Adamic Redemption
In American Literature: 1945 To The Present.

ADAMIC REDEMPTION IN AMERICAN LITERATURE: 1945 TO THE PRESENT

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Thesis Director:
Professor H.A. McPherson

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In Memoriam: Dr. Charles James Cook, Physicist. 1933-1973

I watched you, priest of the vectors
Holding internal wakes
Of ritual and grief-
A prairie-faced, thermostatic,
O more than human number,
Emerging from the slide rule of a wave-
Your heart exploding, out of tune,
To the music of Ludwig Wittengenstein
In the South Carolina roaring surf.

Like you, I rode home from school
Everyday.
The First Avenue bus
Held its festival of singular types,
Who hemorrhaged over
The tax-starved New York streets.
I sat in the bowels of the beast,
Above the diesel heat and flame
(Which only you, Charles, could justify),
Waiting for a glimpse of the loonies.
Bellvue always loomed embarrassingly
Where the asexuals trafficked on their bolted coach,
Screaming at grocery boys
Who zipped by on bicycles.
This cast of night-gowned passengers
(tied from behind)
Read shapes in the exhaust of my leaving.

Now I sit in a slow rain
And read in the exhaust
Of your departure,
A loss only the mad can count.
On their fingers.

Farewell, Hello, Brother.

JTF

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Résumé
Abstract

C'est mon intention de démontrer la continuité du phénomène de redemption d'Adam dans la littérature américaine, de 1945 à nos jours. Mon étude n'est pas exhaustive. J'entends par "Adamite" un individu qui gagne seul son rachat ou qui retrouve la nature, inspiré par son héritage Jeffersonien. S'il échoue dans sa quête, il devient un buffon, un aliéné ou il joue les Adamites bizarres.

Comprendre l'emploi de ce thème est d'utilité pour apprécier quelques unes des contradictions du caractère américain. Et c'est une des meilleurs illustrations que je connaisse pour montrer l'étrange souci de rédemption de l'Amérique, ~~appelé par~~ Stephen Spender "la chose la plus profonde de la vie américaine." Comme Spender, j'emploie rédemption au sens d'amendement et de reintégration de l'Américain dans son pacte allégué et primitif avec la nature.

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Abstract

It is my intention to demonstrate the continuity of the Adamic redemptive mode in American Literature from 1945 to the present. My study is not all-inclusive. By Adamic I refer to a character whose Jeffersonian heritage inspires him to redeem either himself or nature. When not successful in this quest, he becomes a grotesque, an alienate, or a comic mock-Adamite.

An understanding of the continuing use of this theme is a helpful means in appreciating some of the contradictions in the American character. It is one of the best illustrations I know to point out the peculiarly American pre-occupation with redemption, called by Stephen Spender, "the deepest thing in American life." I use the word redemption throughout the course of my study, like Spender, in the sense of reclamation and restoration of the American to his alleged original covenant with nature. This in a word is my thesis.

Abbreviations
Used In Text And Notes

CP	The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens
IM	The Invisible Man (Ellison)
ML	Miss Lonelyhearts (West)
DL	The Day of The Locust
Rev	Revolution For The Hell Of It (Hoffman)
WB	Wise Blood (O'Connor)
CP	The Collected Poems of James Dickey: 1958-1968
EB	The Eye-Beaters, Blood, Victory, Madness, Buckhead and Mercy (Dickey)
AD	An American Dream (Mailer)
DB	The Dharma Bums (Kerouac)
AM	The Adventures of Augie March (Bellow)
H	Herzog
HRK	Henderson The Rain King
NL	A New Life (Malamud)
SWF	The Sot-Weed Factor (Barth)
S-F	Slaughterhouse-Five (Vonnegut)
PP	Player Piano
ST	The Sirens of Titan
GB	God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater
BT	Being There (Kosinski)
CP	The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke
WW	Words For The Wind (Roethke)

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Preface

This thesis was written in a pastoral closet in the most backward section of South Carolina. The research in it was undertaken at the University Library of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and at the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. The originality of my thesis lies in the degree to which it demonstrates and documents the continuity of Adamic Redemption in American life from 1945 to the present moment.

Other than the traditional assistance rendered by my thesis director, Professor H.A. McPherson and the other two readers on my committee, Professors Slava Klima and Ronald R ichertz, the labor and ideas in this study are entirely my wn. I am therefore directly responsible for whatever merits or faults it may possess.

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The technology of the railway created the myth of a green pasture world of innocence. It satisfied man's desire to withdraw from society, symbolized by the city, to a rural setting where he could recover his animal and natural self. It was the pastoral ideal, a Jeffersonian world, an agrarian democracy which was intended to serve as a guide to a social policy. It gave us darkest suburbia and its lasting symbol: the lawnmower.

It is my intention to demonstrate the continuity in a delimited area, 1945 to the present, of the Adamic redemptive phenomenon that still asserts itself in American Literature. My study is not meant to be a comprehensive survey of the written word from 1945 to the present, which might well include everything from American foreign policy and comic books to hippie communes.[1] Where I use the word Adamic throughout the course of this study, I would have the reader understand, specifically, that I refer to an American writer who indulges in the myth that he can think and act independently of history and society by virtue of the natural innocence he derives from his Jeffersonian, pastoral heritage. As a victim of the romantic syndrome of the child, the Adamite searches about him for the unfallen place that instinctively he knows exists either in his self-redeemed heart or in redeemed, unfallen nature; failing to find that place, he becomes a grotesque, an alienate, or a comic mock-Adamite. The means by which he conducts the search for that unfallen place is the tool of naming, by which he attempts to penetrate and reclaim an unfallen existence that will be an alternative to industrial, technocratic America. (Most of those I fail to include within my time-frame, I would have the reader understand, within the context of this study, as non-Adamic artists, i.e., those who shape and order their world not from the premise of self, but from accepted historical traditions (literary and societal) that have been translated from Europe into an American experience.) In other words, these artists enjoy secure assumptions about society and time and place that the Adamite, measuring the world by self alone, cannot or will not allow himself. In my analyses, I am concerned only with this Adamic archetype and not with his opposite. Further, I am concerned only with selected representative examples of the Adamic archetype from the period 1945 to the present.

A clearer understanding of the continuing use of this theme is possibly a helpful means in appreciating some of the many contradictions in the American character. Finally, it is one of the best illustrations I know to point out the peculiarly American pre-occupation with redemption, called by Stephen Spender, "the deepest thing in American life."[2] I use the word redemption throughout the course of my study, like Spender, in the sense of reclamation and restoration of the American to his alleged original covenant with nature. This in a word is my thesis.

A review of the scholarship surrounding this problem convinces me of three things: 1. D.H. Lawrence in Studies In Classic American Literature is the tap-root of all Adamic studies. 2. Professional scholars (R.W.B. Lewis, Pearce, Marx, Noble[3] et alia), while establishing an Adamic canon of sorts, have stopped short roughly at the period 1945. Hoping to have put the baby to bed, they imply (all of them), that the Adamic theme has a certain immaturity about it that will not persuasively contain an emerging American fiction. Pearce looks toward an American poetry that will be international in scope.[4] Marx looks toward political solutions to aesthetic problems. And so on. 3. The paucity and watery thinness of Adamic studies in print convinces me that there is a need to isolate and justify the continuity of the theme. Having borrowed certain assumptions from the Adamic canon at large, I have constructed categories of my own from primary sources.

Before proceeding to my own definition and categories, however, it would be well to examine the major scholarship in the area that is the foundation for many of my assumptions. According to chronology, it was R.W.B. Lewis, who, in 1955, in The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, And Tradition In The Nineteenth Century, first magnified and set in relief the time-haunted figure of the American Adam. Outside the realm of professional scholarship, however, it was D.H. Lawrence who first taught American artists and scholars how to read their native literature. Referring to James Fenimore Cooper's

Leatherstocking Tales, Lawrence says, "they go backwards from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America. She starts old, old, wrinkled and writhing in an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing off of the old skin, towards a new youth. It is the myth of America."[5] Less to the point but nevertheless an influence often apparent in the pages of R.W.B. Lewis is F.O. Matthiessen and his pioneering work in the understanding of American myths, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman.[6] A third important influence on Lewis, the prototypal Henry Nash Smith[7] aside, is the controversial Jeffersonian scholar from the University of Chicago, Daniel J. Boorstin,[8] who, in company with the iconoclast Charles A. Beard[9] and the historian turned literary critic, David W. Noble,[10] form the philosophical basis for the rationale of the myth of Adamic redemption. But it was Lewis who seems to have put it all together in an effort to read American Literature from a point of view that enjoyed some kind of consistency,[11] which may have helped to gravitate Lewis' colleague at Yale, Jerzy Kosinski, toward a summation of the theme in his third novel, Being There (1971) as I hope to prove in Chapter 4,

In the work of R.W.B. Lewis, the American Adam manifests himself in three major areas. In capsule form, Lewis sees him as,

> an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. It was not surprising, in a Bible-reading generation, that the new hero (in praise or disapproval) was most easily identified with Adam before the Fall. Adam was the first, the archetypal man. His moral position was prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The world and history lay all before him. And he was the type of creator, the poet par excellence, creating language itself by naming the elements of the scene around him. All this and more were contained in the image of the American as Adam.[12]

What rings clear in Lewis' summary is foremost the sense of possibility which sums up the three major areas of Adamic perfectibility. First, as a man free from history, the Adamite is granted complete license to create his own history, independent of any traditions that might surround him at birth, which in turn accounts for the fact that he is self-propelling or self-creating. Second, because he is "fundamentally innocent," he is or becomes inevitably pre-occupied with the romantic syndrome of the child and the unfallen world of childhood pulsing everywhere around him but subverted and hidden by the artificial language and traditions of society. Third, to overcome this restraint, the Adamite must learn to speak a new language, the tongue of naming, whereby the Jeffersonian covenant in all its optimistic denominators is revealed to him in the midst of the prelapsarian American garden. In other words, the Adamite does not merely discover the unfallen world and his meaningful place in it: he makes it come alive, redeems it, at the sound of his voice. "It was through the poetic act," Lewis says, "that Whitman articulated the dominant metaphysical illusion of his day and became the creator of his own world."[13] Such articulation rivals not only the state but God Almighty as well.

That the myth is an illusion, goes without saying; but at the same time, one should be prepared to accept the fact that, illusion or no, many Americans have cherished it since the founding of the Republic. Citing Whitman as the derivative archetype again, Lewis points out Whitman's startling analogy in,

> a noiseless patient spider
> I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood out,
> isolated,
> Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
> It launched forth filament, filament, filament,
> out of itself
> Ever unreeling them- ever tirelessly speeding them.
>
> 'Out of itself.' This is the reverse of the traditionalist attitude that, in Eliot's phrase, 'home is where one starts from.' Whitman acted on the hopeful conviction that the new Adam started from himself;

> having created himself, he must next create a home. The given in an individual experience was no longer a complex of human, racial, and familial relationships; it was a self in a vacant, vast surrounding. Each simple separate person must forge his own framework anew. This was the bold enormous venture inevitably confronted by the Adamic personality. He had to become the maker of his own conditions- if he were to have any conditions or any achieved personality at all.[14]

What Eliot means by "home" in the phrase quoted above from the Four Quartets is a staggering complex of assumptions involving one's church, one's government, one's literary traditions. In short, "home" for Eliot invokes an historical acceptance of society as the rubric against which one measures his own worth and his own destiny. For Eliot, it is quite impossible, indeed, it is something akin to madness, to attempt to create (write) independent of one's relation to a traditional society.[15] The non-existence of such assumptions about a traditional society in the United States is the hallmark of the American Adamic redemptor, which is the very thing that sent Eliot and Pound and others like them, in what Pearce calls the mythic school, over the waters to England and Europe, for they discovered early in their careers the real depths and anarchy of solipsism in the Adamic redemptive pre-suppositions that lay behind America's and Whitman's launching-forth filament "out of itself." For Eliot and others in the mythic school, "it comes to this: Murder can't be murder- it has to be some special sort of murder- with a quasi-secret, cabalistic significance- not understood by everyone. It has to be murder in the cathedral- whose momentum is lost, at the full, except to the instructed few. Nothing can be simply beautiful, it must be so beautiful that no one can understand it except by the assistance of the cult. It must be a mystery."[16]

Admittedly, William Carlos Williams' declaration is a bit fish-eyed, but this manner of exaggeration is necessary to strip away the sacerdotal veils from Eliot's extreme anti-Adamic position in "Tradition and The Individual Talent" in which it

becomes apparent that the individual's labor is vital only insofar as it is an incremental part of an evolving civilization based on law, society, and its traditions. In such a world solipsism is apostasy- even criminal- and there is no room at its mythic hearth for the Adamite who carries his self-contained hearth with him.[17] Before Eliot's "Tradition and The Individual Talent," this position was, of course, an unwritten standard, a common Western law, to which the articulate rallied. After Eliot's pronouncement, particularly in the United States amongst the Agrarian Group from Vanderbilt University,[18] the relationship between the artist and his traditional past became codified on literary clay tablets for the mythic artist. "For the mythic poem- like its counterpart, the Adamic poem- is an over-determined poem. It asks too much of both its protagonists and its readers; for it asks them that they reject utterly the principle of personality (to recall the social scientist's terms) and as utterly opt for the principle of culture."[19] What it all amounts to, finally, is whether or not fallen man should attempt to regain a harmonious relation with a potentially redeemed nature in the American garden- the very attempt in itself making up for the sense of loss or displacement he endures- or should fallen man sublimate his sense of loss and achieve redemption by subscribing to "an over-powering sense of the past- all principles of continuity derived from those large, extra-human, form-giving patterns of belief and commitment called myths?"[20]

Having, in effect, already outlined the fundamental ideas of my second major indebtedness, The Continuity of American Poetry, I'll now turn to my third source, Leo Marx, in The Machine In The Garden, whose eclecticism stresses not only the continuity of the Adamic redemptive mode but its tragic consequences as well. For it is here that one begins to see and feel the dangers inherent in the American mind's inability to create a non-mythic surrogate for the pastoral idealism that ceased to be a reality the day Fortress America mechanized itself on a

grand scale for World War I. "To change the situation we require new symbols of possibility, and although the creation of those symbols is in some measure the responsibility of artists, it is in greater measure the responsibility of society. The machine's sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics."[21] Certainly there is no denying the rightfulness of this conclusion; but at the same time one must face up to the irony of its implications, which point directly toward an on-going American government, through the auspices of a foolish and usually dishonest advertising industry, that purposefully manipulates the myth in order to programme an entire population.[22] Unlike David Noble, in The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden, whose sources for the Adamic myth run back no further than 1828 and the coming of Eden-on-earth in the egalitarian Jacksonian Era, Marx is able to see a refertilization of the myth in a dynamic manner, deep into the Elizabethan era and beyond, of the evicted shepherd in Virgil's Eclogues. This eviction of Adamic man from the heart of the garden in nature, Marx sees re-translated into Shakespeare's The Tempest (1616), and further into the popular imagination of all Europe from the 16th century to the middle of the 20th century- with along the way more serious minds, from John Locke to Thomas Jefferson, and from the German Romantics to the American Transcendentalists,[23] giving the myth some philosophical substance. An exegetical examination of the images and terms used by different artists to describe the relationship between man and the garden in nature (and all that implies) is a method used by Marx which I have tried to emulate, for behind these images and the action they make lies the key to an understanding of the Adamic redemptive myth in American life, even unto the present moment.

