

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Sex and Violence: The Genius of Western Literature

Lately when the urge to read something beyond the pale strikes, I open up Camille Paglia's *Sexual Personae* to any page, and read. I fully expect to be engrossed, titillated, and arrested, as though I were embarking on a tour of the Times Square of Western literature.

Ms. Paglia believes (1) that Man's achievements are a frenzied attempt to

vanquish devouring Mother Nature, (2) that despite our revulsion to Nature, we are compulsively drawn back to her via sex, (3) that relations between the sexes always have and always will play out the drama between Man and Nature, and (4) the day we cease to be creatures chained to biology and sexuality art will die, because the imaginative interplay of sexual personae generates Western art and literature.

That is the kernel of Ms. Paglia's philosophy. She has a conservative's profound disdain for Rousseau and nature sentimentalized; she has a libertine's disdain for American puritanism. She is a

Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson

by Camille Paglia
New Haven: Yale University Press
\$35.00

consummate twentieth-century pagan.

I cannot do justice to a 700-page volume in this short space, but I can outline its premises and some of its conclusions with the same anticipatory glee its controversial author obviously feels.

Sexual Personae launches itself from Nietzsche's axiom that all

BOOK REVIEW: *SEXUAL PERSONAE*
THE APPEAL OF TRAGEDY
FOR YOU AND I
LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DRUG POLICY
PIONEERS
MOVIE REVIEW: "DIVA"
ON MANNERS, PART 2
GILDED VERSES: POEM
TRANSLATION
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JUDAS
UNTITLED SKETCH
A MAN LIES SLEEPING
NOTES

MLINKO p. 1
NEWMAN p. 4
ROBERTS p. 9
MUELLER p. 10
COVEY p. 13
BROOKS p. 14
SCHOENER p. 16
de Nerval p. 18
DOLAN p. 19
NEASE p. 20
KELLEY p. 22
ACOSTA p. 24
JOHNSON, GILLANI p. 27

art is Apollonian or Dionysian (here "chthonian"), and chiefly follows the Romantic/Decadent tradition of Western art in order to show that our origins, our darkness, our violence and slavery to sex are still with us despite Apollonian science and Christianity.

Nature is our Mother, a cruel, viscous mother. Sex, being our direct link to Nature, is imbued with aggression whether we acknowledge it or not. Artists, from Euripides to Coleridge to Emily Dickinson, have married sex and violence in discreet and obvious ways. Apollonian art--from the severe, beautiful, ancient Nefertiti bust to sentimental Wordsworth--has tried to keep in place the veil of beauty by which we are allowed to endure existence. Chthonian art

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seeks to rend that veil.

So does Camille Paglia. Beginning with expositions on the Venus of Willendorf and the Nefertiti bust as examples of the Chthonian and Apollonian, Ms. Paglia journeys down into the circles of art. The sexual personae of both artists and their work unlock the atomic energy that holds together the psyches of men and women. We have the "Beautiful Boy" of the Greeks and fin-de-siècle Decadents (the Kouros statues, *Dorian Gray*); the vampires of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and *Les Fleurs du Mal*; the incestuous siblings of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Shelley's "Epipsychidion." Other sexual conceptualizations like narcissism, rape, homosexuality, and sadomasochism appear everywhere in the Western canon. The exclusion of the Marquis de Sade from the canon, in Ms. Paglia's opinion, is hypocritical; it is just another instance of the Academy's puritanical or liberal squeamishness. (For those who would read de Sade on their own, she offers this advice: Don't read him before lunch.)

Even the authors of Western literature must attempt psychosexual recombination of their own selves to achieve beauty of the first magnitude in their works. Men must feminize

themselves; women must masculinize themselves.

Clearly, in a world where Nature is a cruel Mother, and sex is a subset of Nature, the roles of the sexes and relations between them create a formidable force field, profoundly real, disturbing, and insurmountable.

Woman is "Nature's proxy" in the minds of men. Even in her own mind, Woman is irrevocably chained to Nature's cycles; her body, round, fatty, liquidy, fastens her to childbirth even as it keeps hidden its processes in a *τεμενός*, sacred place, where the eye cannot penetrate. Man, his mind and body shaped like an arrow, a phallus, protests against the mystery of Nature, the miasma of his origins, the inevitable return to those origins in death. Man's fear of Nature, which has driven him to create civilization, science, and aestheticism, drives him away from women and their archetype as well.

Sex is power: men physically overpower women with it, but women psychically overpower men. The structure of drama (tension, climax, denouement) imitates man's sexuality, as does history: "Ironically, sexual success always ends in sagging fortunes anyhow...Men enter in triumph but withdraw in decrepitude. The sex act

cruelly mimics history's decline and fall" (p.20).

In Ms. Paglia's view, the state of affairs between men and women is essentially incapable of change. The myths that cast earth as female, sky as male, female as identification, male as objectification, are unshakable, much to modern feminism's discredit. Moreover, the great achievements of men as compared to women cannot be blamed on society but on woman's innate lack of desire to fight Nature. She is too much of a realist, too comfortable in her nature; she has nothing to prove (after all, she can bear children). We have no female Leonardo, Ms. Paglia states, because we have no female Jack the Ripper. Great art and great crime spring from the same source--rage against Nature.

Many women today, myself included, do not want to accept such limita-

Correction:

Chauvinism: French, *chauvinisme* from Nicholas Chauvin, a soldier of Napoleon I, who, in 1815, acquired much notoriety by his bellicose attachment to the lost imperial cause (Webster's).

Please excuse this mistake in the last issue.

tions. But to be a woman does not mean that one always identifies with female personae, just as men do not stick to male personae. All great women have been Apollonized women, objectifying their Chthonian natures. Emily Bronte does it in *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Dickinson in her poetry. The stylized bust of ruling Nefertiti pares femininity down to severe Apollonian lines, and even Jane Austen's genteel *Emma* has its undercurrents of sexual ambivalence.

Hence Ms. Paglia boldly reasserts ancient female archetypes while acknowledging that women do switch masks. She does what our society is afraid to do: allow women to reject Nature. Take, for example, society's sentimentalized view that normal women ought to desire motherhood. Ms. Paglia points out:

Every pregnant woman has body and self taken over by a chthonian force beyond her control. In the welcome pregnancy, this is a happy sacrifice. But in the unwanted one, initiated by rape or misadventure, it is a horror. Such unfortunate women look directly into nature's heart of darkness (p.11).

Thus do abortion and contraception stand among the achievements of sci-

ence, art, and civilization as that which frees us from the anarchism and amorphism of Nature.

Such a book as *Sexual Personae*, with its often stunning prose style, graphic treatment of sex and violence, and shocking stances toward cultural taboos, generates all kinds of excitement and dismay. It cannot be politically pigeonholed, a revelation for those of us who thought the modern American marketplace of ideas was dominated by Allan Blooms on the one hand and post-modern-feminist-marxist-structuralists on the other. This is a great book about the terrible dichotomy of mind and body, man and woman, and the art it gives birth to. In a society which seems to be moving, quite rapidly, toward an all-Apollonized state (from test-tube babies to silicon man), this book seems almost an elegy. But for those of us who still live in the body, who idolize art, and who want to understand it and our own natures better, this book is important. Ruthless and painful, it reveals the truths and falsehoods embedded in our heart of contradictions.

-- ANGE MLINKO '91

The Appeal of Tragedy

Why is it that men enjoy feeling sad at the sight of tragedy and suffering on the stage, although they would be most unhappy if they had to endure the same fate themselves?

-- St Augustine
(*Confessions*, III, 2)

Consider the following scenario. You are home after an exacting week of work, having finally earned a brief respite from the burden of being a productive member of society. You have a quite understandable need for recreation, and you wish to be entertained. Perhaps you are with your spouse, lover, or friend, and you are trying to decide how most agreeably to spend the few hard-won hours of freedom allotted to you. This person you are with offers a suggestion:

"Let's go watch the spectacle of an intelligent, conscientious, successful man who slowly and inexorably, through no fault of his own, brings a horrendous and irrevocable fate on himself, on the discov-

ery of which he gouges out his own eyes in horror and grief, his wife hangs herself, and he becomes a shunned exile from his land." This sounds like a rewarding way to spend your evening, and so off you go to the theater.

There is, I submit, something strange about this.

What is the nature of our attraction to such a spectacle? St. Augustine seems to consider it a dangerous perversion of the natural, virtuous feeling of compassion. A virtuous man, when confronted with suffering, will feel pity for the poor wretch. Augustine observes that the sensation of pity is one which we find pleasurable, because "friendly feelings well up in us like the waters of spring." He makes emphatically clear, however, that the only truly virtuous pity is one that wishes its object's suffering would end and takes steps to effect this. In other words, true pity wishes it had no object. Perhaps for Augustine the "friendly feelings" that we get out of this type of pity are the pleasurable sensations of virtue-in-action.

