His hands talk as much as his tongue. The rocker never ceases to squeak under his weight. Maria sits opposite him facing the lake, doing needlework. On some days the sun shines full upon her bent head and finds a reddish tint in her hair. I lean upon my couch. He calls me Professeur when he addresses me.

She presses him to say for lunch. We eat simply of bread and cheese and milk. Occasionally there is an apple for dessert. After lunch they take a walk on the beach. By now she has put on a green or blue blouse, and her bare feet squeak in the sand. Her hair is tied in a ball behind her head. He does not dress for the beach. His tie hangs loose around his collar and his pants are blown by the wind. Sometimes he takes off his socks and shoes and carries them in one hand. I watch them for a long time through the window. Maria walks in the water. She watches her feet swirl up the firm sand, or she searches out the distant reaches of the lake with her eyes. He continues to talk, gesturing with his free hand. There is a space between them. I watch them grow quite small. After they round a curve in the beach and reappear, they are a smudge spot against the background. When they are gone, I sit down again to paint. My paintings are made of lakes and forests and flying geese and little houses in wide meadows of goldenrod. A man comes to buy them from me. He says they sell well in department stores and art shops.
Many years ago I began to paint Maria, I thought it would help me to remember her face when she is gone. An old man must rely upon his memory, but it too fails. When first I started, I spent many hours upon the background. I have never painted the lake so well. The blues and greens of the lake and forest appear as they do in early morning, and then only once in a year. When I see it, I feel very lucky. I am confident that I will finish the painting.

But when I sit down to paint Maria, my hand trembles. I cannot tell my brush the stroke, and it cannot make it alone. Sometimes, almost by accident, something that I have seen in Maria appears on the canvas, and I work hastily before it disappears. I go to bed jubilant that I have painted Maria. But the next morning's light is unkind, and I must shake my head and say, "No, that is not Maria."

Lately, I idly sketch lines on paper. I think perhaps that one cannot capture Maria with just one view. It occurs to me to paint a cube with six paintings for the sides. Then I could paint different backgrounds to express different parts of Maria. For example, from the front her face would look peaceful against the lake. But from the top one could see she is walking a narrow bridge above a raging fire, or from the back that she is approaching a dark and melancholy forest. Her face is always serene. I try to think of better backgrounds, but it is all idleness. My sketches clutter the room and must be burnt regularly.

When Maria comes back, I try to memorize her face. I glance at her furtively, but I am not good at it. She catches me often. Her silences are long but not oppressive. I ask her about the young man. She tells me he went into the university to teach. She sat an hour, she said, on a park bench and watched many strange people walk by. She does not say what they were like. It is late afternoon. Her serenity troubles the dying day.

At night the young man comes back for supper. Maria meets him on the beach and sits him at the table. Together they talk of things I do not understand. The man laughs and calls me Professeur. He says I should let Maria attend the university. She would be a scientist of psychology, he says. I tell him that Maria is not my daughter. He laughs loudly. He asks me if I would not like Maria to be called Professeur, too. I repeat that Maria is not my daughter. I steal a glance at Maria. She is very serene. Her hair is braided down her front and her dress lies smooth over her knees. I do not know why the young man laughs.

At evening the sun makes a glittering path from the door to the pines on the far side of the lake. Its center is very bright but the edges are indistinct. When the sun goes down, Maria sits in her chair and does some work with her hands. Sometimes she finds a book to read. The light from her shaded lamp caresses her face. Her brow is smooth, her cheek is full, her lashes sweep the air. Sometimes I feel I must ask her a question: "Maria, what are you thinking of?" or "Maria, tell me what you think of this." And she will smile and come to my shoulder and together we will look at my day's work. Her words and voice will be just as they always were. Later she helps me pack up my paints. Her eyes are very blue, and one cannot tell what her heart holds.
Temperament: The Key to Harmony and Discord

Sam Wiersma

In the tuning of harpsichords, he achieved so correct and pure a temperament that all the tonalities sounded pure and agreeable.