The fourth indebtedness I should like to acknowledge is that of David Noble, the historian against history, whose readings in American literature, at times too historically oriented, round off the most current major attempt to define the American

Adam. Where Noble differs from his predecessors, however, is in his distinction between the American Adam and the Eternal Adam. The former, according to Noble, cannot and will never accept the fallen but enlightening state of mortality enjoyed by the latter, the Eternal Adam, who, in accepting his own mortality and sinfulness, accepts at the same time all the institutions of the historical process by which he might lift himself up to a meaningful position in civil society. It is in Noble's readings of Cooper and Henry James that this point of view becomes most convincing. "In the new American nation the romanticism of the developing bourgeoisie, the myth of the self-made man, came to be accepted as the reality rather than the dream of human existence. It was proclaimed, in the United States of 1830, that every man had transcended the human condition to achieve perfect freedom in harmony with redemptive nature. Ironically, it was the thrust of romantic ideology in Europe which made possible this concept of American Exceptionalism."[24] Because this is so, Noble sees American artists in terms of "philosophers and theologians who continually test the national faith in an American Adam living in a New World Eden against their experience with the human situation."[25] For Noble's part, the human situation in America has never come even remotely close to measuring up to the Adamic ideal; it is thus in his study that a quiet note of economic criticism is interposed between the historical facts surrounding the Adamic myth and their transmutation into literary productions- both in the realm of kitsch and serious statement. The myth continues to flourish because it is an expediency not only in the market place but in the tainted halls of government as well.

From the work of R.W.B. Lewis et alia and from my own readings in 19th and 20th-century American Literature, I have confirmed my own judgments and organized my own categories, the application of which will demonstrate, I hope, the continuity and presence of the Adamic redemptive theme from the period 1945 to the moment. "Its denouement," then, according

to Pearce, "is bound up in the fact of that insistent opposition: the egocentric as against the theocentric, man without history as against history without man, the antinomian as against the mythic."[26] Thus, by using some representative variations from the myth of redemption- that either satirize or in some way expose the myth in fiction as a fiction while paradoxically affirming it as a viable faith in poetry- my analyses should help to convince the reader that the American Adam remains in the present as he was in the 19th and first half of the 20th century, an archetype, who:

1. Rejects history and its ideological illness;

2. Is without a rooted past, yet at the same time possessed of a sense of having been driven or fallen from some place in nature but out of historical time. He is invariably an orphan or at least thinks of himself in those terms;

3. Feels time move in a circular as opposed to a linear fashion; this circular movement derives from nature;

4. Believes in a continuing re-creation or genesis of the self by which the timeless unfallen world in nature is revealed beneath the time-ridden, fallen world in society;

5. Is the apotheosis of anti-rationalism who thrives on instinct and intuition;

6. Is the master of, or unwitting participant in, instant theatre performed by the lion and the lamb of the self before the grand audience of redemptive nature;

7. Is given to meditations on earthly perfectibility and new beginnings;

8. Is fundamentally smitten by innocence and often wears a mask to protect his vulnerability as he passes from stage to stage in his development of beginnings;

9. Is the tap-root of either cultural or moral anarchy;

10. Is a namer of unfallen worlds in a language often uniquely his own.

No one single artist is an embodiment of all the above categories, but an adherence to one or more of the categories, particularly a rejection of history and all that is implied by that, is, by inference, a logical acceptance of all insofar as the categories are constructed on a telescoping principle. Thus, to reject history is to reject time and the equity of the law-inspired institutions it fosters. This in turn

inexorably forces the Adamite back to some proximity with nature, wearing a mask as he passes through society-- a mere unnatural edge of an otherwise perfect circle, toward a first position of Adamic redemption. Here, as anarchist,[27] he is able to dissolve his own inner government of the self, and through instinct arising out of natural meditation, reclaim the beginning, the American Eden where the lion lies down with the lamb as in Edward Hicks' almost astounding 19th century painting, "The Peaceable Kingdom."[28] If all this sounds fantastic, it is because I am trying to discover a logical sequence in a phenomenon that is so deeply imbedded in the American irrational that it ought to manifest itself in the dream world, or, more practically, that "other tongue" spoken only by poets.[29]

I have divided my investigation into five chapters, each moving from a starting point of the rejection of history, and each involving most of the other categories I have laid down. Chapter one is a window on the Adamic world and proceeds by way of laying open a cross-section of Adamic redemptive types who follow. In it I go outside my prescribed time-frame to include Nathaniel West, whose rejection of Adamic redemption is pivotal to an understanding of the kinds of rejections that occur after 1945; I include, also, in chapter one, Wallace Stevens, whose Adamic position in American poetry is central in appreciating the three poets I consider later. Others in chapter one are Ralph Ellison, Abbie Hoffman, Flannery O'Connor and James Dickey.

Chapter two focuses on the mildly anarchistic side of the Adamic narrative and includes Norman Mailer, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.

Chapter three deals with the disillusioned Adamic intellectuals Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and John Barth, who, while rejecting the Adamic redemptive mode and having good fun with it, pay service to its vitality by using its apparatus.

Chapter four, dealing with the novels of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and one novel by Jerzy Kosinski is also concerned with

rejections but in a satiric manner; it reveals Vonnegut as the successor to Nathaniel West as well as the most negative exponent of Adamic redemption in American literature. Up to this point, my study reveals that through an invocation of the myth those writers who let the air out of it affirm my thesis of the craving for redemption in American life reflected in its literature.

The final chapter, five, concludes the study with an exegetical examination of the greenhouse poems and "North American Sequence" by Theodore Roethke whom I hope to prove an Adamic composite of the other three Adamic poets (among others) I have studied. The underlying assumption that only through the genre of poetry can the Adamic redemptive myth be totally affirmed emerges, convincingly, I hope, in this chapter.

The obvious danger of a study of this nature is that one tends to see redemptive figures under every bush. I have tried to avoid this through a judicious use of primary sources.

Notes To Introduction

1 That Americans have been programmed from the earliest days of the Puritan Father's "City on the Hill" in the New Jerusalem to President John F. Kennedy's fallacious but well-intentioned "New Frontier" is an understatement. From the piety of advertising slogans involving man in nature or some variation thereof to the present (probably) belated fascination with ecology, the myth of the American Adam reigns supreme. As for the subculture of comic books and the appearance of the American Adam in them, see Leslie Fiedler, Waiting for the End (New York), 1958), pp. 138-151.

2 Stephen Spender, "Americanization," Partisan Review, Vol. XXXIX. No. 2 (Spring, 1972), 172

3 Roy Harvey Pearce, The Continuity of American Poetry (Princeton, New Jersey, 1961), 286.

4 Pearce is the most dogmatic in this pronouncement. "What is Stevens to the continuity of American poetry and he to it? I can conclude only that he is the figure in whom the Adamic phase of the continuity culminates, as he is the figure most fully aware of that toward which the continuity was moving." Pearce, Ibid., 415. Other scholars intimately involved with the myth, from Henry Nash Smith to David Noble, all imply that American art is on the threshold of a new maturity that will not tolerate such a crippling illusion. My investigation, I believe, shows otherwise.

5 D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York, 1922), 64.

6 F.O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York, 1941), 626-631.

7 Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: the American West as Smybol and Myth (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

8 Daniel J. Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1948).

9 Charles A. Beard, Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York, 1915).

10 David W. Noble, The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden: the Central Myth in the American Novel Since 1930 (New York, 1968).

11 Although no complete bibliography exists as yet relative to the Adamic theme, the following in the realm of literature provides some help to fill in gaps overlooked by major critical studies to date. Philip Young, "Fallen From Time: The Mythic Rip Van Winkle," The Kenyon Review, xxii (Autumn, 1960), 544-553; Joseph T. Gordon, "Nathaniel Howthorne and Brook Farm," Emerson Society Quarterly, No. 33 (IV Quar., 1963), 151-161; Frederick I. Carpenter surveys variants, "The American Myth: Paradise (To Be) Regained," PMLA, LXXIV (December, 1959), 559-606.

12 R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1955).

13 Ibid., 51.

14 Ibid., 50.

15 T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," The Sacred Wood (London, 1920), 31-44. All of which is a good excuse for larding one's work with the gravy of others. Whether Eliot derived this practice from witnessing Pound's borrowings from Yeats or whether he arrived at it independently is impossible to determine. Surely time will pass a judgment on this.

16 William Carlos Williams, "Against The Weather," Selected Essays (New York, 1950), 212-213.

17 "What happens /to the poet/ is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

"There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach science. I, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide." Eliot, Ibid., 38. Eliot's "suggestive analogy" is revealing. What it reveals is a brilliant humanist in the early part of the 20th century who is paranoid about the displacement of the arts by an incipient though heavily-endowed scientific community. Here too one sees the origins of some of the attempts of the Neo-Aristotelian, New Critics of the fifties who were trying to make of poetry a science and hence a little more respectable in a decidedly scientific age. The Adamic poet's method of dealing with science is to ignore it, or to take its inorganic materials and return them to their natural organic state.

18 I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition by Twelve Southerners, ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. (New York, 1930).

19 Pearce, p. 302.

20 Pearce, p. 286.

21 Leo Marx, The Machine In The Garden (New York, 1964), 365.

22 How many wars have been fought in the name of the preservation of the American garden and its chief Democratic gardener, Adam? How many million tons of junk have been dumped on the American consumer simply by invoking a subliminal, pastoral, Adamic image?

23 This investigation is not a study of sources, and I do not feel obliged to list a chronological lot of them. I would mention, however, that Locke's The Second Treatise of Government in response, in part, to Montaigne's romantic primitivism (and this popularized and thus refuted by Shakespeare in The Tempest) was a heavy bag in the intellectual equipage of the Englishman traveling to the New World.

Another source and profound influence on Thomas Jefferson is Rousseau's Discourse On The Origin And Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind (1755) strangely underplayed and underestimated amongst Adamic scholars. Without doubt, though, the greatest Adamic-pastoral influence on Jefferson and probably on the entire intellectual milieu of the United States at the turn of the 19th century was the Piedmont Virginian, John Taylor's An Inquiry Into The Principles and Policy of the Government Of The United States (Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1814). This small book is fiercely anti-federalist, anti-corporate, and is as relevant today as it was in 1814. The trouble with citing Jefferson as an ultimate source is that he has too many opinions about too many different things, and he frequently contradicts himself- and me. The main source of his ideas on Adamic pastoralism is to be found in Notes on Virginia.

24 Noble, 4.

25 If one were to take exception with Noble, it would be with the fact that he tends to lose sight of the problem that he is after all dealing with fiction that might or might not have philosophical or theological overtones to it. "The task of poetic criticism, then, is not to learn from any and all available records what was the poet's philosophy, morality, life history, or psychosis, or to find the revelation of his own experiences in his words; it is to evaluate his fiction, the appearance of thought and feeling or outward events that he creates." Susanne K. Langer, Problems of Art (New York, 1957), 152.

26 Pearce, 423.

27 See Henry James, The Princess Casamassima for an Ur refutation of the anarchist precedent in American letters.

28

29 For an appreciation of Adamic perfectibility and the actual achievement of Eden-on-earth, see Maren Lockwood Carden, Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation (Baltimore, 1969). The founder of this Adamic perfectionist sect, John Humphrey Noyes, believed with his community that human perfection could be germinated in an actual combination, humanistic-theological community. In the beginning all beliefs were predicated on a essential harmony with nature, which obtained in the community until the machine in their garden forced Noyes and all the others to enter into a perfectionist industry making silver products. So successful was this venture in underselling all other gold and silver craftsmen in New York State that the state legislators finally hounded them out of business on the pretext that their form of "complex marriage" was a bad influence on the morals of New York State. Of course, it was economics and not sex that destroyed them.

What is more. This community must not be construed as an isolated example. It is one of the literally hundreds that sprang up all over the eastern United States and southern Canada in the middle of the 19th century. Among them, to name a few, are: The Bloomfield Association, The Ontario Union, The Moorehouse Union, and the Jefferson County Phalanx.

Chapter 1

Cross Sections of the Redemptive Tell

The "father of us all" as Theodore Roethke has called Wallace Stevens is without doubt the foremost proponent of the each-man-his-own-Adam philosophy, or each-man-his-own redemptive-god of the physical world ("God is in me or else is not at all.")[1] meditating on the metaphor of himself like Rilke's angel or Dickey's Owl King turned in toward the center of his own complete being. For Stevens, nothing exists independent of the self and its perceptions, which alter reality through "the rhetoric of the narration of the eye" and bring forth such things as never were in nature yet possesing a reality more heightened than the naked thing or place itself.