This is a morally slippery kind of pleasure, however. If you start to value it, you can easily find yourself in the reprehensible position of someone who wants others to suffer

so that he can pity them. This is a feeling which, rather than responding to an object that it wishes did not exist, actively seeks an object, the more pitiable the better. Can this type of pity possibly arise from the same source as the first, "virtuous" kind? At first glance it does not seem so. Can it possibly be out of compassion that you wish to see someone else suffer? Perhaps it is the pleasure that Lucretius describes thus:

It's sweet, when winds blow wild on open seas, to watch from land your neighbor's vast travail, not that men's miseries bring us dear delight but that to see what ills we're spared is sweet;

This would be a good explanation were there not so many things which seem to point to the conclusion that men's miseries do bring us delights. Even Augustine, recalling his own theater-going days, says,

However, in those unhappy days I enjoyed the pangs of sorrow. I always looked for things to wring my heart and the more tears an actor caused me to shed by his performance on the stage, even though he was portraying the imaginary distress of others, the more delightful and attractive I found it (Confessions, III 2).

The appeal of tragedy

lies not in seeing your own good state in the favorable light of comparison with another's misfortune; it somehow lies in taking upon yourself vicariously the other's misfortune. It lies in being made to cry, in the experience of being possessed by a powerful emotion. Perhaps it enables us to experience some of the most powerful human emotions without suffering the circumstances that give rise to them in real life. Augustine maintains that this is not without danger, however:

Was it any wonder that I, the unhappy sheep who strayed from your flock, impatient of your shepherding, became infected with a loathsome mange? Hence my love of things which made me sad. I did not seek the kind of sorrow which would wound me deeply, for I had no wish to endure the sufferings which I saw on the stage; but I enjoyed the fables and fictions, which could only graze the skin. But where the fingers scratch, the skin becomes inflamed. It swells and festers with hideous pus.

Augustine believes that the feelings aroused in spectator activities do not confine themselves to those activities -- they insidiously spread into your life and affect your actions while leading your soul to

new depths of depravity. How can we reconcile his vividly repellent metaphor to Aristotle's apparent belief that tragedy does precisely the opposite?

The word *catharsis* (καθάρσις) has become possibly the most-widely-dropped and never-satisfactorily-explained literary term that high school teachers ever wrote on the board for students to take notes on and later identify in a multiple choice quiz. As a Greek word, it has no such pretensions. It simply means cleansing or purification, usually from guilt or defilement. As for Aristotle's widely touted "Theory of Catharsis," I can find only one place where the word is used in the whole of the *Poetics*, where Aristotle summarizes his definition of poetic tragedy and says that it contains "incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions" (1449b 27). The word is used in passing. Nowhere does he expound on what it means, what it entails, or what it feels like. He analyzes in detail the literary devices which must be skillfully employed to make it happen, but it seems that Aristotle assumes you know what he is talking about when he mentions catharsis itself. Perhaps the Greeks did, and it is in character for Aristotle to recognize that there are

certain intuitively understood things that cannot be explained meaningfully to someone who hasn't experienced them. I bring this up merely in order to state that what follows is my own attempt at understanding tragic catharsis, and not something that I can claim to be quoting from Aristotle, though it may be in line with what he tells us.

At any rate, Aristotle's use of the word implies that he somehow considered the tragic experience to be purging rather than contaminating. Since this effect is presented as the end toward which tragic writing is aimed, to understand the appeal of tragedy we must make an attempt to understand the nature of this cleansing. There may be a way of approaching this which simultaneously placates Augustine.

Remember that, for Augustine, pity is something you feel for the suffering of others -- specific others suffering specific pains. Pity is aroused in you for a certain person that you see, in real life or onstage, undergoing trauma. Thus, if you enjoy this pity, you are dependent on suffering, real or invented, to occasion your enjoyment. It is dangerous

Mr. Newman's essay was submitted in response to Mr. Johnson's note in the last issue.

because, if you enjoy it in a play, how long will it be before you enjoy it in real life and look for (or even manufacture) real suffering? An understandable fear perhaps, but one that is obviously not usually taken too seriously, except by the occasional criminal who tries to get off the hook by saying he was warped by cartoons during his childhood. Most people seem to believe (or to want to) that the line between fantasy and reality is firmly drawn in any mature mind, and that being moved by a well-played death scene does not make you want to kill your neighbors for extra enjoyment.

At this point I would like to introduce a statement of Aristotle's.

Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars (Poetics 1451b 5).

Perhaps Augustine is worried about people becoming complacent about historical suffering while Aristotle is talking about recognizing and dealing with the universal suffering. The fact is that suffering is not simply an occasional phenomenon that virtuous men have to be prepared to deal with every once in a while. It is an

unavoidable part of human existence. I do not say this in any fatalistic or pessimistic way, nor do I think that the fact of suffering means we should focus on it as the central part of life. We must, however, recognize that though we are capable of happiness, it is simply not within our power to extend it indefinitely. Even if we are flawless in our actions, there will always be circumstances not under our control which are capable of laying our lives waste. To admit anything less would be fooling ourselves.

How do we deal with this? I don't think that one can face life every day with these thoughts foremost in one's mind. We tend to acknowledge their truth, file them away somewhere, and go on trying to be happy. We cannot leave them filed away, however. They are too strong, too inherent in everything we see around us. They demand recognition. Before they will leave us alone, they must somehow be purged. Thus the need for tragedy is not something

It is exposure to ideas, instances of philosophical insight, that occasion the greatest and most long-lasting excitement. But to stop at the point of reception, to simply receive the ideas of others, however valid or brilliant, quite misses the basic point, which is that exposure to the ideas of others properly ought to lead to the creation of one's own.

with which we, in our innocence, are infected. Nor is it an unwholesome activity to which our otherwise healthy souls become addicted. It is something which we must embrace precisely because we are constantly seeking to deny it.

Aristotle spends a lot of time on the types of characters and plots that make good tragedy. The poet must make his protagonist a man that we can identify with, an essentially good man, thought not "preeminently virtuous and just," who makes a mistake that we could imagine ourselves making. Obviously, watching a criminal get his just desserts is not tragic. For Aristotle, neither is watching a good man be brought down by a Shakespearean "tragic flaw" -- such a man still chooses and deserves his fate. Rather, the essence of tragedy is when you are destroyed by an error of judgment, by circumstances you could not have been expected to foresee. The horror of real tragedy is that it can happen to anyone. It

Steve Allen, *Dumbth*

is not reserved to mythological heroes and royal families. No matter who you are, you strive for happiness in your own way, and no matter how virtuous you are, you are not omniscient. When you see Oedipus gouge his eyes out in despair, when you see his world annihilated by freak twists of circumstance and his virtue serving to accelerate his destruction, look a little higher. Floating just over his head there is an invisible neon sign which reads, "This means YOU."

Perhaps the purging nature of tragedy lies in the act of surrender to it, in the total realization that it *is* us. When we experience that helplessness, that despair, as acutely and completely as is possible, perhaps there is nothing more it can do to us. Having forced us to experience the horror of our essential vulnerability, it has done its worst. Having done its worst, it must then dissipate. It will return, to be sure, but for now it has been accepted, and through that experience, neutralized. Despair, like happiness, is not infinitely sustainable. The tragic poet must utilize all his skill to make the tragedy the most complete, compelling, horrifying example of human circumstance imaginable. Once we have experienced the worst, there are no more tears to shed and there is nowhere to look but up. We are inured

temporarily to the spectres of what might happen to us because we have already surrendered to their apotheosis and emerged whole. This journey through the heart of the universal suffering actually gives us strength to fight against whatever historical suffering we may encounter.

There must be another way to approach this effect. While the type of catharsis I have described may be necessary, I'm not sure that it is appealing. It sounds more like regular immunization shots than like something you do for entertainment. Nietzsche in his *Birth of Tragedy* seems to focus more on the level we are trying to understand -- the realization within man from which tragedy springs and the kind of mentality that enjoys it. His metaphysics are a tad on the malevolent side compared to Aristotle's. To Aristotle, "All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality" (*Poetics* 1450a 16). Now we are given Silenus to deal with, and the assertion that it would be better for us not to live at all. Silenus and Nietzsche combine to tell us that it is the very fact that we are individuals capable of action and of fooling ourselves that action is efficacious which causes

misery. The Apollonians, with their dream images of gods whom they wish to become as far as possible, are accused of not facing up to reality.

And what is reality? Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer's image of the "stormy sea that, unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves, howling..." The problem is not that the world has certain destructive elements in it, the problem is that the world *is* a maelstrom of destruction. Or rather, it is inevitably such in relation to anything that tries to be independent of it. If we were not alive, if we were not individuated, if we were simply merged with the world, then we would simply take eternal part in its flux and there would be no conflict. The reason we are better off dead or unborn is that life is tied to the *principium individuationis* and so anything living is, by the very fact of its life, set against the world. Thus life does not merely entail conflict, life *is* conflict.

If this is so, one might reasonably conclude that the most logical action of someone possessing the "wisdom of Silenus" would be suicide. In both the *Attempt at Self-Criticism* and the piece itself, Nietzsche toys with the idea that clinging to the *principium individuationis* and the Apollonian images it creates for itself is an act of

cowardice, a decline of strength; that Socrates, in attempting to find (or impose) order in the world was shielding himself against truth. If the real act of courage is in recognizing the world as Nietzsche says it is and throwing away Apollonian pretension, is not death the ultimate merging with the world, the ultimate rejection of the *principium*?