—From the obituary of J.S. Bach by CPE Bach

From one point of view, the performing artist has never had it so good. Just as most of us benefit from products of technology and ingenuity, so the modern musician benefits from having an instrument which not only works but which doesn’t have the shortcomings of its ancient ancestors. The performer need not bother to carry a tuning hammer with him on stage (if he is a pianist), or worry about having, coiled up in his tuxedo pocket, some extra piano strings to replace the ones that inevitably break during the course of a concert. The artist today, thanks to technology, can take his concert grand as an absolute, a dependable device that can absorb all sorts of abuse without suffering mechanical failure. Also, it is a precise machine which, if it is “in tune” to begin with, he regards as merely the local manifestation of something more basic: a temperament built into the universe itself. Consider a fine piano recently tuned “perfectly” according to the best means of technology available, say, the Conn Stroboscopic Electric Tuner (a device far more accurate than the human ear, of course). We might sit down at this paragon of pure intonation, rattle off the little piece we learned for just such occasions and think to ourselves, “Wow, that’s in tune.” We play a chord, think it sounds good enough, and don’t imagine ourselves to be self-deceived. G-sharp and A-flat sound as though they are just where they are supposed to be. In fact, it so happens that these notes are played by the same key lever. Technology, in an elegant, efficient way, has cut financial and physical costs. Two totally separate functions are combined into one and we can’t tell the difference. Naturally, though, we remain eternally grateful that life is just that much simpler, and maybe wonder to ourselves if a Nobel Prize shouldn’t have been offered to the ingenious soul who first thought of putting them together. Yet, despite the technical advantage of this union, it just might be that our ears have grown dull in the process, and that the music suffers without our realizing it. We have grown content to ignore a subtle compromise—the union of a sharp and a flat—and its implications. The temperament that technology has given us—equal temperament, no less—is one in which each semitone has a strict mathematical definition (beating \(\sqrt{2}\) times as fast as his neighbor in an “irrational” ratio) in which all keys are made to sound the same—is apparently as close to technical perfection as is humanly possible; any tone functions equally well as a sharp or a flat. So far so good. In contrast, though, this “equal temperament” has not only destroyed our sense of what intonation is, but our sense of the particular qualities of different keys, as well.

At Wesley College in Massachusetts, there is an organ, built by the great American builder, C.B. Fisk, that possesses an unusual keyboard. At first glance, one sees the usual gap-toothed arrangement of black keys and white keys, but closer inspection reveals a disturbing feature: each G-sharp key—the black key nestled in the middle of clusters of three black keys—is in fact two key levers, one riding sideward to the other. Each of the two controls a different pitch. This, at once, banishes any absolutist notion of equal temperament, because here we find an instrument with “split sharps”; a distinction is made between G-sharp and A-flat, and appropriate key levers are provided for each. The familiar E-flat key (or what from a distance appears to be this essential key) is similarly afflicted. With an enharmonic keyboard such as this, one might imagine that C.B. Fisk has solved for eternity the problem of playing more in tune than it is possible to play in equal temperament. Unfortunately, our aesthetic sense is disturbed even at the thought of adding more mechanism to something that is already cluttered as it is. Furthermore, if we accept the addition of a few split sharps here and there, and justify them by claiming enharmonic perfection (that is, having all keys sound exactly the same, but having them in absolutely perfect tune) as our ultimate goal, key levers would eventually multiply like rabbits all over the keyboard. Such images send shivers down the spines of keyboard players, who, as it is, fumble around on five black keys without

Sam Wiersma is a well-tempered junior music major.
animal delight: a pure interval rather than an imitation of one. Actually be offended at hearing something that produces an effect tune than is possible with the ambiguous tones and contrived sonorities of equal temperament. Their reasonable competence does away in their own opinions, with the need to listen critically to each and every note. Besides, most are concerned with the sweep of a piece, rather than with such esoteric things as pure intervals. This gut sense that most people have serves a key role in their enjoyment of music (few things in life are more unpleasant than listening to a beautiful composition played even slightly out of tune), and has been known to cause violent reaction to the sound of perfect interval—any two pitches sounding together in some simple, "perfect" ratio, the most common being 3:2, the ratio of the fifth; 5:4, the ratio of the major third; and, of course 2:1, the perfect octave which by definition fits the perfect ratio even in equal temperament. Being accustomed to the more contrived sounds (the contrived ratios) of the equally tempered scale, in which the corresponding intervals are expressed as nasty ratios such as $2^{12}/12$, and in which there is always that sugary-sweet vibrato of less than perfect intervals, some may actually be offended at hearing something that produces an animal delight: a pure interval rather than an imitation of one. So, maybe—to avoid giving offense—we should sweep music under equal temperament, under its ambiguous tonalities, its artificial warmth, and its mere approximation of perfect intonation, after all.