> Man, that is not born of woman but of air,
> That comes in the solar chariot,
> Like rhetoric in a narration of the eye-
>
> We knew one parent must have been divine,
> Adam of beau regard, from fat Elysia,
> Whose mind malformed this morning metaphor,
>
> While all the leaves leaked gold. His mind made morning,
> As he slept. He woke in a metaphor: this was
> A metamorphosis of paradise,
>
> (CP. 331)

There are a few things that warrant a comment here. First, Adam "of beau regard" (the visual pun is almost corny) malformed the metaphor of himself and his world by his own doing. Exactly how, Stevens does not say here, but that is not the immediate point. What is important is that the earth as a physical paradise, and man on it enjoying its redemptive potential, have both experienced a fall- call it a shift in consciousness if one likes but a fall nevertheless as grievious to the agnostic Stevens as the biblical fall is to the practicing Christian or Jew. "A myth of the total man recovering a total world is hardly possible without a corresponding myth of a Fall, or some account of what is wrong with our present perspective."[2] Stevens' version

of the Fall is similar to that of the "Orphic Poet" at the end of Emerson's Nature:

> Why, then, inquire
> Who has divided the world, what entrepreneur?
> No man. The self, the chrysalis of all men
>
> Became divided in the leisure of blue day
> And more, in branching after day. One part
> Held fast tenaciously in common earth
>
> And one from central earth to central sky
> And in moonlight extensions of them in the mind
> Searched out such majesty as it could find.
>
> (CP, 468)

For Stevens, then, the division between the self and nature, between the self as perceiving agent and the imagination, that old Adamic, Emersonian song is complete, and the only way to heal the break is through the central power of the imagination that wields

> Description, canon central in itself
> The Thesis of the Plentifullest John
>
> (CP, 345)

"The world is created, we are told in this later poem, not out of nothing but, we might say, in depth or perspective through description of it."[3] But returning to the man who "woke in metaphor,/ that comes in the solar chariot/ While all the leaves leaked gold." The sun, no minor attendant lord in the gospel of the imagination according to Stevens, has no divine attributes and is no source of a primitive veneration lost somewhere in the thinning blood of the progressive history of perceptionless man. The sun is, however, "What a god might be,/ Naked amongst them like a savage source" (CP, 70), a sustaining principle in the act of perception, sine prole, that illuminates the thing in itself as it becomes a part of the imagination of Stevens' fallen "central man." Moreover, the sun, "That brave man," is an antidote against isolation, against "Fears of my bed/ Fears of life and fears of death,/ Run away" (CP, 138). Even in a poem as despairing as the "Snow Man" the "distant glitter/ Of the January sun," weak as it may be in that phase of the quotidian, is a comfort to the listener, who, "nothing

himself," must face up to the "Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is" (CP, 10). There is hardly a poem in the entire output of Wallace Stevens in which the sun does not appear as a balm with the notable exception of "Page From a Tale" where distorted uses of sun-action, i.e., thermonuclear power, produce the ultimate destruction of the human race.[4]

It is not surprising to learn that for Stevens, the past, that is, history, ideologies, philosophies- things less important than the weather, is a garbage dump, a junk shop of the heart where the Adamic mind finds itself caught up in useless matters that inevitably obscure "A new knowledge of reality" (CP, 534), purchased by a total act of perception. There is no past, really: there is only the present moment in which the perceiver confronts the thing perceived and makes it new, both refreshing and enhancing its outlines. Hence a hard-core intellectual like Konstantinov would

> ...interrupt
> With his lunacy. He would not be aware of the lake.
> He would be the lunatic of one idea
> In a world of ideas, who would have all the people
> Live, work, suffer and die in that idea
> In a world of ideas; He would not be aware of the
> clouds
> Lighting the martyrs of logic with white fire.
> His extreme of logic would be illogical.
>
> (CP, 325)

The worst thing about Konstantinov for Stevens is not that he would enslave multitudes in the chains of a single-minded leftist ideology but that he would not be "aware of the lake/ Would not be aware of the clouds." For the new Adam or Stevens' "central man" the greatest poverty is not to live in a physical world where "The green corn gleams and the metaphysicals/ Lie sprawling in majors of the August heat." All of which brings us back to one aspect of our original inquiry, i.e., what exactly was it that "malformed the metaphor," producing that tragic sense of having fallen from somewhere that pervades the poetry of the agnostic Stevens? At the risk of sounding simple-minded, I would suggest that perception or the lack thereof has

brought about the painful distance between man and the physical world around him. It is as simple and as complex as all that: we do not see and therefore cannot become a part of the "res itself and not about it" (CP, 473). (The process is rather similar in both Stevens, Ginsberg, Roethke, and Dickey and is what Sister Bernadetta Quinn calls reification[5]). Adam became an alien on his own shores and eyeless in his own edenic Gaza. He therefore created systems upon systems which ironically further separated him from the "original idea." No longer could he "read the thing, imagine, and it is true" (CP, 38) until he was reborn in the pages of transcendental American literature whence he has persevered in his antinomian strutting up to and including the present moment. For the recent Adam as for his predicate nominative, Stevens' "central man," "the malformed metaphor" can be twisted into shape or redeemed by the act of extended genesis by which,

> out of what one sees and hears and out
> Of what one feels, who could have thought to make
> So many selves, so many sensuous worlds,
> As if the air, the mid-day air, was swarming
> With the metaphysical changes that occur,
> Merely in living as and where we live.
>
> (CP, 326)

Can one ignore the sense of reverence in the extended genesis of the preceding lines from "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven"? It rings out like a liturgical prayer intoned by a hierophant to an ordinary community of materialists who have never seen "Metaphysical changes that occur in the mid-day air." Finally, what we have here is not propositions about life or propositions about prepositions, but an Adamic act of faith or formula for living from day to day, which is the fate of all those (not just poets) who inhabit "an island solitude," who are "unsponsored" and "free" (CP, 70).

As one turns from Wallace Stevens to Ralph Ellison and The Invisible Man (1952), the genres change but the Adamic redemptive outlines remain essentially the same- Ellison's antecedents running back directly to Faulkner and Stevens rather than to Eliot as some critics have alleged.[6] This is a serious

mistake and arises probably from a misreading of the unnecessary and confusing use of the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" to the novel wherein what has been negated by the action of the work is suddenly affirmed "with buggy jiving" about beginnings and ends à la T.S. Eliot. But more of that later. Ellison, unlike Eliot, is first of all an American, then a southerner gone North, then a black man ("the novel is above all not a sociological tract")[7] who is keenly aware of his Adamic heritage.

> The moral imperatives of American life that are implicit in the Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and The Bill of Rights are a part of both the individual consciousness and the conscience of those writers who created what we consider our classic novels. These documents form the ground of assumptions upon which our social values rest; they inform our language and our conduct with public meaning, and they provide the broadest frame of reference for our most private dreams.[8]

Whoever has pondered the awful sentiments of the three documents of which Ellison speaks, easily quoted in part by most American schoolboys, will be struck immediately by the Adamic roots in them, derived from Locke- "In the beginning all the world was America"[9] and predicated on the belief that in a state of nature, in a pre-civil culture, all men are "free, independent and equal in the enjoyment of inalienable rights, chief among them being life, liberty and property."[10] It is a pity that Jefferson and Thomas Paine changed in The Declaration "property" to "pursuit of happiness"- at best a visionary phraseology, for Locke was very clear on how much property (land) each individual deserved according to nature, i.e., as much as "a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of."[11] Ellison goes on.

> It has been observed that modern American fiction is the only body of literature which is not the work of intellectuals. What the observer (a Frenchman) missed was that the major ideas of

> our society are so alive in the minds of every reader that they can be stated implicitly in the contours of the form of the novel. For it is all grounded in a body of the most abstract and explicitly stated conceptions of human society and one which in the form of the great documents of state constitute a body of assumptions about human possibility which is shared by all Americans- even by those who resist most violently any attempt to embody them in fiction.[12]

It is evident this is a blanket statement- how many chilly exceptions it will cover in the bed of American literary criticism remains to be seen; but even a half-truth justifies my position, and no one work demonstrates that better than Ellison's own.

The nameless hero of the Invisible Man has no name other than that given to him matronymically by the slave-holding master of his grandfather and the anonymous underground name given to him by the Brotherhood as the communist party is called in the novel. For Ellison there is a certain fascination in the distinction "between one's given name and his achieved identity. Acknowledging in retrospect the prescience of his own father, he speaks of the 'suggestive power of names and the magic involved in naming.' "[13] This is the special province of the poet, and, broadly speaking, Ellison claims it as his own. "He regards the novel as an act of ritual naming, the novelist, as a 'moralist-designate' who names the central moral issues of our times. In the myth, God gave man the task of naming the objects of the world; thus one of the functions of the poet is to insist upon a correspondence between words and ever-changing reality, between ideals and actualities."[14] Epistemologically, the problem with this is that what you name is what you see, and the narrator-protagonist is invisible because the world around him and the people in it refuse to recognize his humanity. Of course they see him, but they refuse to acknowledge a reflection of themselves in him. He doesn't actually desire any more out of life than this; when it is denied him, and his prepossessing innocence is stripped from him- "Open the window and let the

foul air out. It was good green corn before the harvest" (IM, 502)- this black Adam must cultivate a new mask, a new pose, tempered by a view of man that is no longer essentially benevolent. At the end of the novel, which is the redemptive beginning, black Adam has yet to rise again from his latest fall.

In a general way the novel is divided into four sections utilizing in each both naturalism and surrealism to implement the internal logic of Adamic invisibility. First, his expulsion from the Uncle Tom "Eden" University; second, his first and disastrous confrontation with the world of capital and labor in the "Optic-white" paint factory; third, his career as a professional demagogue for the Brotherhood who subsume him within the dialectic of their particular view of history; finally, his qualified rejection of all things pertaining to time, especially history and the different uses to which history puts all men. "For they were men outside of historical time, they were untouched"[15] (IM, 381). History corrupts innocence and moves from linear point to point, whereas time in the Adamic world in which each man is an innocent, no matter how many times he falls, is circular and brings him back to new beginnings that can be in themselves redemptive. The fall into the manhole in the last chapter, in other words, is only one of a series. In the first section of the novel black Adam is driven from Uncle Tom, "Eden" University, for having exposed its most influential trustee, Mr. Norton, to the squalid realities that circumscribe the university. Norton is, as one of the celebrants at the Golden Day gin mill describes him, "the Messiah" (IM, 73), "the Creator" (IM, 74), a solid-faced man whose arrival corresponds with creation. To some he is the "great white father"; to others he is "the lyncher of souls" (IM, 86), seeking his own destiny in the achievements of blacks who in their success as farmers, doctors, lawyers or whatever, extend some reflection of Norton through time and space. In other words, only as reflections of him and not as human beings do they exist. Another observer at the Golden Day remarks to Norton, "this boy, made of the very clay of this region, sees far less than you. Poor stumbler, neither

of you can see the other. And you, for all your power, are not a man to him, but a force, a God" (IM, 87). For his inadvertent introduction of Norton, god-the-father, to the unprogrammed life of Jim Trueblood and the revelers at the Golden Day, black Adam is driven from "here within this quiet eternal greenness, the only identity I had ever known" (IM, 91). He cannot understand those "who had set me here in this Eden" (IM, 101), "the old country" (IM, 153), and he cannot reconcile in his heart the fear that he may never see again "the sort of earth which I identified with the best of all possible worlds" (IM, 138). (Catchy phrase that.) Just as the bus taking him North into an industrial descent from which there will be a subsequent rising sweeps by the campus of "Eden" University, a cottonmouth moccasin "wriggled swiftly along the gray concrete, vanishing into a length of iron pipe. I watched the flashing past of cotton fields and cabins, feeling that I was moving down into the unknown" (IM, 139). Before this time it had never occured to black Adam that evil was anything except unsuccess in a pathetic black bourgeois dream of America. Now his doubts begin to rise, and the final advice given him by one of the insane inhabitants of the Golden Day who is being deported from the mental asylum nearby to a similar asylum in Washington is "Be your own father, young man" (IM, 139). It will be a long time, a great reckoning in a little coal room, before black Adam can assume this penultimate identity.

The time structure of the novel in a manner befitting the Adamic mode is measured in terms of seasons. We are never told, for example, that the narrator was expelled in April or when he arrived in New York. The Civil War is a presence in the novel to which some of the characters implicitly refer. The race riot that concludes the novel could have occurred anytime between 1927 and 1943. Ellison was himself in New York in 1943, but such information is irrelevant. Quite obviously, then, this deliberate fogging is a device for suggesting that only nature is capable of measuring the circular passage of time in the Adamic redemptive world. Clocks measure history which is inferent,

linear; black Adam is working desperately to step outside history, although at this point in the novel he does not realize this himself.

Before rising to his second fall in New York, black Adam, in the office of the son of a trustee of his former college, learns that his worst nightmare has come true. In an act of charity somewhat obscured by ulterior sexual motives, young Emerson allows Adam to read the testimonial from his old college president, Bledsoe, that Adam has carried with him from "Eden". It says, in effect, "Keep this nigger boy running" (in his nightmare his grandfather had prophesized this legacy), for "he has gone grieviously astray, and who in his fall threatens to upset certain delicate relationships" (IM, 168). In the event that we may have missed the drift of his thinking, a few pages later the narrator tells us that as a result of his humiliation, "his mind flew in circles," and down in the streets he begins to hum an old South Carolina Negro song.

O well they picked poor Robin clean
O well they picked poor Robin clean
Well they tied poor Robin to a stump
Lawd, they picked all the feathers round
from Robin's rump
Well they picked poor Robin clean.

Folk traditions, black and white alike, in South Carolina commonly designate poor Robin with fallen Adam.[16] "But who was Robin and for what had he been humiliated?" (IM, 170).

At the hospital in the "Optic White Paint Factory" where he is recovering from an industrial explosion (a nonliteral correlative for his shattered state of mind) Adam is the victim of an electrical pre-frontal lobotomy after which his "mind is a blank, as though I had just begun to live" (IM, 203). The doctors who attend him see him in a glass darkly, refuse to acknowledge him as anything but an expendable "nigger" in the labor force. When he acquiesces to their judgment, they release him "in the grip of some alien personality lodged deep within me" (IM, 217). What had been at first at least a limited success in the acquisition of some kind of job now becomes the fragmentation of a fractured personality trying to work its way

back to natural sources. In the subway he feels "a current sweeping against him, and I felt I would fall again, had fallen. We, he, him- my mind and I- were no longer getting around in the same circles" (IM, 218). Not only invisible, but now divisible, this figure of expanding innocence must strain to focus a world gone mad in the processes of dehumanization. What he requires here is a mask, but Adam has difficulty in discovering one that is appropriate for one who is invisible. It will not be until he stumbles upon the world of Rinehart, the numbers runner, that he will find a face suitable to allow him finally to see the world as the world is not. In beginning this new phase of his initiation that will lead him into becoming a dupe for the Brotherhood, the communist party, however, he must first perform the ritual of baptism with a foul spitoon on the head of a man in the lobby of the Men's House whom he mistakes for the president of "Eden" University. The act washes away his own thoroughgoing naivete ("You really baptized the old Reverend") and thus vindicates somewhat his former folly. As a reward for his ritual Adam is "banished" from the Men's House for ninety-nine years. Still, he retains his innocence.

In the arms of the Brotherhood, Adam is encouraged to leave off his "pastoral ways" and to think scientifically, i.e., like a good positivist who sees himself (if he can) as a diminutive part of the historical dialectic. The individual is not important: only man in the aggregate. In order to accomplish this, Adam is given money and new lodgings and sent to receive indoctrination from Brother Hambro- Ham, the black son of Adam who has strayed far from his edenic origins. On his way up town, Adam stops at a clothing store to perform the first of a series of three "busks"[17] by which he prepares himself for a rebirth and a new rising. "Even my hat would go; its green was sun-faded and brown, like a leaf stuck in the winter's snows. I would require a new one for my new name" (IM, 273). Now ready to exhort the black masses in a proper frame of mind (on the surface anyway), Adam plunges into history in the form of the

dispossessed of Harlem. His speeches are exciting and a trifle visionary but soon he is let loose before a large multitude at an abandoned boxing arena. He believes his own words, although the Brotherhood doesn't, weighing them as a little more than dangerous but at the moment useful tools toward a greater end, quite unfathomable to Adam. He roars to the crowd in evangelical fashion:

> I feel suddenly I have become more human. Do you understand? More human? Not that I have become a man, for I was born a man. But that I am more human. I feel strong... after a long and desperate and uncommonly rough journey, I have come home-- Home! With your eyes upon me I feel that I have found my true family! I am a new citizen of the country of your vision, a native of your fraternal land. I feel that here tonight, in this old arena, the new is being born and the vital old revived. In each of you, in me, in all of us.
>
> SISTERS! BROTHERS!
> WE ARE THE TRUE PATRIOTS! THE CITIZENS OF TOMORROW'S WORLD!
> WE'LL BE DISPOSSESSED NO MORE!
>
> (IM, 300)

Adam is overwhelmed with adulation from the crowd, although the Brotherhood is worried and looks upon the speech as basically reactionary. But Adam is on his way in his movement outside history. He does not fully understand the motives of the Brotherhood, but he is on the edge of some discovery that will release him finally. Later in the quiet of his own room, he reflects, "We create the race by creating ourselves and then to our great astonishment we have created something far more important: We will have created a culture" (IM, 307). Having created a self independent of historical ideology and the institutions it fosters, one is free to chose from the limitations of mortality. In short, one becomes his own Adam seeing the world for the first time and naming its parts. But black Adam has not yet reached this point of Aristotelian clarification. It will take a withdrawal from society into the absurd and the subsequent death of Tod Clifton to convince him that "the end

is in the beginning and lies far ahead" (IM, 9).