Yet Nietzsche does not advocate suicide. He wants to throw away Apollonian pretension, yes -- but not the life that it serves. Why is this? At first it leads me to suspect that he is not altogether convinced of his own theory, like a Socrates who can't drink the hemlock. Are we playing word games while still being unable to give up the life that we say is worthless? Or is life really worthless? What is it that someone like Nietzsche values? Everywhere you glance, the answer comes back: strength, laughing courage, defiant vitality. Suicide would merely be a surrender of a different kind. Given the world as it has been described, there is a more courageous response to it. The real challenge is to recognize the hostility of reality and choose to live in spite of it.

Yes, I will cling to my individuality, not in fear of reality but in defiance of it. I will face the fact that my Apollonian images are

mere façades, and continue to build them all the same. And as the perfect expression of my mode of existence, I have the tragedy. For Nietzsche the tragedy is at once a payment of homage to the maelstrom and a gauntlet flung in its face. It is a recognition of the fact that man is essentially helpless in the face of the powers that surround him, yet this recognition is expressed in the terms of one who has no intention of surrendering to it. Mere acceptance would make tragedy superfluous. One who surrenders to futility does not write plays about it -- or do anything else constructive, for that matter. Tragedy is the paradox of constructively depicting the ultimate futility of construction.

To fully worship Dionysus you must be an individual to start with. You must willingly lay aside that individuality for a time, but you do so knowing that at some point you will pick it up again. When you do so you may find your son's head in your hands. This is part of the horror of the maelstrom and the courage of giving into it, letting it do its worst, then once again setting yourself as its adversary. We are talking of a tragedy, however, not Bacchic frenzy. Tragedy is a giving-in of a different nature, a synthesis of the maelstrom and the god. Just as the drama onstage

is an Apollonian image of the negation of all images, you as a spectator are an individual allowing your individuality to be annihilated without ever really losing it. After the last chorus you will be yourself again, and you will return safely to the life you had before. The soul, while it can allow itself to take on the maelstrom and be lost in it, is irrevocably tied to the *principium* and thus will find its way back.

Much like Odysseus who, trusting the bonds that keep him from losing himself forever in the sea, defiantly abandons himself to the power of the sirens, the tragic spectator lets universal terror into his soul while knowing that ultimately it cannot tear him away from his identity. Perhaps here is the true appeal of tragedy: the thrill of having it both ways; the passion of experiencing the most intense feelings known to man without being conquered by them; the rebellion of acknowledging the unassailability of Moira while hurling a spear at her; the exhilaration of taking upon yourself the suffering of all humanity and then seeing it melt around the flame of your individuality.

-- CHRIS NEWMAN '91

For You and I, Trying to Find Rent Money

Oh Moira,
when we struggle with ourselves,
when our typewriters live on our beds
(mine is even electric)
when we sell our visions, our dreams of "maybe if,"
and go to love in a closet,
when we spend long days in a kitchen,
chopping onions -- reading old copies
of *American Poetry Review* and *Rolling Stone*
(borrowed from friends who have subscriptions),
when we learn what it means
to work too long too hard
waiting tables in some
side-street, open 24 hours, reeking of coffee stains, restaurant --
we will know the phone bill is past due
and that there are better poets than we
whose sacred words we cannot afford --

I will not turn back
to tunnel through these
books, these minds of the great philosophers,
which are so far less real
than chopping onions in the kitchen,
soaking in a bath full of tea after work,
playing trashy, electro-Eurofag-dance music too loud on the stereo
Sunday afternoons,
forgetting to feed the cat his breakfast,
walking to the laundromat with our arms full,
clothes stuffed into two paper grocery bags,
driving to Baltimore in the old, green jalopy
to the Friday open reading at the Harvest Moon cafe
and stealing salt packets
from the Burger King in town
for our generic popcorn
cooked in an old, copper-bottomed pot
that had two owners before us.

We will not turn back
from days such as these;
it is from days such as these
that we learn to move forward.

-- FRANCIE ROBERTS '93

Drug Policy in the United States: Prohibition and Enforcement

Twenty-four years ago the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice met in Washington, D.C. During the conference the fact came forth that one half of all arrests made annually in the U.S. was for public drunkenness. The Commission recommended that public drunkenness not be considered a crime, that it is a medical and social problem, and that, unless it is accompanied by the attempt to operate a motor vehicle, the threat of assault, or the destruction of property, the problem of public drunkenness is not a police problem. Since the time when these recommendations were made, police have widely adopted that approach. Not one police officer in the U.S. was laid off because he

had nothing to do, although one half of all arrests had been eliminated.

"Traditionally, all levels of government burden the police with medical, social, and political problems. The attitude is 'we have a problem. Let's pass a law, make something illegal, and let the cops handle it.' If you examine the selection process for police candidates, and if you examine the training of police officers, you will see that there is nothing which qualifies them to deal with medical, social, or political problems." Ralph Salerno, former Supervisor of Detectives for the New York City Police and former Chief Investigator for the Queens County New York D.A.'s office, spoke these words at the 20th annual conference of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. Mr. Salerno has 42 years' experience combatting organized crime.

"Consider the problem of the homeless, which up until recently was expected to be dealt with by police officers. Not recognized were the political problem of affordable housing, the medical problem of mental disabilities, and the social problem of substance abuse." Mr. Salerno believes that current drug laws constitute a similar burden for police. Concerning the enforcement of drug laws, he said, "It is damaging

and deleterious to the law enforcement community of the United States and to the people they serve."

Mr. Salerno explained that 40 years ago, New York City had Sunday Blue Laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol by delicatessen owners before one o'clock, but the law was on the books. Nobody enforced it, unless you wanted to be corrupt. Unless you wanted to make a five or ten dollar bill. Then, if the owner didn't pay regularly, you could zap him... I tell you, the problems of police corruption are far more severe, and far more dangerous to America, than anything that has resulted from the smoking of marijuana cigarettes."

In the broad context, I say that although drug use may be a medical, social, or political problem, and may indicate a more basic social condition of which it is only a symptom, drug use by adults should not be a crime. Murder, overdoses, the spread of AIDS by needle, gang warfare, overcrowded prisons, and corruption result from drug prohibition, not from drug use.

The popular opinion that violence, disease, and corruption result from drug use compels citizens to demand that drug use be eliminated. In fact, the very activity which law enforcement seeks mainly to eliminate, i.e. violence, the spread of disease, and

corruption, owes its existence to the environment created by drug prohibition.

We would have avoided many front-page, drug related crimes, if we had in the past considered the use of substances to alter consciousness a social phenomenon which demands the attention not of police, but of qualified thinkers and healers. Instead, we have created an enormous, violent, complicated problem through prohibition. We must consider whether law enforcement can rid us of the problem.

If law enforcement is to succeed, it must either eliminate the supply of drugs, or the demand for drugs. Let us first consider the supply, and how effectively our drug war has attacked it.

The increasing disregard for civil rights and militarization employed in intercepting drugs coming into the country has had some success. Smuggling drugs into the U.S. is more difficult than ever before. This increased difficulty has had many unexpected effects.

Smugglers in general no longer bother trying to bring marijuana into the country. They have abandoned the bulky, smelly, relatively inexpensive marijuana and focus their activity on the compact, processed, easily hidden, high profit margin coca and opium compounds.

As a result, two main trends have emerged. First, consumers in the U.S., particularly in cities, find that crack and heroin are obtained much more easily and less expensively than marijuana. Some analysts fear that like crack's popularity in the 80's, heroin may enjoy a massive resurgence in the 90's as an inexpensive, available drug. Second, the persistence of U.S. pot smokers to have their drug of choice has caused an enormous increase in home cultivation, much of it indoors. U.S. growers, employing advanced technology and breeding techniques, now produce marijuana widely considered superior to any that could be imported.

Consider the nature of the market created by prohibition, a market which has weathered every attempt to eliminate it. Coca and opium grow well in many countries. For most, the plants constitute the only source of the peasants' income. These peasants share no "moral obligation" with the U.S. citizen; the peasant's obligation is to himself, his family, and his community. The people in producing countries have lived with coca or opium for thousands of years; they probably do not place the source of our drug problems in the plants they grow. Thus, all attempts to destroy crops lead to culti-

vation in another area.

The market is so lucrative for producers, smugglers, and dealers, that as long as the demand exists, someone will try to supply it. The more tightly the supply is squeezed, the more valuable the drugs become on U.S. streets. All kinds of criminals become involved, with so much money to gain. These are the crimes which make the headlines.

Most overdoses result from the nature of the prohibition drug market. Because the value of small amounts like grams and half-grams is so high, most of the cocaine and heroin on the streets is cut a great deal. Not only does the junkie not know the purity of the doses he uses, but that purity can change tremendously from dose to dose. Any dose whose purity exceeds the range for which the junkie has developed a tolerance is an overdose. If the purity exceeds that range by too much, the overdose kills.