There have been some incredible attempts at devising an enharmonic keyboard instrument, one in which all the intervals would sound purely in all keys. The Fisk organ at Wellesley is only a moderate example of an instrument with an extra key here and there; much more ambitious instruments have been built with dozens of keys to the octave, strange monuments to the ambition that the music itself serve perfect intonation. We may sigh with relief that such monsters, regardless of their ideal tuning systems, never caught the public appeal; if they had, music would be more contrived than it is already. Given the choice, an instrument with impure intervals is preferable to one on which all the intervals are pure and the instrument is unplayable. Still, this is no justification for equal temperament. Maybe there is nothing morally wrong with wanting all keys to have the same degree of inner tension, or with wanting all keys to sound out of tune to the same degree, or, for that matter, in desiring equal temperament itself; only, it seems such an arbitrary solution—a much more complex solution than it needs to be.

True, it does seem to us the natural thing to do, with twelve members of some set (in this case the twelve pitches of the modern chromatic scale), to somehow space them evenly, in perfect symmetry, whether they fit or not. In the same way, if a table is always symmetrically set (though it may take some effort to get the plates evenly spaced), one may have to give up his usual space and straddle a table leg if there is a guest — and if the symmetry of the universe is to be preserved. As attractive as such an arrangement is, it does not, of itself, guarantee that the ends are better served any more than if the necessary tools to the enjoyment of life—silverware, plates, and piano strings—are arranged in some other way. On the contrary, there may be some situations in which "perfect" arrangements may be undesirable, as is the case when two left-handed people sit next to each other, or when it is desirable that F major should be more in tune than D-sharp minor. The tyrant, equal temperament, has seduced us into believing that it is the best way to tune the chromatic, twelve-tone scale. Its chief beauty really lies in its self-referential perfection, and—as with those monstrous keyboards where the problem is just the opposite—not in its service to music.

Equal temperament is an arbitrary phenomenon and fortunately represents only one of the many possible ways of tuning a standard keyboard instrument. Any temperament, of course, confronts the same basic problem: how to make the individual intervals as bearable as possible, using as its resources only the twelve basic key levers of the chromatic scale. So, in equal temperament, all the intervals are equally bearable—or unbearable. It is no surprise, then, that, in unequal temperament, some intervals turn out to be more unbearable than others. In a certain temperament, a given interval may sound horrible if listened to for its own sake. Not providing an animal pleasure like a pure interval, or a pleasure...
from a sense of duty and order, as with an equally tempered interval, fraught with the anguish of strings sounding in odd ratios to the point of being clearly out of tune, it might seem that unequal temperaments would lose hands down to its perfectly equanimous relative in the struggle to minimize human suffering. Yes, in unequal temperament there are a few rather pungent sonorities. For example, the major third F-sharp to A-sharp might be a howler, especially if the A-sharp is really tuned as a B-flat. Yet by the same token—and herein lies the beauty of less rigid tuning systems—some intervals may indeed be tuned purely. Causes of human suffering may not ultimately be eliminated, but at least they can be redistributed.