Sent out of Harlem because as an individual he has become more relevant than the Brotherhood itself, Adam returns to Morningside Park to deliver Clifton's funeral oration. His words in the terrible heat under the afternoon sun inspire the riot that occurs later that night. As it picks up momentum and hysterical rhythm under Ras the Exhorter, become Ras the Destroyer, a Harlem Black Nationalist, the riot after sundown gets completely out of hand and becomes a full-fledged race riot. Now Adam has been disowned by the Brotherhood and is hunted as a traitor to his own race by the Black Nationalists. He is more vulnerable than ever, his invisibility being a quality and not a condition. Quite by accident he steps into a drug store and acquires a pair of sunglasses. Once out in the street again he is immediately mistaken for the Rev. Bliss Proteus Rinehart, alias "Rine the Runner," "Rine the Briber," "Rine the Lover," and "Rine the Reverend." Aware of the possibilities of all these multiple personalities, he trembles with the realization that history cannot hurt you if it cannot find you, use you, pin you down. Rinehart, he concludes, maintains his innocence inviolate behind masks which he "sheds" with extraordinary facility. Suddenly his vision is clear and Adam meditates upon a future that promises redemption through multiple self creation. "Threatened by his own unfolding personality as much as by the whites, the Negro learns to camouflage, to dissimulate, to retreat behind a protective mask: the mask is a means of warding off the vengeance of the gods."[18] Trying to find his way out of the whirlwind of the riot, Adam is compelled as if by magic to help lead the rioters in creating a literal husk of their own rat-infested apartment house. With wild abandon he runs from room to room sloshing coal oil on the walls and decayed objects in the top floor. When the house goes up in flames, he feels as one awakened from "a long sleep" and wonderfully cleansed. Compared to this, his third husk in the coal hole wherein he burns the contents of a scholarship-awarded

briefcase is almost bathetic. For in his final busk he burns what he has already shed when he put on a pair of sunglasses similar to Rinehart's. "I started with my high school diploma, Clifton's doll, a slip of paper with my anonymous name from the Brotherhood" (IM, 491). For the moment his Adamic identity is transcendent; he knows who he is and "who I was and where I was and knowing too that I had no longer to run from the Jacks and the Emersons and the Bledsoes and the Nortons, but only from their confusion, impatience, and refusal to recognize the beautiful absurdity of their American identity and mine" (IM, 483). "The Prologue" and the "Epilogue" are after all extraneous, "buggy jiving." The national identity crisis is over right here in the coal hole of a great American tradition. Further confusions with the myth of Prometheus stealing light from Con Edison are brilliant but unnecessary. When Louis Armstrong's trumpet sounds, one of these days, black Adam will come forth redeemed in the natural light of day.

If one is able to detect a measurable note of affirmation from the great documents which "form the ground of assumptions upon which our social values rest" in black Adam's last vision, one searches in vain for such affirmation in the corrosive vision of Nathaniel West who invokes those assumptions for the sole purpose of illuminating the absurdities in them. He is the great American nay-sayer, and his weltanschauung contains a prospect of the American garden totally unredeemed. "It discloses that our inherited symbols of order and beauty have been divested of meaning. It compels us to recognize that the aspirations once represented by the symbol of an ideal landscape have not, and probably cannot, be embodied in our traditional institutions."[19] The promise of an Edenic democratic America is a lie, fostering illusions that eat away slowly and inexorably on the bowels of the "last great hope of mankind." Not even Adam, the nameless Miss Lonelyhearts with his "Old Testament look," "a priest of twentieth-century America," can sustain love and a primal innocence in a world in which there is no longer a center

but only revolutions around a nothing, an abyss. Here, in this world, is no extended genesis, for there lurks behind every redeemed beginning the spectre of entropy:

> Mandolins are tuned G D A E. The physical world has a tropism for disorder, entropy. Man against Nature... the battle of the centuries. Keys yearn to mix with change. Mandolins strive to get out of tune. Every order has within it the germ of destruction. All order is doomed, yet the battle is worthwhile
>
> (ML, 104)

for any Adam who, as Shrike says, "will lead us in the way of attainment" (ML, 133).

The plot of Miss Lonelyhearts (1933) can be summed up in two sentences. The hero is an anonymous dispenser of moral courage to the suffering of humanity in a daily newspaper column. He is murdered by a insidious cripple whose suffering, along with that of all the moral cripples in the democratic middle to lower strata of twentieth-century America, he (Miss Lonelyhearts) has tried to mend. Men have always fought misery with their dreams, but these victims of the shibboleths of Emersonian Self-Reliance in technological industrial America are fresh out of them. "Although dreams were once powerful, they have been made puerile by the movies, radio and newspapers. Among many betrayals, this one is the worst" (ML, 115). This compassionate Adam, "who aches with amorous love," like Whitman, defines himself as a "humanity lover" although his editorial boss, Shrike, more fittingly defines him as a "Leper licker." He is purposefully nameless, faceless (we are never told one detail of his appearance except that he wore a "cheap suit that was overly stylish") and though fallen, doggedly innocent. "He has a true religious vocation or calling, but no institutional church to embody it."[21] He can no longer dispense Christian piety in his columns because he can no longer believe in Christ. "If he could only believe in Christ, then adultery would be a sin, then everything would be simple and the letters

extremely easy to write, to answer" (ML, 99). Seeing his threshold of despair, his boss, Shrike, ("The name is marvelously apt. The shrike impales its prey on thorns, and the name is a form of the word 'shriek')[22] almost without interruption attacks Miss Lonelyhearts because of his very innocence, because he attempts to love, and like Adam feels some responsibility for his "children." Miss Lonelyhearts refers to letters from the dispossessed as "his thorns"; at a party thrown by Shrike to torment Miss Lonelyhearts, Shrike sadistically reads aloud letters addressed to the Lonelyhearts column, and by this gesture Miss Lonelyhearts is figuratively impaled on the thorns of the butcherbird. Shrike therefore is not only a bird but the serpent in the garden, as well, that Adam-Lonelyhearts wants so desperately to believe is still there. "He's an escapist. He wants to cultivate his interior garden. But you cannot escape, and where is he going to find a market for the fruits of his personality? The Farm Board is a failure" (ML, 84). To Shrike, who symbolizes the basic values of an industrial society, America is not a garden but a market where everything and everyone is for sale. The game at the party is called "Everyman his own Miss Lonelyhearts," and it "cannot be played without you" (Miss Lonelyhearts). After telling those at the party that in answer to their abiding misery, Lonelyhearts will "provide you with an absolute value and a raison d'etre," he concludes by delivering the gospel of the American Adam:

> Let me tell you about his Lonelyhearts
> Life. It unrolls before me like a scroll.
> First in the dawn of childhood, radiant
> with a pure innocence, like a rain-washed
> star, he wends his weary way to the
> University of Hard Knocks. Next a youth, etc.
>
> (ML, 135)

The allegory here is heavy because Shrike is a heavy, incapable of realizing any kind of innocence. Like Lonelyhearts, he is faceless, (except as an abstract metaphor) but unlike Lonelyhearts he has almost nothing human about him. He is the butcherbird evolved from the serpent in the tainted and unredeemed

garden of American nature. Nothing will content him but the utter disintegration of human innocence.[23]

In the same scene in which Shrike declares that Lonelyhearts is an escapist who wants to "cultivate his interior garden," Adam-Lonelyhearts leaves the bar and meditates on the "metallic" Shrike, who, like his followers and contemporaries in the post-lapsarian world of the novel, is a "machine for making jokes. A button machine makes buttons, no matter what the power used, foot, steam or electricity" (ML, 76). Appropriately, Shrike's wife, Mary, wears "metallic perfume" and in her carriage pantomimes a machine, is "cleanly mechanical." What has driven Adam-Lonelyhearts and his kind from Eden in West's rendering is the machine in the garden, though here Henry Adams' pulsating dynamo has become "a button machine" that reduces life in the industrial United States "to the worst joke of all." Lonelyhearts' meditation continues. What will content them (Shrike and the others)? "Was their nonsense the only barrier" he must overcome to make them see some harmonious relation between man and nature? He returns to the bar, thinking:

> One winter evening, he had been waiting with his little sister for their father to come home from church. She was eight years old, then, and he was twelve. He had gone to the piano and had begun a piece by Mozart. It was the first time he had ever voluntarily gone to the piano. His sister left her picture book to dance to his music. She had never danced before. She danced gravely and carefully, a simple dance yet formal.. As Miss Lonelyhearts stood at the bar, swaying slightly to the remembered music, he thought of children dancing. Square replacing oblong and being replaced by the circle. Every child, everywhere; in the whole world, there was not one child who was not gravely, sweetly dancing.[24]
>
> (ML, 84)

Even at this point the meliorist Lonelyhearts-Adam tries to conceive of a world where square replaces oblong and circle replaces square, for it is at this juncture that history collapses and time is no longer able to penetrate the circle in which we are brought back to our Adamic beginnings. His meditation,

however, is short-lived. As he turns from the bar, accidentally he bumps someone (20th-century America). "When he turned to beg the man's pardon, he received a punch in the mouth. The hurdle was higher than he thought." Moreover, his ascent from the barroom floor back to the heights of his Edenic vision of innocence in which children are gravely dancing is too much for even a "humanity lover." There is only one person who touches his life capable of helping him redeem the vision of the garden and the dancing children. And that is Eve.

"Miss Lonelyhearts identifies Betty as the principle of order."[25] In her naturalness she is the counterforce to Shrike's anti-natural wife, Mary. "Betty told him about her childhood on a farm and of her love for animals, about country sounds and smells and of how fresh and clean everything in the country is. She said that he ought to live there and that if he did, he would find that all his troubles were city troubles" (ML, 106). Hers is a pastoral world, redeemed by love, and populated by unfallen creatures. Steadfastly she believes in the "curative power of animals," and Adam-Lonelyhearts is amused by the fact that "She seemed to think it must steady him to look at a buffalo" (ML, 111). In an attempt to turn him away from the certain abyss of insanity toward which he is heading, Betty takes Lonelyhearts back to his sources to resurrect his faith in beginnings. In a borrowed car they motor to the home of her "first parents," and upon arriving "she began to act like an excited child, greeting the trees and grass with delight" (ML, 112). During the second day of their pastoral interlude they walk about naked, swim, and make love in the Fifth month grass. But it is to no avail. Adam-Lonelyhearts has fallen too far to see himself as a part of Betty's unfallen nature. He is now an alien, And nature is a strange land "filled with a horrible racket in the woods somewhere and when it quit, a loon began down on the pond. The crickets made as much noise as the loon" (ML, 113). Indeed, he is so far removed from the redeeming power of nature that he felt "in the deep shade there was nothing

but death- rotten leaves, gray and white fungi, and over everything a funeral hush" (ML, 114). Before leaving Betty's garden, Adam-Lonelyhearts observes that "the new green leaves hung straight down and shone in the hot sun like an army of little metal shields. Somewhere in the woods a thrush was singing. Its sound was like that of a flute choked with saliva" (ML, 114). Even nature has surrendered, making way for the great changeover from the organic to the inorganic which is the plight of life lived in the American garden. For West natural facts are no longer symbols of spiritual realities: Emerson and transcendentalism are as completely gone as if they "had been rubbed out with a soiled eraser" (ML, 71). But wouldn't it be nice, says West, speaking through the character of Betty and aware of his grained American traditions, if it were not so? The novel ends with the grotesque murder of Adam-Lonelyhearts in the arms of the cripple- one of the "Desperate, Broken-hearted, Sick-of-it-all." Adam had been "running to succor them with love."

Of West's other three novels, only two continue his preoccupation with Adamism and a view of the American garden as essentially tainted and unredeeming. A Cool Million or, The Dismantling of Lemuel Pitkin (1934) is so transparently Adamic in theme and structure that to read it critically would be as much a waste of time as pointing to an elephant and saying, "He is very large." Where West departs from his way of working in his earlier novel is in his insistence upon laying the blame for all of us having been driven out of the garden onto the steps of the American capitalist, whose greed and immoral inhumanity has allowed him to take advantage of a nation of Adams, who foolishly believe in that body of assumptions deriving from the great American documents of state. Viewed in the context of the American left of the decade of the late sixties and early seventies, West's Marxism is pretty mild stuff. "Writing just after the accession of Hitler, West felt the vulnerability of America to totalitarianism disguised as superpatriotism, and he makes it disturbingly convincing."[26] It has taken almost

forty years for another intellectual Jew to write a sequel of sorts to A Cool Million, and Revolution for the Hell of It, making many of the same points West had made, probably does a better job of communicating the chaos into which the American Adam has been swept in fiction. Before discussing Hoffman's Revolution, however, it would be appropriate to finish a brief examination of West's last novel.

The Day of the Locust (1939) is a difficult novel to appraise because there is too much of it that hangs in the air suspended, never to be fused with what finally purports to be the theme of the novel, i.e., a canvas entitled "The Burning of Los Angeles," a microcosmic busk of the firing of American civilization by the almost-hero, Tod Hackett. But the novel remains unresolved because West cannot determine on which protagonist the emphasis properly lies: on Hackett or Homer "Adam" Simpson. Aesthetically, the novel moves the reader as if he were a screamer with a hand clapped over his mouth. There is hardly resolution enough, reading it as critics have in the past, to adjudicate the scream. From one third of the way through the novel to the end, the hands of Homer-Adam crawl with an identity quite their own. In the bathtub, for example, Homer's hands bathe independent of Homer: "He kept his enormous hands folded quietly on his belly. Although absolutely still, they seemed curbed rather than resting" (DL, 289). The evidence supporting the unused conceit of Homer's hands is overwhelming throughout the novel, but as Hyman says, "West let it all go to waste." But not quite. If Homer is a benumbed Adam and Faye a mindless Eve, and Adore Loomis, whom Homer kills in the middle of the riot at the conclusion of the novel, is a representation of what nature in the American garden has become, it's all rather clear. The problem is that Homer kills Adore, the child-star, by stomping him to death rather than killing him with his hands- which would have realized the full potential of the conceit. Given a few minor changes- e.g., making the murder more deliberate and having Homer use his hands in the murder- West could have turned the corner to some aesthetic resolution. Let me explain further.