Squeezing the supply produces many negative effects. The cost of eliminating the supply, if it is possible, must far, far exceed the great cost we pay now. It seems that policy would have a greater chance of success if it turned inward, concentrating on demand.

In the first article of this series I reviewed the erosion of individual rights

resulting from increased efforts to eliminate the demand for drugs in the U.S. To concentrate effectively on the drug user and eliminate the demand, such infringements must become greater. The cost in rights is clear. On a more material level, the cost of the drug war within the country is already quite burdensome.

In 1990 the total prison population in the U.S. passed the one million mark. This figure is twice the prison population of 10 years ago. It is three times that of 15 years ago. In federal prisons, 40% of inmates are there for violating drug laws. Drug law violators constitute 40%; this percentage does not include perpetrators of drug-related crimes. Jail cells currently cost from \$15,000 to \$40,000 apiece per year to maintain. The construction and maintenance of jails is the fastest-growing item in many state budgets.

To eliminate demand, across-the-board drug testing must become the rule in the United States. I can envision no other way, unless we develop a safer, cheaper, universally acceptable way for citizens to get high, and give it the federal government's blessing. Every drug ever introduced into our society has remained with us, to some degree. The high-powered hallucinogens of

the 60's (LSD, STP, Ketamine, etc.) maintain a relatively small, low profile cult of citizens for whom these are the drugs of choice. PCP, the high-powered hallucinogen of the late 70's, still enjoys enormous popularity. Each substance has its own story, but all have evaded extinction.

The technology exists to test everyone who wants a job, a college education, welfare, unemployment benefits, a passport, you name it. If you want to register to vote, you have to pass a drug test. If you fail a drug test, you go to jail. I am certain that this approach will eliminate the demand for drugs. This approach will solve the problem.

Of course, our prison population will grow explosively, at first, until citizens understand that we mean business. Can we afford this? We already spend in excess of \$20 billion annually on the drug war. What will become of our mission when our economy shrinks, as is its nature to do periodically, and recession hits our pockets? Then we will certainly ask, "who benefits from this?"

I think that the great majority of Americans receive no benefit from drug prohibition, for the simple reason that the great majority of Americans do not need drug laws to keep them from becoming ad-

dicts. I also think, however, that many Americans believe that they benefit from drug prohibition.

Many Americans believe that an addict occupies every street corner, and a dealer every block. The media present such an illusion. Titillating cop shows depict a growing network of drug-crazed sociopaths arming themselves for massive warfare against the heart of the nation, preparing to rape daughters, enslave sons, and steal power lawnmowers. Many Americans also believe that drug laws prevent them from becoming addicts. If the substances are legally available, these citizens fear that somehow they will eventually try the drugs. Then, they think that they will kill someone or injure themselves while under the influence, or that they will become hopelessly addicted. Many Americans are so fearful and misinformed, that not only do they mistrust their own abilities to cope with these substances, but they think that no person could possibly use them without harm.

Also, many Americans believe that a person who smokes pot is not as moral as someone who does not. How this is, I am uncertain, especially since there are 400,000 drugs available in the U.S., of which about 600 are illegal. Drugs are everywhere. Without any

moral evaluation, here are some figures for deaths directly caused by drugs (not drug-related), for the year 1988: A federal study estimates that from cigarettes, 350,000 died. Alcohol killed 150,000. Overdoses and complications caused by over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin claimed 250,000. Prescrip-

tion drugs caused an estimated 750,000 deaths. All illegal drugs combined killed 5200 people. Marijuana killed no one.

Who really benefits from drug policy? Politicians, to begin with, get a lot of mileage out of playing on people's fears. I need say no more about politicians and drug policy. Private

drug testing firms benefit greatly from employers' beliefs that they profit from costly employee drug testing programs. Even if productivity and safety increases do not justify the cost of such programs, employers benefit from the increased control over employees' private lives. Every sort of moral entre-

Pioneers

Beneath the swaying white wagon top
 He walks, she rides through the tall grass
 That bends noiselessly beneath the wheels.
 He, beside the team, surveys a world
 Shut in by the brim of a hat, locked
 Into its place, each hill new and familiar
 As if waiting ten thousand years in the same place.
 To surprise him with its rehearsed spontaneity.
 She, on the seat, sees less, her bonnet closed
 On three sides like blinders she has chosen
 To place on herself, locking out sky, wagon,
 And her husband, closing off all that tugs
 From behind her -- a fireplace and a garden,
 A stream and a stable and a Sunday morning drive --
 Watching the team that draws her as by a rope,
 Hand over hand, to an unfamiliar home.
 And falling a little behind is the boy who will sire men,
 The tired little child that will grow and marry and have children
 That will be free for a while because of the sacrifice
 He doesn't even know he makes.
 He, drooping his head, sees only the land that falls behind,
 The land that some less ambitious man will own,
 For his own home lies far ahead.
 They move on together as if it were only a habit,
 A pose held for an artist that is not there to paint it;
 They sweep relentlessly towards the mountains
 And the father, walking stick in one hand,
 Stretches out the other as the land parts before them.

-- JEFF COVEY '93

preneur uses drug policy as an angle for increasing the authoritarian aspect of society. Increased enforcement of drug laws opens the door for all kinds of state control.

When you teach school children not to tolerate drug use by others, when you rationalize the mistreatment of people who don't harm anyone else but who

are different because they smoke pot, it is very difficult not to rationalize other forms of intolerance of people who are different.

We have a continuum of policy available to us. We are not imprisoned in a black or white choice of total prohibition or complete legalization. I find that, given the costs of current policy and its benefits,

some fair amount of drug decriminalization is the best choice. I consider this choice necessary to maintain some notion of individual freedom and dignity in this country, and to avoid a country where social control and conformity are the greatest good.

-- LEE MUELLER '91

Convention and Chaos in "Diva"

Beneix's "Diva" is a film about self-consciousness, intimacy and the different forms in which good and evil manifest themselves. "Diva" is a multi-layered film which takes conventional views of what is considered correct, proper and symmetrical in human life and turns them upside down, wrenches them inside-out and reveals them to be merely chimerae. Good comes in many different, sometimes bizarre and unrecognizable forms. What at first appears chaotic may be good and what appears orderly can be the most insidious, double-sided evil.

The plot in the film is convoluted, consisting of multiple storylines taken from different aspects of the life of a French delivery

boy named Jules. One aspect is the romance between Jules and the American Diva Cynthia Hawkins, another is the mystery of an international prostitution and drug ring, and a third is the friendship between Jules, Alba -- a young Vietnamese woman -- and Gorodish, Alba's boyfriend. The romance addresses the concept of self-consciousness; the mystery addresses the nature of "The System" and how it perpetrates the evil it purports to combat; the friendship depicts a richer, more detailed form of human intimacy than is depicted in most American films. Throughout the film is a mix-up of two tapes -- one an illegal recording of a concert, and the other a tape containing incriminating evidence about the leader of the drug and prostitution ring.

The film commences in an opera-house at the recital of a world-renowned songstress (Diva), Cynthia Hawkins. Miss Hawkins

has never cut a record. She will not waver from the conviction that the performance depends directly upon interaction with the audience. Jules, who is in love with Miss Hawkins, makes a high-quality recording of the recital. Jules steals Miss Hawkins' gown, which he uses as a device to meet her in her home.

Everything about the romance of Jules and the Diva is paradoxical and unconventional. Miss Hawkins is black; Jules is white. She is a woman with status, fame and money; he is an unknown delivery boy who rides his moped around Europe to attend her concerts. Nonetheless, Jules pursues Miss Hawkins relentlessly. She is weakened and charmed by his total devotion to her. Because she is a Diva, and acts out of caprice, spontaneously and without preconceived notions, Miss Hawkins is a free agent and accedes to spend an evening with Jules. She responds as herself to Jules,

not as her social class to his. Both characters listen to their hearts, not to convention, which often serves to divide people along unnatural lines.

Jules is the first, the only person to hear Miss Hawkins practice in her home. She grants him a view of herself which no other person has ever had. Because of this Jules is instrumental to Miss Hawkins' reaching self-consciousness. At the end of the film, Miss Hawkins stands alone on the stage facing the empty opera-house. Jules plays the recording of her recital; she is motionless. Finally, she says, "I've never heard myself sing before," and reaches for his hand. Miss Hawkins has become the audience of her own voice. She has become the gazing of one self-consciousness into another.

The Drug and Prostitution Ring enters Jules' life when a barefoot woman in a trenchcoat places the tape -- unbeknownst to Jules -- in the saddle-bag of his moped. Two thugs and two ineffectual cops are introduced. It becomes clear later in the film that the head of the Ring is Chief Inspector of Police Saporta: both the thugs and the cops operate under the same boss. Both want the tape, and they employ similar methods to get it from Jules -- they chase and intimidate him.

The mindless acts of the cops and the thugs are equally instrumental in destroying the fabric of Jules' life.