The chief criticism of unequal temperament has been that there are inconsistently some tonalities sounding more agreeable than others, and also, as a more complex manifestation of the same thing, that there undeniably are some startling leading tone relationships in which some notes are stretched almost beyond the limits of dual service. (A leading tone is a note which wants very badly to go to an upper neighbor. At any rate, the closer a leading tone sounds to the consequent note, the more the resolution seems inevitable.) An odd effect in an unequal tuning system is the sound of a leading tone quite far removed from its neighbor, with the result that some resolutions sound rather hesitant, though enchanting, there being less musical force demanding them. Of course, in equal temperament, all resolutions are routine, sounding the same in all keys. In other temperaments, however, since leading tones are not evenly distributed, the leading tones that are bunched closer make some resolutions into significant events. Some tones, although they are stretched almost beyond recognition when serving as flats, serve perfectly as sharps. If only for the sake of a few perfect intervals, or for a few beautiful leading tones, alternative temperaments may be desirable.

Please, do not be misled. The effect of first hearing an instrument tuned in a different system, for someone used to the drowsy warmth of equal temperament, may be like learning to like yogurt all over again. In new things there is always a new challenge. At first there are some different sounds that one may have to become accustomed to. True, the familiar pieces we have come to love do sound peculiar, especially if they happen to be written in either the purest or most anguished of the keys of the instrument played. In the case, for example, that our piece is C major, and C major is the purest of keys, we may find that our piece sounds purely to the point of barrenness. Also, with the emphasis of a temperament on some notes more than others, scale passages seem to take on a different character, to the point of suggesting a new way of playing music to make the fast parts sound the best. Whatever criticism some temperaments might draw, they force the ear to become conscious of pure intonation and the peculiarities of certain keys. As the piece goes along, the ear becomes very conscious of tonality and its implications; it always knows through what keys the music is progressing. This allows the cultured listener much more satisfaction in expectations met. After we learn the oddities of a certain temperament, tonality becomes something important to the pieces played, rather than just something technical and incidental. It is not something for the lazy, but rather for those concerned with beauty, and for whom sense of key does matter, because it expresses human concern—with a passion—that music should please the ear, to the benefit of man and the glory of God.

Well, equal temperament is here to stay, and few will give it up. But if you wonder why so little classical literature is written in the obscure keys of G-sharp and F-sharp major, for example, there is a plausible explanation for it. Simply, why write a beautiful piece in a cumbersome key, when everyone knows that C major sounds so much better than F-sharp minor? Temperament being a very sensitive personal issue, Haydn would certainly have offended his patrons had he written most of his piano sonatas in exotic keys—not because his patrons couldn't fumble their way through thickets of black keys and not because they couldn't, with their trusty tuning wrenches sitting next to their instruments, force a more disagreeable key like F-sharp minor to become just that much more bearable (of course, at the expense of B-flat; although, that is another story, . . .). It was just that they had such a sense of key that it went without saying that the peculiarities of a key in an unequal temperament was integral to the pieces in that key. Some would point to The Well Tempered Clavier of J.S. Bach or to music literature of the Romantics and, with a final flourish, to the music of the twentieth century as the self-righteous justification of equal temperament that not even many of the Romantics knew. In the first place, the “well-tempering” of Bach was by no means equal to temperament. This may come as a surprise to those who don't realize that all keys are more or less playable in a given temperament. It may also add depth to the notion that the greatest artist-technician of them all, father Bach, wrote his humble little preludes of and fugues of The Well Tempered Clavier with certain spicy qualities of certain keys in mind, inherent with unequal temperament, rather than as a demonstration, if one could imagine it, that it no longer mattered what key music was made in. And yet, for some reason the myth persists that if only the Romantics had actually had equal temperament, they would have preferred it to their own homemade versions—versions that presumably worked to inspire them to great music and give them the effects they loved. In closing, one can only wonder whether, if twentieth century composers knew what equal temperament really was, they would support it the way that they do.
If you've walked through the Barn (i.e. the Commons addition) during the past two months you might have noticed seven alabaster figureheads on display in the main lobby. They are the works of students currently taking the Introductory Sculpture class with professor Ron Pederson. Accompanying the works was a brief statement by Pederson which shed some light on the intent and process involved in arriving at the finished pieces.

"The students began with the anatomical study of the human head. They made clay figureheads using a live model as reference for the underlying cranial and muscular structures. They then went to a local gypsum mine to select the alabaster stones from which they would carve their sculptures.