Homer-Adam hails from where James Fenimore Cooper in The

Pioneer last left him, that is, the mid-west. Adam-Natty Bumppo's dying word lying on a birch-pallet facing the sunset in the West, in other words, facing California, is "'Here!'" Natty Bumppo came to the Mid-west prairie to die; Homer Simpson "came to California also to die, perfect in every detail down to fever eyes and unruly hands" (DL, 411). Like Natty Bumppo he has never known a woman. Like Natty Bumppo, he never will. His fascination for Faye Greener (read green-er) is as natural and complementing as the violence in the American grain that permeates the novel. She "smelled like buck-wheat in flower and her beauty was structural like a tree's, not a quality of her mind or heart." Even after she has become a whore, a trivial matter to Homer, "She looked just born, everything moist and fresh, volatile and perfumed." She is, as Homer tells Tod Hackett, "a wholesome child." But this Eve is an American Lilith on whom all the men in the novel, from the cowboy to the dwarf to Homer, wish to smash themselves. Underneath her "egg-like self-sufficiency" there is something fundamentally decayed and rotting. She is so many faces and so many poses gleaned from the pages of motion picture magazines that someone as natural and innocent as Homer is incapable of judging her out of the context of her false Edenic wholeness. His attraction to her is in his Adamic blood, welling up out of some primordial source in him he cannot begin to understand. Only his hands understand fully what is going on: they strain to curl around the throat of an anti-Eve.

What the myth of the American garden was and what it has become in California where it cannot go any further is summed up in the character of the child-star Adore Loomis in whom West sees nature gone mad. Eight years old, he has "plucked eyebrows," and he sings a salacious song to Homer and Tod Hackett in the back garden at Homer's house fraught with overtones of rank sensuality:

> he seemed to know what the words meant, or at least his body and his voice seemed to know. When he came

> to the final chorus, his buttocks
> writhed and his voice carried a
> top-heavy load of sexual pain.
>
> (DL, 364)

Like everything else in California, for West, Adore, (nature) along with poor somebody's mother enjoying her third face-job and a new tint of lilac hair in the supermarket, is the obverse of everything that grows graciously in the redeemed garden. In Adore the summation is complete, and it is fitting that Homer-Adam should stamp out this gross distortion of what nature has become in the height of the riot. It is a pity, however, that he did not strangle him, if for nothing else, for the sake of aesthetic unity.

In undertaking a study of Hoffman's Revolution for the Hell of It[27] (1968) one starts with a working premise that bears itself out significantly in the mythology of American life, i.e., that each evolution from the left on the American political spectrum leads back inevitably to an inner core of Adamic anarchy rather than to an outer core of adjusted and adjusting compromise, as is the case with evolutionary movement on the right of the political spectrum. The inner circle narrows to a dimensionless original beginning that exists as the natural garden for all those who profess themselves to be their own government. Abbie Hoffman's political evolution from intellectual liberalism at Brandeis to moderate socialism to marxism to the ultimate dissolution of all property and existing institutions is a good example of this. It is no accident, I think, that a number of those whom I have cited in the role of Adam in this study see themselves in one shape or another as anarchists-sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively. It may be the anarchist's bomb has as much tradition in American life as the busk. Gasoline in a coca-cola bottle stuffed with a rag is just another way of making it new, giving it new life, starting a new beginning. From the anarchist's point of view, anyway. Even someone as far to the right (on the surface at any rate) as the Republican Wallace Stevens will occasionally turn words

into bombs-

> Remus, blow your horn!
> I'm ploughing on Sunday,
> Ploughing North America.
> Blow your horn!
>
> Tum-ti-tum,
> Ti-tum-tum-tum!
> The turkey cock's tail
> Spreads to the sun.
>
> (CP, 377)

-when he despairs of the state of the garden in North America.

> The gardener's cat is dead, the gardener gone
> And last year's garden grows salacious weeds.
>
> A complex of emotions falls apart,
> In an abandoned spot.
>
> (CP, 377)

To be more precise, one might say that when the imagination cannot support the Adamic vision in Stevens' work, the poem, as a general rule, even though it might start in clarity, will dissolve "into incoherence and nonwords."[28] The process is like an aesthetic bomb going off in the cluttered area between the perceiver and the thing perceived. I do not wish to push this too far beyond subjective limits, but that is the way I react to Stevens' nonwords. The narrator in The Invisible Man in his journeys back to his real identity throws a few bombs himself and is the beneficiary of their cleansing flames. Finally, Lonelyhearts-Adam, sitting in a gin mill listening to Shrike abuse his natural rights to the redeemed garden, conforms to the pattern, also.

> Miss Lonelyhearts drank steadily. He was smiling an innocent smile, the smile of the anarchist sitting in the movies with a bomb in his pocket. If the people around him only knew what was in his pocket. In a little while he would leave to kill the President.
>
> (ML, 83)

Like A Cool Million, Revolution For the Hell of It is a formless, non-organic stringing together of incidents, most of which purport to be comic. Both novels exhibit a

pervasive fear of fascism; both are thoroughly Adamic. Lemuel Pitkin is more a caricature than a character, who becomes a dupe by steadfastly maintaining his innocence to his martyred end. Free, from Hoffman's Revolution, is a master of disguises who uses his innocence as a weapon "to fuck the system"- always ready to become a martyr in the name of the abolition of private property and the reclamation of nature. "Nobody owns fucking nature" (Rev, 18). Under the skin all Adams are brothers sharing in the natural joys of the garden. "We're all brothers when we are naked," says Free. "Did you ever see a fight in a steam bath? But cops in uniform are a different story. Actually, all uniforms are enemies. Just another extension of machine living. The way we dress- in costumes- is in direct opposition to a uniform culture" (Rev, 72). In the new society envisioned by Free there are no leaders and everybody goes naked. "Each morning begin naked. Destroy your name, become unlisted, go underground" (Rev, 34). One dramatic manifestation of the New Society of The Festival Life in time present is the Free Store which can be stocked and staffed- free. "When people ask how the store is run, tell them 'by the rays of the sun'" (Rev, 155). In a Free Store there are no problems: there are only things to do:

> It is a free forum of theatre in which the forces of art battle the forces of garbage. Who wins is unimportant, for the Free Store is a school and the student is repeatedly forced by the vacuum to choose sides. Which side are you on? Are you a garbage collector or are you an artist? The choice is always yours in the FREE STORE."
>
> (Rev, 155)

In a true Adamic fashion Free tells us to be an artist, to create ourselves through masks, through instant guerilla theatre in the streets or on the New York Stock Exchange in a spontaneous play called, "Burning Money."

> I can only relate to history as a personal anarchist, a revolutionary artist. If that sounds egotistical,

> tough shit. My concept of reality comes from what I see, touch and feel. The rest, as far as I'm concerned, didn't happen. I am my own leader. I make my own rules. The revolution is wherever my boots hit the ground.
>
> (Rev, 118)

The "Festival of Life," of which the FREE STORE is only a prelude, is a liberation of the Adamic self from history, which is the chronicle of machines and their servants. "The myths of America are strong and good but the institutional machine is a trap of death" (Rev, 89). In the first chapter of Revolution Free recounts the biblical story of Abraham and Issac, pointing out that Abraham committed his son to the whim of God the Father because he trusted his impulses.[29] "Inside he knows because he is God, which is to say, a Man and not a machine" (Rev, 16). The effect of Abraham's decision reverberates down through the centuries until the present moment in which it can hardly be heard. He was close to his origins, and by his act of faith he was a god made whole by confrontation, the consummate occupation of his twentieth-century namesake. Hating the machine, Free nevertheless realizes that it must be put to use in order to destroy it. But how? Not through words "which are the absolute in horseshit. Rely on doing- go all the way. Move fast." (Rev, 33). Create a myth, Free suggests. Any myth. "Something that people can play a role in, can relate to. "This is especially true of media people who become participants in the creation of a myth by distorting, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not, the world under their nose. In instant theatre the "play's the thing" and not what really happened. An excellent example of this principle is the YIP-IN which occurred at the New York Stock Exchange on May 20, 1967. With a group of merry tourists Free and his Yippie brethern were allowed to tour the "big board" when suddenly they went into wild antics, burning and throwing money down on the brokers below them who cheered them on. After having been thrown out, Free "carried-on" before the media who had been alerted before hand.

> "Who are you?"
> "I'm Cardinal Spellman."
> "Where did you get the money?"
> "I'm Cardinal Spellman. Don't ask me where I get my money."

In retrospect Free comments: "Every news report differed. Some said we threw out monopoly money, some said twenty-three dollars, some said over $100.00, some said the bills were all ripped up first. It was a perfect mythical event" (Rev, 37). When the Festival of Life is realized, Free-Adam declares, he will start his own newspaper called the New York Liar. It would be the most honest newspaper in the country because Free

> would sit in a closet and write all the news. The paper would be printed with lemon juice, which is invisible until you heat it with an iron, hence involving the reader. I would write about events without ever leaving the closet. The point is, we all live in dark closets.
>
> (Rev, 69)

Free's analysis of television- "The commercial is information. The news program rhetoric. The commercial is the figure; the program is the ground" is a happy tribute to his masters McLuhan and Fiore. His practical use of this analysis at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago served him well as a tactical weapon against those who didn't care for his particular politics. Free saw the convention itself as the ground, the rhetoric; the demonstrations outside the hall he saw as the figure, or the action, carefully built up to lure away the media from the staged hypocrisy of Mayor Daly and friends behind the locked doors of the convention.

> WE CAN NEVER BE SHUT OUT. The public would rebel against the attempt to impose a dull ground upon an exciting figure. I'm sure what pissed off a good number of viewers was the fact that they were being forced to watch a dull, Meet-the-Press, Democratic Convention when, in fact, what they wanted to see was the Cops vs. Yippies football game taking place on the streets of Chicago.
>
> (Rev, 138)

For Free-Adam, instant guerilla theatre is geared toward summer. "I have to live in total summer if I am to survive" (Rev, 64). Moreover, the last stronghold of nature in which Adam can survive in a machine-oriented, urban culture is the park until the Festival of Life is come to pass. In the park is love, freedom, greeness, children, flowers, grass; in institutions (including any church) is regimentation, repression, sterility and death. In the park, drugs evaporate time, easing man outside the continuum of history, whereas in institutions time controls even the natural functions of the body. Hence at a YIP-IN in Grand Central station, demonstrators pulled the hands off the clock which triggered "a police" riot. Why did the revelers do this? "I don't know," says Free. "Maybe they hate time" (Rev, 73).

If "Jesus is a trick on niggers," as Hazel Motes tells the cab driver in Wise Blood,[30] Flannery O'Connor herself is a trick on critics, who, taking careful note of Miss O'Connor's sincere commitment to Roman Catholicism, seem consistently to ignore the fact that fiction is not apologetics and never has been. Reading the entire body of her work in vacuo, without benefit of any critical scholarship or her later public utterances that tend to obscure the works, one would be hardpressed, I think, to come up with such conclusions as her vision "everywhere is directed by a sacramental view of life."[31] Such an unwarranted judgment, partly Miss O'Connor's own fault, is deserving of a further explanation, and we are provided with one:

> The sacramental view, is, of course, more than the transformation of an object into a sign of the mystery that resides in the created universe; as the term itself says, it is a vision of reality focused through the seven sacraments which constitute the means of recognizing and accepting divine grace. The sacramental view thus provides for man's discovery of his place in the divine scheme.[32]

While not denying that O'Connor's work is profoundly religious

in the sense that it explores the destiny of Adamic man and the conflicting images of God buried deep within him, I would have to disagree with any notion that her corpus "maintains and supports at every turn the sacramental vision that the story teller must have if he is going to write fiction of any depth."[33] Measured against the work itself, the logic of this statement is devastating insofar as readers as careful as Jean Paul Sartre have hailed Wise Blood, for better or for worse, as "exciting existential pronouncement."[34] To argue that Paradise Lost is not first of all a poem is to defend the indefensible. To substitute theology for aesthetics and craftsmanship is as indefensible as substituting rules of football for international chess. What Miss O'Connor is trying to say, I guess, without much help from her critics, is that she is attempting to define the positive by means of the negative pole. That is, she creates characters and situations so repulsive, so lacking in hope, that the mind almost in self-defense turns from grotesque spectacle to the ideal, thus making possible "a slow participation toward redemption."

> I am no disbeliever in spiritual purpose and no vague believer. I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. This means that for me the meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ and that what I see I see in relation to that.[35]

The more vicious life becomes, the more intensely she is drawn to going back to "the lost innocence of our first parents and our return is through the Redemption."[36] Quite obviously making transparent an acceptance of the Redemption in any fiction is a serious risk of which Miss O'Connor is not unaware.

> The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural: and he may well be forced to take ever more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience. When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, you can relax a little and use more normal ways of talking to it; when you have to

> assume that it does not, then you have to make your vision by shock- to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures.37

Notwithstanding, I don't wish to get in over my boots in this, for I am mainly concerned here only with her first novel, Wise Blood (1952), in which the transparency reveals not an image of the Redemption but the blinded unredeemed face of a thoroughly broken American Adam.

In the "Author's Note" to the second edition of Wise Blood (1962) Miss O'Connor made some attempt to clear up the confusion she had created in her pre-occupation with the Redemption back in 1957. After second thoughts she refers to her comic novel as "about a Christian malgré lui, and as such, very serious," which is a good enough place to start in an evaluation of Hazel Motes although the reader will have to judge in the end whether or not there is any change in the color of Hazel's commitment to Christianity- malgré lui. To begin with it is clear that we are confronted with the image of a man who is a complete innocent and a mystery, especially before himself. His first act after having been discharged from the army "where he was pleased to know he was still uncorrupted" is to return to his home in Eastrod, Tennessee, (read East of the Cross) with the picture of Jesus, as with his father before him, "hidden in his head like a stinger" (WB, 15). In his first home, "Eden," however, all the inhabitants are dead or "have been driven away" through poverty. Nothing remains of his former life but a house set at precarious angles to the weather and the sad end of his mother's "shiffer-robe." To this chest he attaches a caveat to any passing thief and departs with the intention of returning one day to reclaim his "Shiffer-robe" legacy. On one level there is nothing to return to but a recognition of original sin and the fallen nature of man, but at the source of the internal logic of the novel he is already there, back again, and does not need to return- for wherever he is is innocence and a refusal to accept sin as a condition of mortality. Hence

wherever he is is Eden; nor is he out of it, despite the fact that he visits Leora Watts, the whore, repeatedly, and runs down and murders Solace Layfield, his anti-Adam doppelganger. Like Miss Lonelyhearts Hazel can achieve conviction in neither Christ nor a belief in sin.

> There was already a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin. He knew by the time he was twelve years old that he was going to be a preacher. Later he saw Jesus move from tree to tree in the back of his mind, a wild ragged figure motioning him to turn around and come off into the dark where he was not sure of his footing.
>
> (WB, 16)

Like Miss Lonelyhearts, Haze has a humanistic, Adamic vocation but no institutional church in which to embody it. (Who but Emerson would ever send a child to an Adamic church?) Therefore it is not long before he forms his own church called "The Church Without Christ Crucified," in which there was "no Fall because there was nothing to fall from and no Redemption because there was no fall and no judgment because there wasn't the first two. Nothing matters but that Jesus was a liar" (WB, 61).