Jules meets Alba while she is heisting a record in a music-store. Impressed by her wit and wanting to know her trick, Jules follows her. He questions her about her life and she retorts tartly, "Don't want to know much, do you?" The record turns out to be a gift for a boyfriend who is in his "cool" stage.

Jules takes refuge from his pursuers with Alba and her boyfriend Gorodish. Gorodish sits cross-legged in the middle of the floor meditating in front of a pile of puzzle-pieces, while Alba rollerskates around the room. The main article of furniture in the room is a bathtub. Gorodish explains the Zen of buttering bread to Jules while wearing a diving mask and snorkel. Alba sits on the refrigerator. "There is no bread, no butter -- only a motion," Gorodish tells Jules. Caviar is provided by Alba -- another gift.

In this home-scene and others like it, Beneix gives the viewer a look into the interior lives of his characters, and shows them being themselves -- or being weird, as the case may be. They are not trying to live up to anyone else's standards, or put forward a veneer of hospitality. "This is our home.

You may stay if you wish, but don't expect us to change our habits for your benefit." This kind of account of the interior lives of characters and show of friendly affection is almost non-existent in American films.

The household presented is highly irregular, apparently unstable. It isn't clear whether Gorodish is a friend or part of one or all of the evil conspiracies. Yet in the end, it is Gorodish who saves Jules from his pursuers, solves the mystery of the Prostitution Ring, and foils the record-pirates.

At the start of the film, the puzzle on Gorodish's floor is a pile of pieces. The puzzle becomes more and more complete as the film progresses. Finally, right before the culmination, before he acts, Gorodish places the last piece -- a seagull -- in place. Gorodish saves Jules and the day not by confronting his foes, but by arranging it so that they destroy each other. Evil concatenates; it is predictable. It has a self-destruct mechanism which blinds its possessor.

Not so the Good.

-- TEQUILA BROOKS '91

On Manners, Part II:

Eating and Ritual Behavior in Homer's *Odyssey*

The *Odyssey* unfolds as a series of meals which are either beautiful celebrations of generosity, or terrible meals which fail utterly -- with dire consequences for the participants. (The *Iliad*, on the other hand, features only two meals, both with the same host.) The *Odyssey* gives a sign of the importance of meals at the very beginning of the poem. After telling us that Poseidon alone among the gods did not pity the wandering Odysseus, we hear that he is reclining at the feasts of the Aitheopians. These feasts are a singular occasion in Greek myths: no other god shares a meal with mortals.

Next Homer tells us that all of the other gods are gathered at this time on Olympus, where Athena is pleading for Odysseus' safe return, she wins a promise of this from Zeus and is

unopposed only because Poseidon is feasting with the distant Aithiopians. This small sign indicates to what degree Odysseus' fate is tied to the sharing of food.

One of the many dangers of the *Odyssey* is, of course, that Odysseus and his men will become the ingredients of someone else's meal. This is clearest in the episode in the Cyclops' cave, in which several of Odysseus' companions are lost to Polyphemus' appetite.

Homer focuses the whole episode on manners, eating, and ritual behavior. When they enter the cave of Polyphemus, Odysseus and his companions see that it is full of sheep's milk, cheeses and lamb kids. His companions urge him to take some of the cheeses and leave immediately, but Odysseus insists that they remain "to see if he would give me presents." These "presents" are, in Greek, *τεννα*, the tokens of guest-friendship-hospitality. Odysseus, for some reason, wants to see if the Cyclops has manners.

Odysseus and his companions sit down to wait. They build a fire and select some cheeses to eat, but first Homer says they sacrifice. They do not slaughter a sheep, but evidence from a later episode in the poem suggests that they must have incinerated some of the cheese in their fire. This offering of some

of their own food constitutes the sacrifice.

This ritual beginning of the meal is clearly opposed to the Cyclops' own customs. When Polyphemus prepares his own meal, he sets nothing aside for the gods, nor does he slaughter his victims according to any ritual, but simply slaps them against the ground so that their brains break open. He then butchers them carefully, "dividing them limb by limb." Homer even tells us what he drinks with his meal, not wine but milk.

This is one of the terrible meals in the *Odyssey*, probably the most terrible. It seems to me that three elements of it are not accidental but essential to its terrible nature:

- 1) the absence of wine;
- 2) the absence of sacrifice;
- 3) the unhesitating cannibalism.

The absence of wine from the Cyclops' meal is not striking until Homer says that Polyphemus was "drinking down milk unmixed with water." The adjective is *ακρθος*; it is elsewhere used almost exclusively with wine (*οινοσ*) to such an extent that the noun *οινοσ* is sometimes ellipsed.

Now this lexical relation will bring wine to mind here; moreover, for us it is hard

to imagine why sheep's milk would be too strong to drink pure. Wine, more than milk, requires dilution for the sake of moderation.

This sets up an antithesis between the milk which is named and the wine which is suggested. I think that the antithesis stands for the opposition between a) that which flows freely from the earth, on the one hand; and b) that which requires the intervention and effort of human beings for its production. In Hesiod's Golden Age, as in Eden before the fall, the earth gave forth its bounty without toil; but now, in our fallen age, we must toil and struggle for our food. That struggle takes the form of Agriculture. Wine is only the product of careful and sophisticated agriculture; milk is not, it sometimes spurts without coaxing from full udders.

This is a frequent image from the Bacchae: the Maenads, at one with nature upon their mountain, need only strike the ground and milk flows; their unity is further demonstrated by their giving suck to fawns and cubs. There is no agriculture with its divisions and oppositions in this revel; only the irrepressible bounty of Nature.

The Cyclops' island also offers this bounty. Odysseus says: "The Cyclopes neither plow with their hands nor plant anything, but all grows for them with-

out seed-sowing or cultivation." They have no need for agriculture because they have no possibility for want. As in the Age of Gold, all the earth will always satisfy their needs. The Cyclops' unmixed milk is a sign of this unending bounty; the absence of wine points to Polyphemus' distance from the arduous tasks of wine-making.

I suspect that his failure to offer sacrifice is also a sign of his easy life. To understand this suspicion, I will have to tell you how I understand the function of sacrifice.

It seems to me to be first of all a sign of gratitude, this is why Odysseus sacrifices some cheese in the Cyclops' cave, he is glad to have found some food. This is also why offerings of "First Fruit" are traditional at the end of harvest, at the beginning of a meal. At the

beginning of another important, much more propitious, meal for Odysseus, the pious swineherd Eumaios burns some offerings for the gods in gratitude for their meal.

The sacrifice seems to indicate even more than gratitude for food but also true reverence for the sacrificial offering. Thus the head of the cow is often decorated with braids, with dyed cloth, with woolen crowns; its horns are often gilded. It is led peacefully to the altar, never dragged; water is sometimes placed before it so that it will nod its head in assent. At the moment the animal is felled, the audience, especially the women, cry out - Aeschylus calls this scream to *Ελληνικον νομισμα*, a Greek custom. There is some terror and shock in the death of the animal.

This seems to me to be

To Autumn

But although Summer is dead, and Golden Autumn will soon pass away, we shall not be left altogether desolate, for we have still stored up in the pages of our immortal poets Seasons that are ever green and golden, and flowery, and which can never die. And these we have but to open their green pages and look at, and all the land will again ring with music, while the trees shake their leaves in the sun, as before the "inward eye;" there comes a blinding shower of undying flowers; for Chaucer has shed a glory over our old winding highways...while Shakespeare the immortal has "Warbled his native wood-notes wild."

Thomas Miller, *English Country Life*

an appropriate reaction for people who must struggle for their food. Precisely because it does not flow from the earth like milk from a teat, these humans show reverence and gratitude for their food. It is dear to them because of its potential scarcity on the earth, and because of the toil they have invested in its cultivation and harvest. They sacrifice because the food is so dear to them. Thus the hungry Odysseus sacrifices some cheese before he eats any himself. But the Cyclops knows nothing of the terror of starvation or the toil of tilling and harvesting. His milk and cheese are the allotments he has come to expect. He has no reason for reverence or gratitude; thus he consumes the sailors without any ritual offering. Odysseus wondered if his host had manners; now we know he has none. Not only does Polyphemus eat his guests but he does not even sacrifice first.

This is because they are all part of the irrepressible bounty of nature for him. They are one more gift of the hills: why should he not eat them, or even sacrifice before doing so? I think that such times of bounty are terrifying because of the feelings of unity they inspire. When you feel connected to all things, not different from any of them, then it is easy to consume whatever you want. When

Vers Dorés

Eh quoil tout est sensible!
Pythagore

Homme, libre penseur! te crois-tu seul pensant
Dans ce monde où la vie éclate en toute chose?
Des forces que tu tiens ta liberté dispose,
Mais de tous tes conseils l'univers est absent.

Respecte dans la bête un esprit agissant:
Chaque fleur est une âme à la Nature éclosée;
Un mystère d'amour dans la métal repose;
<<Tout est sensible!>> Et tout sur ton être est puissant.

Crains, dans le mur aveugle un regard qui t'épie:
A la matière même un verbe est attaché. . .
Ne la fais pas servir à quelque usage impie!