What you see is a record of a physical process. Every chisel mark, polished or rough-hewn surface records a facet of that process. But a conceptual process also took place. Because of the psychologically powerful nature of the human face the emerging forms suggest new directions: abstractions of features to intensify a mood, elimination of features that made no contribution to the coherence of the sculpture as a whole, etc. Problems were encountered and decisions made to solve them."

The intent of this feature is to give the students an opportunity to speak about the pieces in the hope of aiding those of you who saw the figureheads and wondered about them and those of you who see them for the first time here on these pages to come to a better understanding of them. Unfortunately the sculptures are no longer on display for direct reference.

*Ron does not always wear horn-rimmed glasses.

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Margaret Dijkhuis—senior

Every time I look at my figureheads, I am struck by how familiar they are to me and yet there is something odd about them. This is probably because the finished form of the sculpture is only the end result of a long and intense process of struggling with the rock and the forms as they emerged from it. I started with a rather large mass of rock. After having carved out facial features in the center of the side of the rock, I noticed a protrusion on the side to the left which strongly suggested a profile. I shifted my focus to this area and defined the face that you now see on the right. Then I worked on the opposite side of the rock. When a large chunk of the alabaster fell away, another nose-like protrusion was exposed. That got me to working on a third face, the one you now see on the left. So I had a rock with faces on three sides. But I wasn't happy with it, because I found that the face that I had started with was too imposing and too stilted. I had imposed facial features onto the rock, rather than having worked with the natural forms, colours and textures already present in the rock. In the second and particularly the third faces (right, left) I was more conscious of working with these givens. For example, on the right face the nose twists grotesquely following the line of the rock; the right cheek is left rough and the white crystal suggests a highlighted area. On the left face, the brow and the right cheek were left as rough planes; a small overhang below the nose becomes an upper lip; black fissures suggest lip forms and define the curvature of a closed right eyelid. I was not aiming at achieving naturalistic representation: rock is not flesh and bones. Thus I arrived at a stylization of the human face with a character shaped by the personality of the rock.

So, what ever happened to the first face? I obliterated it in a fit of frustration and, in doing so, split the rock into two main parts. Then I had to deal with the problem of putting the two parts together in a significant way. Although the sculpture may seem to be primarily a frontal piece, the back side records the former unity of the two forms as a solid mass in the negative and positive shapes left there.
Mary Buikema—sophomore

My figurehead is a study that helped me get to know more about the anatomy of the human face. My intent was never to make a very realistic representation of a human head—I wanted to make it very stylized. I had no preliminary sketches or ideas as to what it would turn out to look like.

What I basically wanted to do was show how the forms or planes of your face flow into each other. I started from what I saw as a suggestion of the right cheek and the nose which stuck out of the rock the most, and then worked back through the hair and all the way around. So I was working on all sides of the head “at the same time,” dealing with the forms as they developed.

As I was chiselling, the very top of the head cracked off and I had to solve that: I had to decide whether to leave it off or stick it back on. I plastered it back on but from there had to leave that part alone. Once it breaks off and is put back on, you can’t work on it anymore. I had to chisel around it and take off from there.

I chose to sand down and then oil the figurehead so that all of the surfaces are smooth. The face I polished with a buffer for the visual effect: there’s continuity in the smoothness and yet a distinction between the face and hair surfaces.

Jan Helmer—sophomore

The rock that I worked on was flat and triangular so I was somewhat limited in what I could do with it. Keeping in mind the basic proportions of the face, I started carving the main features of the face and moved on to the details from there. I dug out the back of it which gives it a mask-like appearance.

I couldn’t plan on it looking the way I saw it in my mind because as I carved at the alabaster some parts chipped away accidentally that I actually would have liked to see remain. I simply had to keep in mind that the intrinsic character of the material is an important part of the completed sculpture and that however it turned out was the way it was supposed to turn out.

The front of the mask represents the smooth and serene qualities of mankind that many people appear to have. The back side which was left rough and unpolished represents the true feelings that people often try to keep hidden.