After leaving Eastrod and setting up in Taulkinham (Atlanta) where he meets his first disciple in "The Church Without Christ," Enoch Emory, Haze begins to realize how difficult it is to convince even himself that original sin is merely a word rather than a condition of the history of man on earth. Walking down the street with Enoch in hot pursuit of a blinded Jesus-preacher and his daughter, Lilly Sabbath Hawks, Haze remembers a guilty moment from childhood in which has mother beat him "across the legs with a stick, but he was part of the tree." She beat him for no reason other than he was there "with a nameless unplaced guilt in him" (WB, 39), arising on the surface from his having caught a glimpse of a naked woman in a coffin at a carnival. The guilt was "in his eyes in spite of the fact he knew he was clean." In the new church, "The Church Without Christ," such nameless and placeless guilt would be washed away by a new Jesus.

"Give me this new Jesus, somebody," Haze screams before a crowd in downtown Atlanta, "so we'll all be saved" (WB, 79). Not complete in himself even though for some reason "he is part of the tree," Haze must find some satisfaction outside himself that will confirm an inner knowledge of his natural sanctity. Standing on the outside of the crowd and listening to Haze's sermon on the street corner, Enoch, the disciple, suddenly receives messages from his wise blood. "Listen here, I got him! I mean I can get him!" And he does: from a glass case in the Egyptian Room at the "MVSEVM" (Enoch is fearful of pronouncing the name of the temple from which he steals the new Jesus.) Later, upon receiving the new Jesus through the intermediary Sabbath Hawks, "He's right cute, ain't you?" Haze grabs the wizened mummy and smashes it against the wall in a scene that would surely mystify St. Thomas Aquinas himself. Such combinations as this blasphemous parody of the Holy Family and the obscenely grotesque are commonplace in the novel, and one does not have to be hard of hearing or almost totally blind to appreciate their proportions.

The progression of time in Wise Blood is curious and very skillfully handled. As in The Invisible Man and Miss Lonely-hearts nothing happens on a particular day in a particular year. Seasons pass. It is summer or winter; it doesn't matter really to Hazel Motes, who, from the very beginning of the novel, senses that time and the world move away from him on a linear trajectory as he moves back toward moral anarchy- the center of the circle that brought him into the world and will return him now to the point of light and beyond that, his landlady, widow Flood, thinks she can see with her eyes closed. On the train to Atlanta in the first pages of the novel Haze lay "in his upper birth to watch how the country went by the train." Upon arriving in Atlanta, this ambulatory, not quite self-contained "part of the tree" casts a "shadow now behind him and now before him and now and then broken up by other people's shadows, but when it was by itself, stretching behind him, it was a thin

nervous shadow walking backwards" (WB, 24). The long trek back to Bethlehem and Eve, the antichristian, antidromous Mrs. Flood, and beyond, to the beginning, unfortunately does not pass by the site of the Redemption as many critics insist. Incapable of his own salvation, Haze may be the cause of salvation- or better yet, a mystic experience, in others: namely, Mrs. Flood, who, in running away from his Adamic isolation is running toward an acceptance of the nothing Haze sees after having blinded himself with quicklime. Staring at him in horror and fascination, she wonders:

> How would he know if time was going backwards or forwards or if he was going with it? She imagined it was like you were walking in a tunnel and all you could see was a pin-point of light. She had to imagine the pin-point of light; she couldn't think of it at all without that. She saw it as some kind of star, like the star on the Christmas cards. She saw him going backwards to Bethlehem and she had to laugh.
>
> (WB, 119)

Sightlessness is a prerequisite for reading the "Book of Genesis" according to this hollow-eyed Adam. The first line reads like this. "In the beginning was nothing." As one journeys back to this paradoxical beginning, he must come to realize that he carries Eden with him, makes it himself, or there is no Eden.

> "Where you come from is gone, where you thought you were going to never was there, and where you are is no good unless you can get away from it. Where is there a place for you to be? No place.
>
> "Nothing outside you can give you any place," he said; "You needn't look at the sky because it's not going to open up and show you no place behind it. You needn't to search for any hole in the ground to look through into somewhere else. You can't go neither forwards or backwards into you daddy's time nor your children's time if you have them. In yourself right now is all the place you've got."
>
> (WB, 90)

(No wonder this novel made Jean Paul Sartre stand on his chair!) The "upper birth" or the part of consciousness that directs our animal comforts revolts against this painful knowledge. Savonarola suffers with angst and the band plays on. "He had the sense that the road was really slipping back under him." But his Adamic "wise blood" which he shares with his disciple, Enoch, tells him something "he had known all along: that there was no more country, but he didn't know there was not another city" (WB, 112). When the state trooper pushes his Essex auto over the embankment into the abyss for his not having, among other things, a driver's license, Haze acknowledges that if there is no city and not even any roads leading to it, the Essex, which up until now had been his spiritual "house," is useless anyway. ("A man got a good car he don't need to be justified," he once told a filling station mechanic.) Prior to this, he had faith in the Essex (his body-house) and a rabid belief in blasphemy; now after the demise of the Essex even blasphemy as a way to truth fails him, for "to blaspheme meant you were believing in something to blaspheme" (WB, 104). In the beginning he had preached to his sidewalk congregation that he believed only in what "you could see or hold in your hands or test with your teeth" (WB, 106). He has gone from "believing in but avoiding Jesus as a child, to preaching disbelief in Jesus, to propounding what is: from fear to blasphemy to a phenomenology in which all he can know is what he can see."[38] Eyeless now in Atlanta, Haze believes in nothing, which becomes the penultimate consequence as a new fear comes upon him. The insight that accompanies the vision of nothingness beyond his eyes tortures him into believing that he has to pay. "For what?" says Mrs. Flood. "It don't make any difference for what," he said. "I'm paying" (WB, 121).

The fact of the matter is that he has been paying all his life. Even as a small child his indulgence in mortification of the flesh was common: stones and pebbles in his Sunday shoes, denials, self-inflicted whippings and the rest of it. There never was a time when mortification was not a part of his own

private Jansenist ethic. But even as a child he hadn't the slightest idea what he was paying for. It is not until he accompanies Enoch to the museum and looks down with "eyes like two clean bullet holes" (WB, 57) on the shriveled mummy in the glass case that he sees the futility of things. Obviously the "clean bullet holes" conceit prefigures Haze's self-blinding, but the entire scene, grasped as a tableau, signifies the finality of never escaping from the flesh, which creates an aversion toward a world in which organic decay is a first principle. The nightmare he suffers just before he loses his Essex confirms this, for in it Haze is the sightless mummy inspected through the glass case of the sun-faded, oval back window of the Essex. "Various eyes looked through the back oval window at his situation, some with considerable reverence, like the boy from the zoo, and some only to see what they could see" (WB, 88). What Enoch, the disciple, saw in gawking at Haze on the hood of the Essex preaching "The Church Without Christ" was Adam struggling with his old mortality. In this instance the converts are few, but the Adamic impulse raging in the mind of Flannery O'Connor, malgré lui, is overwhelming. In trying to fix the relationship between the created and his creator here one thinks of the moth striking back quite unexpectedly at the spider. In a lecture at Notre Dame University Miss O'Connor affirmed her "abiding interest in the Old Adam. He just talks Southern because I do."[39] Let us take her at her word.

There remains to be said a few words about the final pages of the novel that seem to be written in some language other than English, judging from the wildly different interpretations critics have attached to it. Among the various readings two come to mind immediately, insofar as both thoroughly contradict one another. Martin sees in the pin-point of light

> the divine timelessness and limitlessness of Haze's vision of God.

Further, the relation between Mrs. Flood and Haze suggests to him

> the traditional Christian analogy between

> Christ and the Church, Haze in this instance standing as a Christ-like bridegroom and Mrs. Flood (her name associating with the descendants of Noah) taking her position as the expectant bride soon to be assimilated into the one flesh of God- the concept that makes marriage a sacrament and extends the bridegroom imagery to approach the significance of the partaking of Christ's body in the mass.[40]

I do not wish to throw unholy water on religious fire, but the fact of the matter is there is neither internal nor external evidence to support this reading. To the very end Haze disavows any belief in Jesus or any kind of Eden that "is not right in yourself." Home with Eve, Haze dies "stern and tranquil," stubbornly maintaining, just before he left the house for the last time, "There's no other house nor no other city" (WB, 124). He did not marry Mrs. Flood and surely had no intention of doing so. If there is any symbolic marriage "in being home," it is a figurative union in a state of nature. "You can have it free here now." There is no denying that Eve, "who was not religious or morbid," did have something like a mystic experience; certainly the pin-point of light was more than "the glow of decomposing tissue, the light of mortality,"[41] as Josephine Hendin would have us believe. If the ambiguous light does refer to the star of Bethlehem and hence to Christ, Adam-Haze in the absolute finality of his death is well beyond its reflection.

In many of her other works Miss O'Connor displays a vital interest in "the Old Adam" as well as in other unredemptive preoccupations of modern America. "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "The Lame Shall Enter First," and "Judgement Day" among her stories, and her other novel, The Violent Bear It Away, easily manifest this interest. As in Wise Blood the protagonist in The Violent is an Adamite who believes that each man is capable of creating his own Eden, a markedly humanistic Eden, raised on the tree-like pillars of right reason and common sense. Rayber, a psychologist as fiercely anti-religious as his creator is anti-rationalist, struggles in vain to convince his

young nephew, Tarwater, that sin and hell-fire and all other religious imperatives are what Lord Monboddo, speaking unfortunately of Dr. Johnson's ideas, calls "bow-wow." According to Rayber, it is religion and all the fanaticism it produces that is responsible for the suffering in the world, and like Miss Lonelyhearts, Holden Caulfield and the Adamic hero, Williams, of Stanley Elkins' "A Poetics For A Bully," he sees himself in a vision:

> moving like an avenging angel through
> the world, gathering up all the children
> that the Lord, not Herod, had slain.

He would like to flee, with all the exploited children in the world to a state of nature, "some enclosed garden where he would teach them the truth and let the sunshine flood their minds" (The Violent, 384). Rayber is defeated, of course, and his nephew Tarwater reverts back to a hideous replica of his "jesus-freaked" great uncle, who saw all of reality through a vision of "The Second Coming and the Day of Judgment." For Flannery O'Connor the presence of Adam in American life is unavoidable, and she sees any belief in his fundamental innocence and refusal to accept a fallen garden world as a menace to spiritual salvation.

Having begun this study with the examination of a poet, it is appropriate that it should conclude with another, a contemporary figure, whose variation on the Adamic redemptive tradition is no less striking than Wallace Stevens'. As with Stevens, I am concerned here not with exegetical readings of entire poems (with two exceptions) but rather with a view from the bridge that will provide a picture of the exact way in which James Dickey participates in the continuity of the tradition in American letters. This does not mean, of course, that I will isolate one part of the poem at the expense of the whole. It presupposes simply that the organic part excerpted is, as it should be, a minor statement of the entire poem and as such a representative reflection of the other parts. In

other words, I do not wish to take something out of context and bend it to fit a "foolish consistency"- a danger one sometimes confronts in a study of this kind.

Unlike some of the prose statements Stevens has made about his own work in The Necessary Angel, Dickey's prose statements about his own work and that of others in Self-Interviews are illuminating and helpful in reading his poems. Taken as a whole and heard as an antiphonal voice alongside the poems, they reveal a man who believes that each new poem is an act of creation, an extended genesis, because "the province of the poem is the poet's, and in it he is God"[42] or Adam, insofar as Dickey does not entertain any traditional belief in God. "Whatever made this universe, even if it is nothing but blind force, should be worshipped. But whether It acknowledges this worship, or even is aware of it, is very unlikely in my opinion. Religion to me involves myself and the universe, and it does not admit of any kind of intermediary, such as Jesus or the Bible."[43] Nothing must be allowed to intervene between Adam, who considers himself "a step-child of Thoreau," and the natural rhythms of the garden in which "spirits inhabit all things." His is a "personal, a stick and stone religion. I would have made a great bushman or aborigine."[44] Since he cannot accept a traditional God, he cannot accept sin in any traditional sense. What would inevitably be a sin to, say, the Christian, would be to Dickey a pragmatic error followed by an explicable unhappiness, not arising from a misuse of reason, which he tries again and again to cast off from him in the vision of the poems, but almost from what the Hellenic Greeks would call going against the dike, the way with us. Hence though he does believe that we did fall from somewhere, or we think we did, he is a believer in natural innocence recaptured in the act of the poem through "re-entering the cycle of the man who hunts for his food. In my case at least I have a great sense of renewal when I am able to go into the woods and hunt with a bow and arrow, to enter into the animals' world in this way."[45] Finally, for Dickey, history should be tolerated but not taken seriously, because

beginnings or acts of renewal are recorded in the Adamic blood and not in the pages of chronicles. Interesting as all this may be, it is at the same time idle unless it is grounded organically in the poems, as I shall now attempt to do.

"The Poisoned Man" of several is Dickey's most successful rendering of the psychological reality of man's having fallen and thereby becoming separated from his sources. In the first stanza in "a dream of the country," a farmer is struck on the foot by a rattlesnake, and he sits upon a rock where he "opens his sole to the water," dreaming "day after day of the river." The blood shed from the opened snake bite pours into the river, and the farmer sees his blood assume

> Inside the cold path of the river
> The inmost routes of a serpent
> Through grass, through branches and leaves.

Co-incident with this "Some leaves fell from the trees," and upon arising from the bank, imperceptibly, the whole of nature has become blighted, "oaks ashen,/ wild grass dead without flame." The farmer hobbles through his "blasted cornfield" to seek help from "his old wife in the garden,/ Where she reached for a withering apple." The remainder of the poem deserves quotation as it echoes strongly "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," by Keats, with whom Dickey has more than a passing affinity.

> I lay in the country and dreamed
> Of the substance and course of the river
> While the different colors of fever
>
> Like quilt patches flickered upon me.
> At last I arose, with the poison
> Gone out of the seam of the scar,
>
> And brought my wife westward and weeping,
> Through the copper fields springing alive
> With the promise of harvest for no one.

("The Poisoned Man," CP, 145)

I do not wish to crucify a beautiful poem on the cross of logic, but one is struck immediately by the fact that the poem does not tell us why the farmer was struck by the snake, why the whole of nature should be infected as a result of this, and why the old wife should be in the garden reaching (notice the participle) "for a withering apple." In Dickey's world

the time sequence is out of joint: the old woman should have bitten the apple, the snake should have struck, and nature should have, as a consequence, gone awry. But it doesn't happen that way. Why? Because it just happened as lightning happened to strike three men who held the iron scythes in the valley floor: "The only metal for miles/ In the hands of judged, innocent men" ("The Beholders," CP, 144). The poison is gone from "the seam" of the uneasy feeling one experiences in looking at the vastness of a forest or the sensuous rhythms of an animal free in nature. Lacking a formal cause, who can say, Dickey or anyone, what has produced a sense of the fall with its resultant feeling of a separation from nature in godless man. Perhaps it was the too sudden transition from the aquatic to the terrestrial? Perhaps it was the use of the thumb[46] which kicked on and forced into use the intellectual motor processes as Julian Huxley and Lamarck maintain? At any rate, Dickey cannot say: he accepts the fact and tries to probe beyond it to the heart of that special light that pervades his poems under the glare of which, "The heart in my breast turned green" (CP, 19).