Souvent dans l'être obscur habite un Dieu caché;
Et comme un oeil naissant couvert par ses paupières,
Un pur esprit s'accroît sous l'écorce des pierres!

Gérard de Nerval

milk flows from rocks, there are no boundaries. Holding yourself apart or away from anything would seem like a rejection of nature's bounty; and then, in such wonderful worlds, everything must be tasted. Greek myths point to the consequences of this in two places: here, in the Cyclops who is an omnivore to the point of cannibalism, and in the revels of the Maenads. Just as in the Bacchae, their revels traditionally end in OMOPHAGY- the indiscriminate

eating of raw flesh. Sacrifice, I think, works against both of these tendencies; it institutes differences rather than encouraging unity, it erects barriers, establishes distance.

I said before that the point of the sacrifice was to show gratitude and reverence for the food at hand. Now I will try to explain how in the world a ritual slaughter can demonstrate reverence and gratitude.

We saw above how the sacrificial offering is honored by its attendants. I

Gilded Verses

Ah what! everything is sentient!
Pythagoras

Man, free thinker! do you imagine only yourself
thinking
In this world where life cries out in all things?
Your freedom compels the powers you hold,
But from all your advice, the universe is withdrawn.

Respect in the beast an active spirit:
Every flower is a soul blooming in Nature;
In metal a mystery of love slumbers;
"Everything is sentient!" And everything is powerful
over your being.

Dread, from the sightless wall, a stare that penetrates
you:
To the matter itself a Word is bound . . .
Don't make it serve some impious purpose!

In the dark creature a hidden God often abides;
And like an emerging eye covered by its lids,
An innocent spirit thrives beneath the crust of rocks!

Translated by GEORGE DOLAN '92

think it is not unfair to say that they even treat it with fondness. Its death is a shock to them.

Yet clearly its death was wrought by them! They decorated it and led it to the altar for precisely this purpose -- the spilling of its blood is the end they have determined for it. How then can they recoil at the slaughter? Precisely because the offering is dear to them. They have raised it, they depend on it as a draught animal, or for its wool, or for its milk, or for the meat it will provide. But

if it is so dear to them, why do they slaughter it? As a sacrifice.

They slaughter it not for themselves but for the gods. This is the message of all sacrificial ritual: this offering is for you, not us. The ritual thus distances its participants from the very act it performs; it turns the slaughter into an act of reverence.

The slaughter of a useful animal like a lamb or bull is fraught with danger in the fallen world of scarcity. Moreover, the animal might have been raised in the

farmyard: it might be familiar. Last of all, its slaughter will inevitably be bloody and gruesome. It is hard to slaughter even a chicken without covering oneself with gore.

These thoughts fill the mind of the hungry farmer with trepidation. The slaughter seems ugly and perhaps greedy -- killing a useful animal just for his plate. Yet the aroma of roast meat beckons him.

The sacrifice is the solution; it celebrates the animal, treats it gently and most of all, proclaims: this is not for me, it is for the gods. The ritual of sacrifice puts a comfortable distance between the hungry farmer and his victim.

The slaughter of an animal by carnivorous farmers, or hunters, is only the most obvious case of this kind of trepidation. It seems to me that it applies to the consumption of all food in this fallen age of toil, even vegetables and cheeses. Odysseus' sacrifice in the cave is a sign of this: any time that food is scarce and its production depends on human effort, consuming it is a problematic act. It is problematic because it means eliminating a resource, uprooting a plant, picking a fruit, and putting it to your own most personal use. The previously growing thing (this is the word for vegetable in Greek, φυτόν, a growing thing) is now

interrupted and ingested, purely for our own sake.

There is a strange and small sign of the Greek sensitivity to this problem in Homer. In the Iliad, he speaks of the *ἵππευοί*, the horse-milkers, who eke out a miserable existence with mare's milk as their only food. Because they eat neither animals nor plants, they have no share in the problem we outlined above. The sign of Homer's sensitivity to this problem?

Mr. Schoener's lecture will be concluded in the next issue.

He calls the starving horse-milkers "δικαιοτατοὶ ἀνθρώπων," the most just of men.

Because all eating in the fallen age is affected by the problem of eliminating and ingesting a resource, it becomes tinged with danger and selfishness. The sacrifice resolves both the purely vegetarian worries of consuming a resource and the anxieties of the carnivore before his violence by instituting a difference between offering and slaughter, reverence and hunger. The farmer becomes a priest and his sad cow a glorious hecatomb.

The same structure holds even in fruit offerings: any sacrifice is a sign that I, the harvester, am not interrupting or cutting short the bounty of nature for my sake. Rather, it shows that this harvest, this slaughter, is performed by the community, for the god.

-- ABRAHAM
SCHOENER
Tutor

The Gospel According to Judas

In this, the third month of the year 3821, I, Judas of the Sikarii, also known as Joseph Iskereot, do hereby inscribe the true events of a day thirty years ago which others of my acquaintance have been altering so that what they consider a necessary fiction can be perpetuated. The conspirators in this affair include, but are not limited to, those known as

Peter, John and James the sons of Zebedee, Paul of Tarsus, and Jerusha of Bethlehem. Although James is dead, he participated, as I refused to, in what will probably become known as the greatest conspiracy in history. Unfortunately, the truth may not be revealed for another century, and certainly not during my lifetime, as the movement called "Christianity" has a certain stubbornness that does not lend itself to easy eradication.

Peter, John, and Paul, the self-styled evangelists, are promoting this movement in order to establish Jesus of Nazareth as the one true Messiah. I had this notion once, but the

subsequent actions of Jesus' followers rapidly disabused me of that idea.

The manuscripts that have been distributed to further this conspiracy contain a number of inaccuracies, even though they are supposed to be the truth. For example, the account written by Mark states that I betrayed Jesus for the sum of thirty pieces of silver. Even had I been inclined to betray him I would not have committed the deed for so small an amount of money. Nearly every item contained in Mark's account, or in any of the varying accounts I have heard, is false. Let me relate, in what I suppose should be called the gospel accord-

ing to Judas, what actually happened on that day in 3791.

The events took barely twenty-four hours. Later writers expanded these events to include a second meeting with Pontius Pilate and a completely fictitious visit to Herod Antipas, all for the sake of promoting Jesus as the Christ. I will narrate the truth about that when the time comes.

The first thing I must say is that Jesus was true to his beliefs. I can attest to that unequivocally, since I have always felt that I am able to see into men and determine their sincerity. At no time, either preceding or following his short period in Roman custody, did Jesus doubt for more than the briefest of instants that he was the Messiah. I myself did not begin to disbelieve until after our release.

The first misstatement concerning me in the stories I have heard concerns my meeting with two priests to discuss my betrayal of Jesus. That contains only the merest modicum of truth. I indeed met with the two priests. However, I met with them accidentally, on a public road. Far from offering me money to betray Jesus, they were openly hostile, since they recognized me as a follower of a radical and disruptive element in Judaeon society, Jesus of Nazareth. They would not have approached

me because I was satisfied that Jesus was the Messiah. This would have made me an unpromising prospect for conversion to their side. As soon as they realized who I was, they attempted to call for the guard to arrest me. I fled before they said anything, though, and escaped with little difficulty.