Bob Alderink—junior

My sculpture is much different than everybody else’s because I wanted it to be a minimal form. I wanted to give the viewer a suggestion of the form in the most economical way, portraying no more than necessary. In a drawing class you study a face in terms of planes—you think of planes and shadows. I was interested in that and wished to reduce the face to those planes so that they would react to the light. Using geometric forms to suggest abstracted facial features and brass rods I constructed rather than carved my figurehead.

At first I thought I would make an eggshell-like form: just have outside planes connected to each other enclosing the inner space. But then I decided that I didn’t want to give the viewer everything and I did want to include a brain-like inner mass that would relate the piece more closely to the structure of the human head.

The smoothness and angularity of the outer features contrasts with the rough chiseled-pocked texture of the rounded inner form. Yet they relate to each other in subtle ways: rough and broken-off or rounded edges came about during the carving, filing and sanding done on the outer features; crystal impurities in the alabaster expose smooth surfaces on the inner form in places.

The piece is mounted on a brass pole to give it a feeling of airiness. You can see through to the other side which increases the sense of space around the inner form.
**Rick Beerhorst—junior**

Working on this figurehead was an exercise in facial structures for me. I wanted to better understand how the planes and forms of the nose, cheeks, chin, forehead etc., fit together and flow into each other.

I had a plan of cutting the stone to look exactly like my clay figurehead, but that didn’t work out—the stone was making demands. You can’t manipulate and model stone like you can clay. The stone chips and cracks where it’s not “supposed” to; there’s not enough stone where there “should” be. The personality of the particular stone comes out in the sculpting process and you have to be flexible in responding to it.

At first the hair was just an afro—round and simple. Then I thought it would be more exciting to have hair like hair really isn’t. So I made tufts of hair in flowing planes and geometric shapes.

I felt that any surface texture other than a smooth surface would overcomplicate the pieces, so I simply sanded, waxed and then polished it.

*Rick does not always wear stewart safety glasses.*

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**Barbara McQueen—junior**

I had a very difficult time carving my sculpture. The slab of alabaster that I worked with was covered with slate, a very hard, layered rock that is impossible to carve. After chiselling the slate away I was left with a lot of flat areas and one large protrusion. I worked with this the best I could but even so, while trying to define certain facial features the rock crumbled away because of impurities in the alabaster. So I eventually decided to simply let the rock “have its way with me”—so to speak.

I had another problem with the rock. It craved my blood. In the carving process I obtained about seventeen lacerations on my hands and arms.

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**Chip Vander Brug—junior**

My sculpture is mainly a frontal piece. I only worked on one side of the rock. I didn’t have to chisel or carve very hard because the rock crystals were really soft, and there weren’t any impurities in it. The natural colour of the rock is very close to the colour of a white person’s skin, and when the rock is sanded smooth it looks very fleshlike. You turn the piece around, and you’ve got the real rock surface which is very opposite from the front side.

Originally, there was more rock sticking out on the front left side, and there was a feature on it that looked kind of like a nose. I worked on the face, which was very shallow, at first and didn’t look quite right. Then I worked to the right leaving more and more rough chisel marks as I went.

I left the left side of the face as the rock was, to let people figure out what the other side of the face looks like. I had no intention of making a mouth and chin. I just wanted a partial face kind of wanting to come out of the rock—just pressing itself through the rock. The features aren’t perfect but . . .

I did not plan on the natural wrinkle in the rock that showed up once the surface was completely smooth and oiled. It makes the rock even more flesh-like.

—edited by Margaret Dijkhuis
The rubber band

in a rubber band

was swept by a street cleaner

into the sewer systems of Grand Rapids

A lucky workman

spied the rubber band as he cleared a trap.

Using the rubber band to secure an important message to his shoe.

Unfortunately, the rubber band broke on a piece of rubble, and the important message was lost.

The rubber band was photographed next to some dead flies on the sidewalk as a social comment.