Earlier I mentioned Dickey's indebtedness to Keats. A casual reading of the Collected Poems, 1957-1967 is enough to confirm this. But the debt runs deeper than mere sensuous language and solipsistic romantic posturings that condemn reason and make light of philosophers. Making it quite his own, Dickey has borrowed from Keats the mystical sense of participation in the existence of other things, informing them in their entirety and yet at the same time retaining the perceiver's, dreamer's or meditator's unique identity. Like Keats, Dickey is capable of informing the life of a sparrow, an owl, a hunting dog, wrecked machinery or even a voyeur- himself become a part of the very tree from which he fiendishly views a woman disrobing. Unlike Keats, who maintains the poet "has no Identity- he is continually in for [sic] and filling some other Body- The Sun, the Moon, the Sea, and Men and Women,"[47] Dickey, cast as a lyric voice in the poems, always retains some part of himself

with which he is able to confirm his own existence outside himself while at the same time informing another object. In other words he is always himself looking at himself from the point of view of another object, yet never surrendering his own identity. "Approaching Prayer" is perhaps the best example I can cite of this phenomenon wherein the hunter becomes the hunted, and the hunted (in this case a wild boar) becomes the hunter. As in many of Keats' poems the aesthetic experience progresses in intensity by stages, a kind of Pleasure Thermometer,"[48] leading up to and merging with another object- a Grecian Urn, a nightingale or in Dickey's case a wild boar. A young man in the attic of his father's house decks himself with the panoply of the hunter in the gear of his dead father in an attempt to pray, "to produce a word I can't say/ Until all my reason is slain." First, he puts on his father's old hunting sweater; then he straps on gamecock spurs and falls to his knees, gazing up into the hollow head of a boar that he had helped to slay while his father was alive. In putting it over his head, suddenly he takes on the existence of the boar. "The night sky fills with a light of hunting"; the intensity of the aesthetic experience has collapsed time, and he is in the midst of the forest "drawing the breath of life/ For the dead hog." Frantically dogs leap upon him and he gores at them in his fear and anger while at the same time, with the presence of his father "pale on my body," he draws steady aim on the boar, now become himself. He is witnessing himself about to murder himself.

> Inside the hair helmet
> I look upward out of the total
> Stillness of killing with arrows.
> I have seen the hog see me kill him
> And I was as still as I hoped.

The arrow pierces his body "Like the explosion of a star/ Six billion light years off/ Whose light gives out/ Just as it goes straight through me." The natural epiphany over, he gets up "in the way I usually do," and tries to fathom the full meaning

of that "hovering place" where the experience has taken him. It was something, he concludes, analogous to what the "desert fathers" beheld when they saw "angels come."

> To answer what questions men asked
> In heaven's tongue,
> Using images of earth
> Almightily.

What the desert fathers saw, or thought they saw, was not the world to come but the world from which their father's had been driven- bathed in the light of pure innocence. Like the narrator of the poem they gained a new knowledge of an unfallen world superimposed upon the fallen. In Dickey the "hovering place"[50] is not Eliot's "still point of the turning world," and it has even less to do with St. John of the Cross and the kind of otherwordly vision to which he aspires. It is a place where innocence confirms itself, harkening back in the time of man to a world where plenitude was not just a word and nature was a place where man, through whom "two red cows walk" in "holy alliance with the trees" ("Trees and Cattle" CP, 37), enjoyed a meaningful and guiltless existence, where the hunter and the hunted, man and beast alike would

> Know this as their life,
> Their reward: to walk
> Under such trees in full knowledge
> Of what is in glory above them, (a predator)
> And to feel no fear,
> But acceptance, compliance.
> Fulfilling themselves without pain
> At the cycle's center.
>
> ("The Heaven of Animals," CP, 57).

Certainly it would not be too far afield to say that Dickey's "hovering place" has more in common with Edward Hick's Adamic "Peaceable Kingdom" (see notes to introduction) than with Eliot's "still point." Indeed it is a little silly to burden a confined agnostic with onerous mystical ecstasy. And besides it ain't even American.

> The relationship of the human being to the great natural cycles of birth and death, the seasons, the growing up of plants and the dying of leaves, the springing up of other

> plants out of the dead leaves, the generations
> of animals and of men, all on the heraldic
> wheel, is very beautiful to me. I like to
> think I'm like Thoreau in this respect.[51]

The subject of "The Owl King," Dickey's quasi-version of Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," is a blind child lost in the woods near his father's house. As he enters the woods in search of his child in Part I, the father assumes a new awareness of the strange quality his voice has taken on in trying to locate the child in the depths of greenness. In Part III, the narrator identifies the quality in the father's voice as something "Entranced by the endless beauty," something "grief-stricken" like "a holy song"; but in Part I he only identifies the sound as something fearful, for the identification itself is a progression toward intensifying the aesthetic experience he will be unable to share with his "seeing child" in Part III. In Part II the Owl King, sitting in a graven oak, meditates. The forest still draws a weak light from the setting sun, but for the Owl King "Every light was too feeble to show/ My world as I knew it must be." In order to hunt and to see the unfallen world beneath the sun-struck layers of the fallen world, the darkness of the blind, paradoxically, must prevail- a fiction Dickey precariously maintains in his last published poem, "The Eye-Beaters." But of that later. The more dark it becomes the better able is the owl to see as he merges into the oak in which he sits, thus becoming one with nature. The stage is set. Below him the animals which in the light of day had been as invisible to him as they are to the blind child are now seen clearly fulfilling their part of the "heraldic cycle."

> I sat on the oak in my shape
> With my claws growing deep into wood
> And my sight going slowly out
> Inch by inch, as into a stone,
> Disclosing the rabbits running
> Beneath my bent, growing throne,
> And the foxes lighting their hair
> And the serpent taking the shape
> Of the stream of life as it slept.
> That night I parted my lids

Once more, and saw dark burn
Greater than sunlight or moonlight,
For it burned from deep within me.

At this juncture the blind child appears below him in a ragged clearing. The Owl King descends, circling, "beating above him" and lands "taking his hand in my claw. Every tree's life lived in his fingers." Edward Hicks' "Peaceable Kingdom" is underway as the owl and the blind Adamite trod gravely together "As beasts at their own wedding dance." Through the forest the sound of the child's father's voice becomes "an irrelevant music" as owl and child together ascend into the tree where the child takes on the unfallen vision of the owl in the peaceable kingdom:

His eyes inch by inch going forward
Through stone dark, burning and picking
The creatures out one by one,
Each waiting alive in its own
Peculiar light to be found.

At the very height of the experience the Owl King declares "All dark shall come to light," though as we have learned this is a "Peculiar light."

Part III is delivered from the blind child's point of view. Entering the woods and approaching by stages the aesthetic experience- an imploded epiphany of the peaceable kingdom- the blind child feels "The heat falling/ On the backs of my hands" and sharp edges of the natural world touch his body. Leaves and bark brush against him, and "I am blessing them/ Slowly, one after another/ Deeper into the woods." Now at last completely a part of nature, the Adamic innocent is taken up with the Owl King onto "a double throne" from which the child can see "the self of every substance/ As it crouches, hidden and free/ In the glow of the original light of heaven." The superimposition of the fallen world of unreal, sun-struck light upon the unfallen world of blind light has been lifted, allowing the child:

To see as the owl king sees,
By going in deeper than darkness.
The wood comes back in a light

It did not know it withheld
And I can tell
By its breathing glow
Each tree on which I laid
My hands when I was blind

The experience over the child returns up through the slanted meadow, retaining the vision that allows him to see and "to believe everything." He has been to the very heart of his own beginning and seen everything as "I knew it must be."

Dickey's Adamism is freely-ranging. Though the situations in which it is articulated vary considerably from poem to poem, it is not restricted to a choice half-dozen poems or so, thus making it safe for one to say it is one of the major if not the major themes of his work. Dancing on the footnotes of T.S. Eliot, for example, Dickey casts the American Adam, a suburban householder, in the role of Osiris, the vegetable king, who is "Hacked apart in the growing cold/ Of the year, by the whole of mindless nature" (CP, 23). The poem evolves from the actions of a sleeping man in a suburban grove of pines near his house. Once asleep he passes into a dream

I never once have had,
Of being part of the acclaimed rebirth
Of the ruined calm world, in spring

when "the drowned god and the sun unite/ to bring the yellow flower cut of the earth/ Of the tended and untended garden." Adam-Osiris, himself a part of the "heraldic cycle" each spring, lifts the fallen "tended garden" from the unfallen "untended garden" so that we may see the world as it ought to be. The price for this is death, being hacked apart, but the dreamer upon waking and returning to his house bears "magnificent pardon" to all things a part of the natural cycle. "The 'dread, impending crime' is his own ritual murder, and the pardon is his resurrection. Or so I intended, anyway."[49] Apropos of Keats', Dickey's own comments on his own poem are quite revealing. "I have this absolute belief," he says, "in the poet really giving himself to his invention which, with luck, is also his vision. In the process of writing, it's absolutely

necessary that he surrender himself and flow with the poem wherever it may go."[52] Sometimes the flow of the poem takes "the green graceful bones" of Adam into the substance of a tree at the top of which his dead brother has built a treehouse in "the world's light"; sometimes into the liquid body of a deer "who is moving./ I am with him," headlong down the side of Springer Mountain under an "unbearable light" (CP, 134). The prerequisite for this merging of man and beast in the peaceable kindgom is "to think, beginning with laurel." Once he has become a part of nature and then part of the deer, the mindless and innocent "waters of life/ melt and flow from the hills' though "petrified in a creekbed," in the time of man where the hunter shall lie down with the deer and the lion with the lamb. When Adam meets Eve in a junkyard in "Cherrylog Road," they approach one another from different points, in the door of one wrecked car, out another, moving up the "pleasure thermometer" of intensity through the "living souls" of wrecked autos.

> Someone outside would have seen
> The oldest car's door inexplicably
> Close from within!
>
> I held her and held her and held her,
> Convoyed at terrific speed
> By the stalled, dreaming traffic around us.

Even the inorganic reverts back to the organic when Adam and his occasional Eve, clinging, "glued together," leave "by separate doors/ Into the changed, other bodies/ Of cars," adamically "Wild to be wreckage forever" (CP, 136).

Dickey's belief that an unfallen world lies buried somewhere under the fallen, visible only to the "blind" or the Adamic, is virtually shattered in his last published poem, "The Eye-Beaters" (The Eye-Beaters, Blood, Victory, Madness, Buckhead and Mercy, 1970), remarkable not only for its profound vision but for its brilliant Whitman-like techniques as well. Once again his subject is the blind in an asylum for children somewhere in Indiana. Adam, who refers to himself as the "visitor" or the "stranger" observes the blind children and is appalled to learn that their hands and wrists must be bound to their tiny

bodies to prevent them from smashing at their sightless, bruised eyes. Some children, however, break the bonds and strike at their eyes with their small fists, moaning, "trying to strike for the middle/ Of the brain, where the race is young" as the Visitor on the other side of the wall would like to think at this point. But what do they see there back into the race? What "tribal light old/ Enough to be seen without sight" does the long-haired nine-year old girl see "who clubs her blue cheeks blacker" in her imploded vision? Surely she must see beasts (the visitor imagines) from prehistory, "cave bear, aurochs, mammoth" and niches on the walls of caves "filled not with Virgins/ But with the squat shape of the Mother." But the Visitor is possessed of a terrible doubt. Supposing they see nothing. Absolute vacuity? Quickly to save his own mind he constructs for them a fiction "of painting and hunting" on the walls of the cave of the mind by which in his own mind he tries to merge unsuccessfully in order to reach "tne hovering place" of the peaceable kingdom that had always sustained him in the past? Then a clarification comes upon him. "I am trying to make it/ make anything/ make them/ make me/ Re-invent the vision of the race." Those beasts and the mother figure are "made-up" by an American fiction that has become the Visitor's own "therapy." He despairs. There is no pre-history and "Nothing behind their eyes."

But art is not only a triumph over life; it is a truimph over nothingness as well. It means intensely. Therefore,

> what they see must be crucial
> To the human race. It is so; to let you live
> with yourself after seeing
> Them, they must be thought to see by what has caused
> is causing us all
> To survive. In the late sun of the asylum, you know
> nothing else will do
> You; the rest is mere light.
> Stranger, you may as well take your own life
> Blood brain-blood, as vision.

Somehow Adam must reaffirm the fact that art is more than "makeshift salvation," and like the god that isn't there he must

"try to see by the race alone/ the wall of art-crazed beasts" that complement the heraldic cycle. "A spell sways the Visitor." He puts "history out. An innocent eye, it is closed off outside in the sun." The darkness that is the light of vision in unfallen nature takes hold. Like God's surrogate, a "Cloud bellows in his hand." With history dispelled and "reason gone," Adam merges into a deer beyond the "sheer despair of invention.

Therapist, farewell at the living end.
Give me my spear."

The predicate nominative has been fulfilled in metaphor at least. The hunter lies down with the hunted, the one becomes the other, in the redeemed "Peaceable Kingdom" of American art. To accept the world the children see is to accept the world of Miss Lonely-hearts and Hazel Motes, where not even art has any redemptive value.

For James Dickey that would be too easy.

Notes to Chapter 1

1 Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York, 1953), 74. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Alfred A. Knopf edition.

2 Northrop Frye, "The Realistic Oriole: A Study of Wallace Stevens," The Hudson Review, X., No. 3 (Autumn, 1957), 369.

3 Ralph J. Mills, "The Image of The Rock," from Wallace Stevens: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Marie Borroff (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963), 100.

4 For an interesting and controversial interpretation of this poem, see James Baird, The Dome And The Rock (Baltimore, 1968), 112-117.

5 Sister M. Berbetta Quinn, "Metamorphosis in Wallace Stevens," from Wallace Stevens: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Marie Borroff (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963), 57.

6 Ralph Ellison, The Invisible Man (New York, 1952). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Modern Library, Random House edition. "But Ellison's real debt stems from Eliot's insistence upon the importance of tradition. It was Eliot who taught him to value a past which was both painful and precious, and flinching neither from slavery nor incest nor prostitution nor chaos itself, to assimilate even his negative heritage, conquering it, transforming it into an asset." Robert A. Bone, The Negro Novel In America (New Haven and London, 1958), 201. Bone's judgment concerning Eliot and the tradition strikes me as inaccurate given the heroic struggles of the narrator to abandon history, and where that is not possible, to burn it.

7 Ralph Ellison, "Society, Morality and The Novel," from The Living Novel, ed. Granville Hicks (New York, 1962), 83.

8 Ibid., 73.

9 John Locke, The Second Treatise of Government (New York, 1952), 29.

10 Ibid., 10.

11 Ibid., 20.

12 Robert Bone, "Ralph Ellison and The Uses of Imagination," from Twentieth-Century Interpretations of The Invisible Man, ed. John M. Reilly (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), 31.