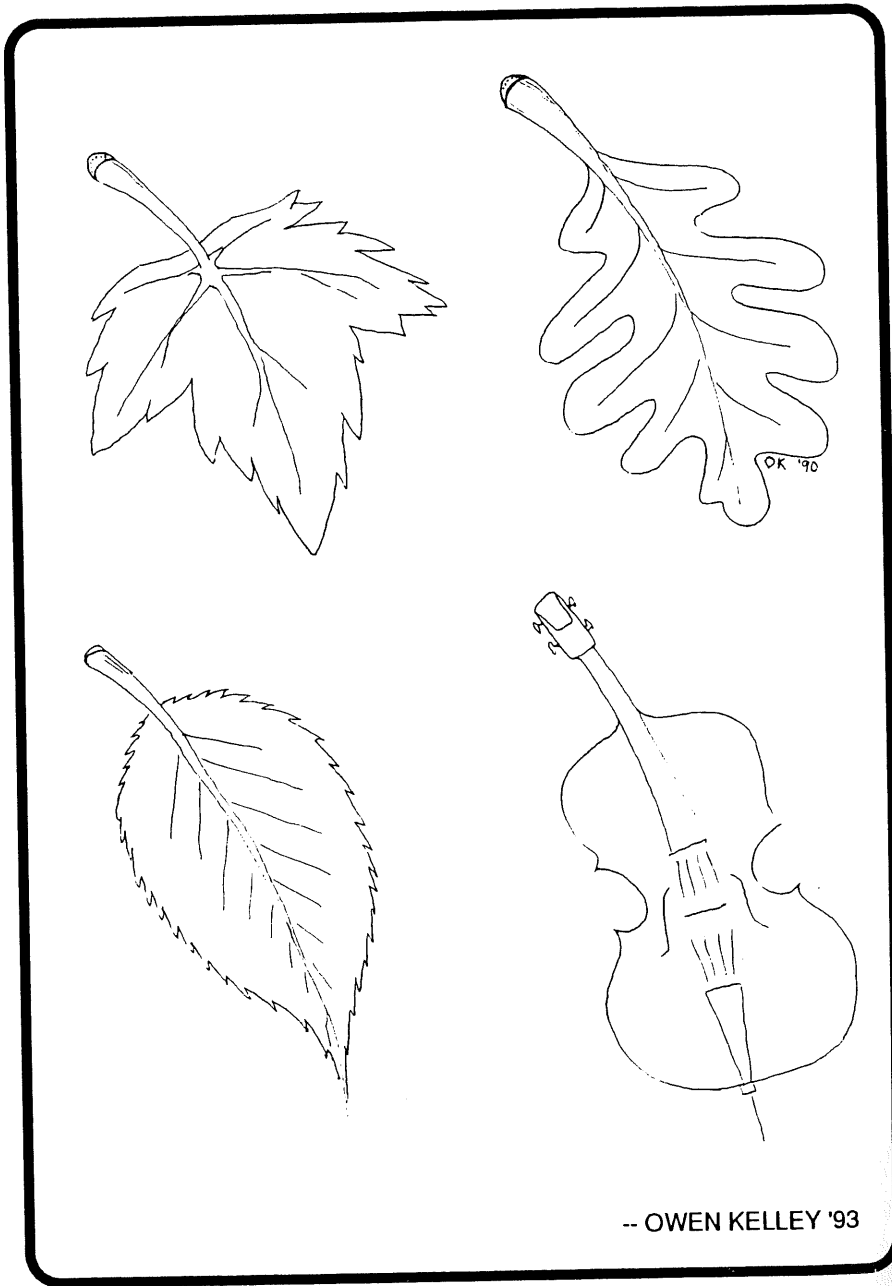
When I mentioned this incident to Jesus and the rest of the disciples, they applauded my quick thinking and then apparently forgot the matter. I did not realize then that the evangelists would change this thankfully brief meeting into a planned encounter between me and the priests.

However, Jesus became a little worried. If the priests knew enough to arrest one of his followers on sight, then Jesus himself might also be subject to immediate arrest. Therefore, we retreated hastily to the Garden of Geth-Semane to rest for the night. We were planning to return to Jerusalem the next day; our plans were unnecessary. Our orderly but hurried flight from the city had been noticed by an alert guard who knew who we were and had followed us to Geth-Semane.

Now I must note another discrepancy between my story and the enthusiastic proselytizers of Christianity. They state that I identified Jesus for our captors, and some of them

even dare to suggest that I would have used the kiss as my method of identification. That is a mark of friendship, not betrayal. Again, the evangelists' tales and the truth are barely related; in this instance, Peter, James son of Zebedee, and I happened to be conversing with Jesus when the Romans arrested us. Peter and James would not have wanted themselves implicated in his arrest, so when they first related the story they asserted that I was the one who betrayed him. They placed themselves as far from Jesus as they could have conceivably gone without actually leaving Geth-Semane entirely. I suppose that's because leaving the garden would not have enhanced their images in their potential converts' eyes. They intended, and I believe still intend, to make me appear the foulest traitor that ever trod upon the face of the Earth. Again, I assert that their stories, which are inconsistent and in some places contradictory, misrepresent the truth almost completely.

Our captors roughly escorted the twelve of us, and Jesus, to a Roman prison. I must say that it took considerable courage for the other disciples to relate in their stories that they had eventually fled the site of the arrest. I believe they did this, however, to show the faith they must



-- OWEN KELLEY '93

have had to return to their beliefs in Jesus' divinity. After the following events transpired, I lost that faith, and I suspect that is why I am made the villain of the story.

We languished in jail for what seemed an immeasurable period of time; however, it could not have been more than half a day when some of the guards came to take us to Pilate's chambers. A note about Pontius Pilate: I never liked anyone the Romans appointed to oversee we "heathen," but even I, having once been a radical terrorist, am forced to admit that Pilate was one of the least oppressive and corrupt administrators selected. Nevertheless, I wanted to see the man removed from office. I felt no animosity towards him except for a natural antagonism arising from my former membership in the Sikarii, one of the many terrorist groups which believed that the Romans should be overthrown as soon and as violently as possible. I remained uncertain whether the peaceful methods advocated by Jesus would work. I still do not know if they would have. The stories told assert that Jesus' methods worked, and his means seem to be effective now, as Christianity continues to grow. I hope that it does not become overly powerful. I have seen what the Ro-

mans are willing to do for their religion, so I want none to dominate the rest.

We waited in Pilate's chambers. There were at least a dozen heavily armed and armored guards in the room, there to prevent any of us from taking this opportunity to assassinate local administrators. Pilate entered the room, approached us, and motioned for us to have a seat on the floor.

He began, "Prophet of Nazareth, you have given me no end of trouble. Both my superiors and the Jewish priests have been influencing me to take care of the problems you have been causing."

"Governor, I am the Chosen, the Son of God, and I have a mission on this Earth. With the aid of my disciples I must spread God's word over the entire world. I believe you have little comprehension of your true role. If you try to hinder my mission, God will punish you, and history will name you the villain who tried -- and failed -- to oppose His will."

This may sound divinely inspired. On the contrary, its origins are most undivine. We had realized our capture was imminent, and had readied ourselves. Only Jesus, Peter, the sons of Zebedee and I were aware of our preparations. We helped Jesus write a speech that he would make upon our

apprehension, with some deviations, depending on who caught us. However unlikely it may sound, we did not intend to procure Jesus' release with this speech, but to assist him in becoming a martyr. Jesus had revealed a vision that he would die, and that with his death the word of God would spread throughout the world. It has always appeared that a martyr brings converts to a cause. Now that I recall those days when I believed Jesus so completely, I shudder to remember how foolish I was.

Pilate responded to Jesus' provocative statements by saying, "Indeed. If you truly are the Christ, the one true Messiah, the son of God and the King of the Jews, it would undoubtedly seal my doom to hinder your mission." Here Pilate stopped and thought for a moment. We were all surprised at his next action.

Pilate said, "Guards? Leave my chambers. You will be aware should any trouble ensue, and I think it unlikely that Jesus or his disciples would attack me, particularly when my room is surrounded by twelve armed men."

I was tempted. My Sikarii training had not deserted me, and had I been unaware of Jesus' plans for martyrdom I would assuredly have strangled Pilate then and there -- even

though armed guards surrounded the chambers.

The guards left the room. Pilate continued with his speech.

"I am perplexed, Jesus of Nazareth. You have broken no important laws, and if I attempted to have you and your disciples arrested, tried, convicted, and punished on exaggerated charges, the masses would probably rise up and demolish the city with their rioting. We were barely able to avoid that with the Baptist, and he was not quite so well-loved as you. I could release you, but that would bring the anger of my superiors and the Jewish priests upon me for not stopping you when I had the opportunity. That leaves me but one option."

Here Pilate paused for a moment. Jesus took advantage of Pilate's momentary lapse to interject, "Pontius Pilate, I have no fear of death. My God will protect me, and will vindicate me in the end. The truth will come out."

Pilate looked startled upon hearing Jesus' remarks. "Put you to death? Nazarene, that is the last thing I would do. Even if I presented your death to the people as a deed already done, there would be unrest and dissension, and I simply cannot afford to have that happen. My life is important to me, and so is my position as governor, and I fear neither one would

A man lies sleeping

A man lies sleeping on tossed sheets.
A desert island sprawls over seas
Quieted after the storm.
His back rolls gently like the sands of a beach,
Fine, smooth and warm.
I am drawn to the rising of sweet steam
From a hot spring running deep.
My lips linger there, so near to his,
Breathing his breath. I seek
That, by some miracle, his spirit
Might mingle with a sigh;
A draught to quench this castaway
Parched for love on an arid night.

-- MARTI ACOSTA '92

remain long were I simply to have you executed. Therefore, this is what I am going to do. This will be the . . . truth . . . of the matter."

Jesus appeared to grow more and more worried with Pilate's revelations, as did all of the disciples except myself. I was prepared to martyr myself for Jesus' sake if absolutely necessary, but, like Pilate, my life was important to me. I was willing to allow Jesus to martyr himself -- saw some necessity in it, actually -- and even I was a little apprehensive at the thought that he might not receive his wish. I kept my misgivings to myself for the moment, but resolved to converse with Jesus later.

The disciples who were unaware of our elaborate preparations, such as

Simon the zealot and Matthew, simply wanted to die because they were that special breed of fanatic, willing to die for any cause. Peter and the sons of Zebedee had slightly higher aspirations, but at the core of their souls were as fanatic as the remaining disciples. It seems that I was not so dedicated, though I had not fully realized it until this moment.

Pilate continued, ignoring everyone's discomfort, "I certainly cannot have you executed. Nor can I release you to continue your work with the people of Jerusalem. My only choice, then, is to exile you from the city. Guards!"

Here the guards reentered the room.