—Catherine Bouwsma
It has been suggested that if Dialogue is to be in the business of presenting "literature"—stories, drama and poetry—to Calvin readers, perhaps we ought to say something about how such things should be read. This seems only fair. Not every student (or professor) at Calvin is an English major, not all English majors at Calvin are in the habit of reading literature when it is not assigned; and not everyone in the habit of reading literature could, easily, say how to assess or critically explore any given piece. Indeed practical critical interaction with a text is just not a simple task for the educated reader of our age. Let me use the example of poetry. In the last century, methods, styles and subject matter have been as various and kaleidoscopic as would be thought possible; witness these examples of opening lines from several major poets of the last hundred years:

Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days! Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways
—W.B. Yeats, 1892

And from the windy west came two-gunned Gabriel, From Jesus' sleeve trumped up the king of spots
—Dylan Thomas, 1936

This spoonful of chocolate tapioca Tastes like—like peanut butter, like the vanilla
—Randall Jarrell, 1965

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
—Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1918

I knew a woman, lovely in her bones, When small birds sighed, she would sigh back at them
—Theodore Roethke, 1958

'A cold coming we had of it, Just the worst time of the year
—T.S. Eliot, 1927

Though, it is, perhaps, a little artificial to characterize a poet's work by quoting the opening lines of one poem, at least one can get some idea of the wide diversity in what is called modern poetry. Indeed, even in the pages of Dialogue, one finds a cummings-like piece of free verse rubbing shoulders with an extended lyric in terza rima.

It is no more possible to find a consensus among critics. Depending on their philosophical, theoretical assumptions, schools of criticism may direct the reader's attention to structural elements of the text, its historical or social context, the shape of the reader's response to the work or any one of a number of other aspects. Even as its influence is becoming strong, a critical approach may become "fasse," superseded by the momentous work of some new giant of literary criticism. But worse, each dying critical school seems, hydra-like, to engender at least two new offshoots.

Just to know a very little about literature and criticism is to be paralyzed by the immensity of the field and the likelihood of making a fatal blunder if we step out onto it.

But the field of literature cannot be ignored. It is not for nothing that thinkers of the past have regarded literature—poetry and prose—as an education in itself, an education of moral sensibilities, of aesthetic sensitivity, and just as importantly, of expressive skills, writing and speaking. Reading is invaluable, and can be delightful.

But reading cannot be a merely passive exercise—not if it is to be all that it should be. The reader cannot simply sit back and "emote" while the words trickle into his eyes. Part of the reason reading is such a worthwhile exercise is that literature requires lively interaction with it to make it give up its treasures. Literature schools of thought, analytical, critical, sympathetic, are cover the essence of a piece. So we are started: how things called poetry are to be read? In this from a critical point of view, I can distinguish five literary, intellectual and dummy all these needed to discern a piece.

So we are started: how things called poetry are to be read? In this from a critical point of view, I can distinguish five literary approaches to poetry. These methods of finding, understanding, and concentrating on the art of poetry are used, more or less, for all these approaches.

Content—This is, perhaps, the most easily discernible aspect of a poem. Often poems will have a narrative or plot on their very surface. However, though poems present a form, and these methods are often maligned, often too often, the mechanics of the critical process I outline would have to be radically revised, I think my five basic elements of criticism can be applied, insofar as they are useful at all, to most pieces of literature.

Appendix
scattered. The poem is not always unified by its narrative structure. Still, in most poems of moderate length, there is a happening that the reader can discern and describe. It should be noted that sometimes, in (usually very short) "imagistic" poems, the poet simply presents a static image; then the reader can turn to another aspect of content analysis, comprehending the poem's images. The actors and actions in a work, the metaphors, the meanings of the words: all these evoke images. They may give the reader specific visual pictures or they may move more obscurely in his mind, but the noun, verbs, adjectives, all the language used by a good poet suggests, to an attentive reader, concepts and emotional connotations that are the raw material of aesthetic feeling. If the poet mentions a "rose," he elicits a certain response; if he mentions the "gestapo" he discovers another; and "Ulysses" evokes still another.

Once the reader has examined the narrative a poem contains and its working images, he may examine the ideas in the work. Readers of literature, on all levels, are often tempted to ask, "But what does it mean?"; however, unless a piece is explicitly didactic—and sometimes even when it appears so—drawing ideas out of a work as its lesson or moral can be one of the least productive aspects of criticism. On the other hand, works of art do contain ideas, and these are important to a reader's understanding of a poem. The juxtaposition of ideas, and the way ideas are related to narrative and images, can be especially informative to the strategy of the work. The traditional uses of a form, and the way a poet adheres to or deviates from the form, can be very informative to the strategy of the work.

Form is the next thing for a reader to examine. Here, I mean by this the mere shape and sound of the poem. Poems, these days, are two things: they are written and they are spoken works. Most often, in this age, we see, rather than hear, a poem; then, the visual impact of the poem becomes important. Is it divided into stanzas; are the lines regularly or irregularly arranged, of equal or unequal lengths? Does the poet follow, ignore, or alter the traditional rules of punctuation and capitalization? All of these elements contribute to establishing the tone of the poem as regular, traditional, iconoclastic, fragmented or unified. But, though the reader is probably presented with a written poem first, he must never forget that the sounds of a poem, its rhymes, if it has any, its use of alliteration, assonance, harsh or melodic vowels and consonants also contribute to the totality of the art work. Reading the poem aloud, naturally, can help a reader to analyze this part of the poem.

Strategy—Once the reader has examined the content and form of work, he can begin to formulate a coherent picture of the work. Using all the elements he has discovered, he can begin to map out the strategy of a poem; by this I mean the patterns, connections and flows that move the poem from its opening to its conclusion. A useful pattern to keep in mind while analyzing the strategy of many poems is movement from disequilibrium and imbalance to resolution; in other words, discovering what, at the beginning of the poem, is out of joint, what problem needs to be solved, what is the process whereby the problem is solved, and what is the solution. Alternatively, a poem may be patterned on a build-up of tension or anticipation followed by a release. These of course, are only possibilities. To explore the strategy of a poem, one also needs to examine connections: connections among images, among sounds, among events, as well as between images and sound, images and events and so forth. A poem can be a complex thing. The poem may "say" one thing, but the form may contradict, undercut or trivialize this apparent meaning. Use of excessive rhyme or absurd images may transform a heroic saga into an ironic comedy. (A poem's title can be helpful in discerning strategy at times.)

To discern the strategy, the reader has to be aware of how all the elements in a poem combine in certain relationships to produce focus and mood. Ultimately, the strategy of a poem is the pattern of movement the poem is designed to make on the reader's consciousness.

Context—Not after all these processes, but during (of course, the temporal succession of these steps is artificial), the reader can use whatever contextual knowledge he has to shape his judgments. Biographical facts about the artist, historical facts of his society and ours, sociological, psychological theories, ideologies—all these are often looked on with suspicion as illegitimate resources for the literary critic, but if used carefully and with discretion, anything that helps to illuminate a work is of value to the critic. Often knowledge of the poet and his situation will keep the reader from erroneously imposing his own set of assumptions and values on a work. On the other hand, what we perceive as an author's "intention" need not become the "be all and end all" of our interpretation.

Any knowledge of literary modes and traditions is especially helpful in examining a work. The traditional uses of a form, and the way a poet adheres to or deviates from the form, can be very informative to the strategy of the work.

Reader-Response—Finally, when the reader has plumbed the depths of a poem, he may then sit back and "emote." Now aware of the complexities and nuances, he can surrender his informed soul to the patterns of mood and idea that flow through the work. Without his previous analysis, he would drown in the dark ocean of subtleties, but buoyed up by his critical understanding, he can move with the tides and enjoy the sparkle of the waves.

Of course, this is a very simplistic account of the critical experience. On any higher a plane, the distinctions I have made would blur and run into one another. That is because the critical enterprise is not, as you might gather, a long process of checking steps off on a checklist. This account is merely a lifeless anatomicization of a single living interaction with a text of any work of literature. And if it sounds hard, I admit it is; criticism is not simply a species of fuzzy thinking that English majors do because they can't do anything else. Learning to read literature well is a rigorous and intellectually invigorating discipline; but the rewards of mastering it are greater than in many another.

—Paul Baker