"Escort the King of the Jews and his followers to

their garden to gather their belongings, and then make certain they leave Jerusalem's surroundings permanently. Prophet of Nazareth, if you, or any of these twelve followers of yours, are seen within the vicinity of Jerusalem again, you will be killed immediately. You will not be arrested. You will not be put on trial so you can martyr yourself. You will be slain on sight and your body thrown into the nearest well. Do you understand me?"

This news stunned Jesus. He retained barely enough presence of mind to respond to Pilate's questions in the affirmative, but it was quite clear that this turn of events shocked him. While I also had not expected this particular outcome, I was not as overcome as were Jesus and the other disciples. This was but a temporary setback; Jesus could certainly go to other cities to die.

Almost in complete silence, broken only by the rustle of boots and the mutterings of the guards, we were marched quickly back to Geth-Semane to retrieve our belongings. I retained enough presence of mind to ask if I could return to Jerusalem to purchase provisions, and was refused but told that a guard would do it for us. The other disciples gathered their possessions as if they were completely lacking in volition.

It was not until we made camp, about an hour after sunset, that anyone besides myself attempted conversation. Jesus silently motioned for us to gather in a circle, and said in a voice so low I could barely hear him, "It is over. My mission is finished."

I asked him, "What do you mean? You did not achieve the death you desired here, but that does not mean you will not achieve it elsewhere. Did you need to die in Jerusalem?"

Jesus answered, still in a very low voice, "Yes. In my vision, it was revealed that my death in Jerusalem would bring the message of God to the entire world. Now I am doomed to spend the rest of my life wandering, unable to carry his message. My purpose cannot be fulfilled. Judas, you could not possibly understand."

Despite Jesus' patronizing statement, I understood. I understood more than I ever truly had. If Jesus' vision had been a message from God that the Messiah would die in Jerusalem, then Jesus, who was not dead, had not now and never had been the Messiah. The other possibility was that Jesus had seen a vision that had not originated with God. This would mean that his entire campaign had begun on a simple hallucination, or -- even worse -- a

vision provided by the Adversary. These thoughts seemed to me the only two alternatives, and caused enough doubt for me to question my belief that Jesus was the Son of God. Apparently, none of the other disciples arrived at the same conclusions. They continued to believe in Jesus without so much as a second's thought. How this was possible is something strange which has mystified me ever since.

Just after sunrise the following morning I was awakened by Peter's cries of, "The Christ has vanished!" He sounded not so much frantic as enraptured, as though he were contemplating the possibility that God had come from Heaven and carried Jesus back with him. A more mundane explanation developed, however, when we investigated Jesus' bedroll and discovered a hastily scrawled letter. Since Simon had been the one who found it, he read it to the rest of us:

"My friends, my vision was that I would die in Jerusalem to save mankind from its sins. I have gone to fulfill my vision. Therefore, I charge the twelve of you with this task: Tell the world that I died to save it. Only in this way will my vision become truth."

After Simon finished, he and the rest of the disciples were all for packing their belongings and de-

parting to tell of Jesus' death within the hour. I tried to dissuade them, saying that we should examine the evidence and try to find proof that Jesus was indeed dead. This was not well-taken by the other disciples. I was sharply informed that those who unquestionably believed Jesus was the Messiah had no need of such proof. I agreed with them, and prepared to follow Jesus' footprints. Peter then told me that, if I departed, they would not be there when I returned. I responded that evidence that Jesus was the Christ was far more important than their company. John then curtly said that, should I continue to demonstrate my lack of faith in this manner, they would not mention me well when they told Jesus' story. I said no more to them, but silently left and followed Jesus' trail.

For three hours I walked in Jesus' footsteps in the direction of Jerusalem. I was beginning to believe that Jesus had been killed and thrown down a well, as Pilate had threatened, when I noticed the trail veering from Jesus' supposed destination. I continued in this direction for two more hours, until I finally concluded that Jesus had started towards Jerusalem, but somewhere along the way had decided not to fulfill his vision. It seemed that, after being

completely demoralized by Pilate's decision, Jesus' life was as important to him as Pilate's was to Pilate. This determined for me that Jesus was not the Christ, and I gave up trailing him and turned back.

Everything since then is widely known. The stories invented by Jesus' immediate disciples and their followers have become popular far and wide. Something that I have noticed about these stories is that, over thirty years, they have grown in complexity. At first, what was told was roughly the truth, with me in varying degrees of villainy depending on who had originated that particular account. It is only recently, for example, that I have heard of Jesus' crucifixion. I cannot tell whether the other eleven changed the story themselves as the years went by, or whether it has grown beyond their control.

Earlier in my narrative I mentioned Jerusha of Bethlehem as one of the conspirators who had spread the story proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God. I have heard tales of him, and there are those who believe him to be Jesus. If he is, then Christianity is certainly false. If he is not, it proves nothing. But I know that the one major town he has never visited is Jerusalem.

I no longer use my real name, since the growing

number of Christians would be hostile to me because of my purported betrayal. In addition, I do not wish to be associated with such calumny.

It is in this, the last document of my life, that I attempt to relate the truth. The fictions told by the evangelists are becoming more and more complex. There will, I believe, come a day when the lies will not be able to support themselves, and will collapse because they are based not on reality but on many different versions of the same story. The contradictions and inconsistencies will come out. That day will probably come after my death, since I am an old man and do not expect to live much longer.

In this document. I have tried to appear certain of my story. However, there is still a slight possibility that Jesus turned back towards Jerusalem after I ceased tracking him. In this event, he may have been the Son of God. Some may choose to believe this; I do not. The truth will one day be brought to light. The truth shall set me free.

May the Lord God have mercy on my soul.

Judas of the Sikarii
Joseph Iskereot

-- ROBBY NEASE '92

Notes

On the Chorus in Classical Tragedy

My recent essay on the experience of tragedy met with one major objection from those who talked to me about it. Their objection was this: If the playwright is not trying to moralize to his audience, why in classical tragedy is there so frequently a chorus which takes an extremely moral tone in the play?

Let me make my concession first, and then follow with my defense. It's true. The chorus wants us to think about the tragic hero's mistake as one which centers on morality. Perhaps, then, the playwright wants us to learn a lesson from the play somehow.

But take, for instance, Agamemnon. The mistake which he made was the sacrifice of his daughter, and he was grievously repaid by his wife, Clytaemnestra. How could he have avoided this awful sacrifice? By not taking all measures to ensure a favorable outcome in war. But nothing truer can be said about Agamemnon than that he is a reasonable warrior -- not a good daddy, not a loving husband. He is a warrior. So if Agamemnon

is not to meet an awful fate, he must stop being himself. What else can he be? Never in history has a single man acted against his nature.

This points to a fundamental difference between the tragic hero and his audience, ourselves. The hero is a man on one way. He expresses, especially in classical tragedy, a singularity. Hippolytus = a chaste man. Oedipus = a dynamic leader. Pentheus = a rational man. We, however, are men of many ways. (πολυτροποι). We are sons, brothers, fathers, husbands, fighters, workers, all at once. We are more complex beings than the hero, though the hero is a man as well. We are susceptible to the virtue of moderation in a way that the hero is not.

The chorus never comes to an understanding that the hero's very nature is what brings him to ruin. They are the public; they are the masses; they are not interested in the tragic hero as an individual, and there are no individuals among them. They are interested in the good of the town (as the playwright is). But the playwright and his audience see more than they do. The audience is asked to empathize instead of point fingers. It is asked to see itself in the

hero, not in a near-god far from its nature. They are asked to look into the hero's private life, and see what they most fear and envy, an uncompromising man.

Look you too, unflinchingly, and experience the awful joy of being for a moment only one aspect of humanity. Then watch the mighty tower of the man fall. Weep. Weep, and look into yourself. See a πολυτροπον. Sigh. Be glad.

-- KEVIN JOHNSON '93

ΑΤΟΠΟΝ

Ms. Suzanne Drake, or Suzy, if you wish, rushed to her air-conditioned dorm room. It was already 7:45 p.m. and Suzy was sure that she was going to be late for the Friday night lecture. "It's on life and death," someone had told her.

Suzy, as beautiful as she was, had a minor health problem: coughs. "Oh, don't worry, it's just the spring flu," the nurse had explained to her. Relieved that she didn't have anything dangerous, Suzy had gone on with her life as usual.

After fumbling through her closet, Suzy settled on a nicely cut evening suit --

all black. It went well with her long, soft black hair. After applying some bright red lipstick, she coughed her way to FSK. "Aargh! the damn cough! I wish it would go away!" prophe-sized*Suzy.

As Suzy entered the auditorium, she realized she was late for the grave lecture. She quietly slipped

into one of the cozy orange chairs of FSK. As the lecture was on such a solemn issue, Suzy's cracking up with a cough every now and again was a great disturbance to Ms. Bios.

Fed up with Suzy's loud convulsions, Ms. Bios reached over to Suzy and passed her a small bottle. "Drink it, and be quiet!" Ms.

Bios snapped. Suzy did as she was told, and rested her small head on the comfortable orange chair.

Peace and serenity entered the auditorium once again . . . as it was before Suzy ever was.

-- MALIK GILLANI '92

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