13. Ibid., 32.

14 Ibid., 32.

15 Only outside history is redemption possible; thus, all the novelists in this study appear obsessed with this effort.

16 Bishop Gryffyd Gregg, A History of The Old Cheraws in South Carolina (New York, 1915), 179.

17 "'When a town celebrates the busk, they have previously provided themselves with new clothes, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture; then they collect all their worn out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town, of their filth, which with all their remaining grain and other old provisions they cast together into one common heap and consume it with fire.'

But the rite of purification was more than a poetic invention. The need for it, in fact, had long been expressed in a series of concrete political and economic proposals, all of them voicing a belief in the need for periodic and radical change in the very structure of American society." R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago, 1955), 15. For a variation on this idea, see Stanley Edgar Hyman's reading of Walden, "Henry Thoreau In Our Time," from Walden And Civil Disobedience, ed. Owen Thomas (New York, 1966), 314-327.

18 Bone, 29.

19 Leo Marx, The Machine In The Garden (New York, 1964), 364.

20 Nathaniel West, Miss Lonelyhearts (New York, 1966). All subsequent references in parentheses are The Complete Works of Nathaniel West in the Braziller edition.

21 Stanley Edgar Hyman, Nathaniel West (Minneapolis, 1962), 16.

22 Ibid., 18.

23 Shrike reacts to Miss Lonelyhearts the way Claggart reacts to Billy Budd in Melville's short novel. Both novels share in the same Adamic tradition.

24 Two other Adamic redemptive tableaus such as the one quoted here come easily to mind. The most famous, of course, is from Catcher in the Rye by Salinger. "I thought it was 'If a body catch a body,'" I said. "Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around- nobody big, I mean- except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some

crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start, going over the cliff- I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy." J.D. Salinger, The Catcher In The Rye (New York, 1951), 224-225. The other is from Flannery O'Connor's The Violent Bear It Away (New York, 1955), 384, which I'll discuss presently in this chapter.

25 Hyman, 17.

26 Hyman, 30.

27 Abbie Hoffman, Revolution For The Hell Of It (New York, 1968). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Signet paperback edition.

28 J. Hillis Miller describes these nonwords as a "thick linguistic paste, like the splotches of paint on an expressionist canvas." One wants to know, from the vantage point of logic, anyway, how nonwords spread a paste? Insofar as we are dealing with poetry here and not with physics or the precision of celestial navigation, I will give Miller his due and stand by my own reaction to these "nonwords" and their effect upon the field of the poem. See J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 252.

29 Compare James Dickey, who appears later in this chapter. "I have always believed- and I mean believed blindly- in what I choose to call 'instinct.' This is one of the reasons that animals have always been so important to me, and especially the instinctual way animals live. I want to get a feeling of this instinctualness into poetry." James Dickey, Self-Interviews (Garden City, New York, 1970), 58-60.

30 Flannery O'Connor, 3 by Flannery O'Connor (New York, 1962). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Signet paperback edition.

31 Carter W. Martin, The True Country (Nashville, Tenn., 1968) 13.

32 Martin, 15.

33 Flannery O'Connor, Everything That Rises Must Converge, "Introduction" by Robert Fitzgerald (New York, 1956), xviv.

34 Jean Paul Sartre, "The Art of Fiction," from Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews (New York, 1963), 38.

35 Flannery O'Connor, "The Fiction Writer And His Country," from The Living Novel ed. Granville Hicks (New York, 1957), 162.

36 Flannery O'Connor, "The Church and the Fiction Writer," America, XXVII (March 30, 1957), 734.

37 O'Connor, 163.

38 Josephine Hendin, The World of Flannery O'Connor (Bloomington and London, 1970), 53.

39 Flannery O'Connor, "Notre Dame Lecture," from Flannery O'Connor: A Critical Essay by Robert Drake (New York, 1966), 11.

40 Martin, 120.

41 Hendin, 55.

42 James Dickey, Self-Interviews (Garden City, New York, 1970), 32.

43 Dickey, 78.

44 Dickey, 79.

45 Dickey, 111.

46 Julian Huxley, Man Stands Alone (London, 1941), 147.

47 John Keats, The Letters of John Keats, ed. Hyder E. Rollins, Vol. II (New York, 1958), 37.

48 Earl R. Wasserman, Keats' Major Poems (Baltimore, 1953), 69. More to the point, see Keats' Endymion itself from which Wasserman draws his theory.

49 Dickey, 68.

50 For an interpretation more consistent with Eliot's "still point," see H.L. Weatherby, "The Way of Exchange," The Sewanee Review, Vol. LXXIV, No. 3 (Summer, 1966), 679.

51 Dickey, 90.

52 Dickey, 91.

Chapter 2

After Princess Casamassima: Or, Adamic Redemption Gone To Pot

Most great artists in the past have had some inner navigator or soundless voice pushing and directing them away from what is superficial and ephemeral in their culture. Virgil had his res publica, Dante his medieval church, Spenser his Gloriana, Pope his man-oriented Liebnitzean perfections, and so on. Even social anthropologists should not quarrel with such an unassuming statement. Yet for the American writer of any century such referents have never properly existed; there has never been enough collective purpose or standard of extrinsic belief to enable the American artist to proclaim smugly, "Here, here is the point of view from which I shall collect and interpret American experience so that you will know me both above and below the surface of my words where we shall assemble in the collective twilight drama of our race." Hart Crane is a tragic example of one brilliant American artist's inability to find a voice or a frame of reference that would sum up the disparate parts of American life. The result, of course, was fragmentation, and the bridge never connected or spanned anything, finally, in the American soul. Such a fragmented fate almost befell Norman Mailer, who, until 1965 and the publication of An American Dream, cast about him in a sea of voices, no one of which was even remotely directed toward redemption. But Mailer's ear began to pick up strange hints from his Adamic blood as far back as 1957 when he wrote, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster."

Dissatisfaction with the American Neo-Faustian mania to dominate nature by mastering time compelled Mailer to seek some adjunct or reversal of the processes of a quasi-totalitarian culture. To do this, he needed a figure or a symbol of life against which the totalitarian figures of death by cooperation and death by conformity would pale. For Mailer, the quality of

American life was so bad that nothing less would do.

> It is on this bleak scene that a phenomenon has appeared: the American existentialist- the hipster, the man who knows that if our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war, relatively quick death by the state as l'univers concentrationaire, [sic] or a slow death by a conformity with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled (at what damage to the mind and heart and the liver and the nerves no research foundation for cancer will discover in a hurry), if the fate of twentieth-century man is to live with death from adolescence to senescence, why then the only life giving answers to death is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as an immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self. In short, whether the life is criminal or not, the decision is to encourage the psychopath in oneself, to explore that domain of experience where security is boredom and therefore sickness, and one exists in the present, in that enormous present which is without past or future, memory or planned intention, the life where a man must go until he is beat, where he must gamble with his energies through all those small or large crises of courage and unforeseen situations which beset his day, where he must be with it or doomed not to swing.[1]

The Adamic posturing in the above is a fair summation of Mailer's concept of the "White Negro" or the "Hipster." He who would "divorce himself from society," exist without roots, and journey into the unpremeditated self in the enormous present or the "electric present of the perpetual climax of the present," as Mailer names it elsewhere in the same essay, is Adamic by turns- a fantastic, whose very innocence grows out of his amorality like a strange flower out of a dung pile. From the above it is easy to infer a character like Rev. J. Bliss Rinehart in Ellison's Invisible Man, or even Rinehart's disciple, Black Adam, who journeys into his own soul by painful degrees. Further, like Black Adam, the white Negro or Adamic hipster cannot afford the civilizing inhibitions of "Square" culture, or even

the lessons of demented super-states, for "to respect the past means that one must also respect such ugly consequences of the past as the collective murders of the State."[2] History is dead because it is incapable of containing the truth, which can be found only in the amoral self and the new beginnings it creates. What is past, is, or should be, entirely out of mind.

> Character being thus seen as perpetually ambivalent and dynamic enters then into an absolute relativity where there are no truths other than the isolated truths of what each observer feels at each instant of his existence. To take a perhaps unjustified metaphysical extrapolation, it is as if the universe which has usually existed as a fact (even if the Fact were Berkeley's God) but a fact which it was the aim of all science and philosophy to reveal, becomes instead a changing reality whose laws are remade at each instant by everything living, but most particularly man, man raised to a neo-medieval summit where the truth is not what one felt yesterday or what one expects to feel tomorrow but rather truth is no more nor less than what one feels at each instant in the perpetual climax of the present.[3]

If each man were his own state, if the new world garden of the anarchist were to prevail, there would be no longer collective murder, only individual murders, which Mailer in An American Dream,[4] ironically, sees as the ultimate form of Adamic courage by which the "heavenly city on earth" is to be reclaimed and re-entered. When protagonist Rojack murders his wife, Deborah, (Eve) the door to the "heavenly city" swings open for his re-entry to the new life where the state exists, at best, as a temporary inconvenience. The ultimate form of the ventilation of the instincts surely is murder; it is the job of the state to see that such libidinous drives, or, indeed, any drives that interfere with the harmonious operations of the state, are suppressed and paid in kind. Hence, for Mailer, who stoutly maintains the purity and innocence of the murderer, the state must (if not wither away) go away, for it is the greatest obstacke to redemption in the garden and in the self.

> Hip, which would return us to ourselves, at no matter what price in individual violence, is the affirmation of the barbarian, for it requires a primitive passion about human nature to believe that individual acts of violence are always to be preferred to the collective violence of the state; it takes literal faith in the creative possibilities of the human being to envisage acts of violence as the catharsis which prepares growth.[5]

Being forever cleansed and reborn in the "perpetual present," one has no time for the guilt of the past or the responsibility of the future. It is, therefore, because historical society is cancerous and unjust, stifling the very creative instincts by which we are born again, redeemed in the present (and this stifling not overt but gradual and in an atrophying manner) that the Adamic protagonist, Stephen Rojack, makes a stand against the subtle starvation of freedom imposed upon him by the world (his job, his friends, his wife) of New York society. To conform is to die of both the literal and metaphorical cancer that infects society at all levels. But this is a realization that comes to Rojack slowly and by progressive olfactory stages, beginning with the actual murder of his wife, Deborah. "A parallel corollary that indulging the psychopath in oneself (especially to the extent of committing murder) can cure or prevent cancer is also dealt with in the novel, as a part of an interlocking system of real cancer (in Deborah, in Eddie Gannucci, and even momentarily in Rojack himself) which supports the metaphorical statement that American society and culture is being destroyed from within by the cancer of conformity and fear."[6]

Eight years of marriage to Deborah, a corrupt and corrupting Eve, social lioness, huntress and heiress to American tycoon, Barney Oswald Kelly (whose family coat of arms reads, Victoria In Caelo Terraque)- have so anesthetized husband, Stephan, that he has lost his especial relationship with nature and perverted his Adamic gifts. Relying solely on instinct and listening to those "special voices of the moon," Rojack had earned the Distinguished Service Cross from the army; with this honor in his pocket, he also earned a term in congress from the

State of New York, and later, syndicated television appearances and tenure from a major university in Manhattan. But his world is fast falling around him. His instincts have deteriorated markedly, and his dependence upon artificial social structures has become over riding. He has lost confidence in his own courage and is no longer in touch, as he was formerly, with the sunlit areas of his Adamic self. It follows then at the very beginning of the novel at a penthouse cocktail party that, realizing how atrophied he has become, Rojack is drawn to the edge of a summer balcony, his instinct telling him to die.

> Like a lion I would join the legions of the past and share their power. "Come now," said the moon, "now is your moment. What joy in flight." And I actually let one hand go. It was my left. Instinct was telling me to die.
>
> Which instinct and where? The right hand tightened in its grip, and I whipped around to the balcony, almost banging into the rail with my breast, my back now to the street and the sky. Only if I turned my head could I see the lady.
>
> "Drop," she said one more time, but the moment had gone. Now if I dropped, all of me passed down. There would be no trip.
>
> "You can't die yet," said the formal part of my brain, "you haven't done your work, but you've lived your life, and you are dead with it."
>
> (An American Dream, 13-4)

In order for Adam to be reborn, he must die to his social self; in order to reclaim the "jeweled city" in nature or the inner self, he must die; in order to repossess the unfallen world beneath the fallen world of society and all its sick demands, he must heed the voice of the Lady, the moon, and do her work, i.e., murder the corrupt Lilith-Eve, his wife, Deborah. To this end he goes immediately to his estranged wife's Edenic apartment high above East River Drive where,

> every vertical surface within was covered with flock, which must have gone for twenty-

> five dollars a yard; a hot-house of flat velvet flowers, royal, sinister, cultivated in their twinings, breathed at one from all four walls, upstairs and down. It had the specific density of a jungle conceived by Rousseau, and Deborah liked it best of her purloined pads. "I feel warm here," she would say, "nice and warm."
>
> (AD, 21)

It is at this point that Rojack's olfactory instincts, a technical device that everywhere ushers one into the major thematic rooms of the novel, comes into play. Sitting across from Deborah reclining on the bed, Rojack laments to himself, "probably I did not have the strength to stand alone from my mate" (AD, 17), but at the same time there emits from Deborah the unmistakable odor of something gross in nature, "a sweet rot lifted from her, a poison altogether suffocating that began to seep through me" (AD, 25). At every critical juncture in the novel where an important decision hangs in the balance, it is instinct, guided by a primordial woodsman's sense of smell- the comparison with Natty Bumppo here is not altogether fantastic, that directs the moral choices, framed as always within the Mailerian ethic of the Adamic Hipster. An olfactory instinct prompts Rojack's heroism in the war. It enables him to outwit and out-fight Shago Martin in Cherry's, the real Eve's, backstreet apartment. "I got a whiff of his odor which had something of defeat in it" (AD, 193). It inspires him to his evaluation of his evil father-in-law, Kelly, to whom he repairs to pay tribute for having murdered Deborah. "A deep smell came off Kelly, a hint of a big foul cat, carnal as the meat on a butcher's block" (AD, 217). That special congregated odor of the wealthy in Kelly that leaves "the taste of pennies in the mouth, a whiff of the tomb" (AD, 217), draws forth from Rojack out of spite a confession of murder before the false father figure that is so essential in completing the act of redemption through which Rojack is evolving. But in order to bring his sense of smell into play, it is first necessary to hear that inner moon-struck voice that would help Rojack into the presence of the great father.

> "Go to Kelly," said a voice now in my mind, and it was a voice near to indistinguishable from the other voice. Which was true? When voices came, how did you make the separation? "That which you fear most is what you must do," said my mind. "Trust the authority of your senses." But I had taken too long to decide: I had no senses. I was now nothing but fear.
>
> (AD, 203)

It will be necessary to return to this scene in a moment, but at this point an examination of the murder itself and what it engenders in Rojack seems in order.

Clearly, Deborah "was out to spoil the light" (AD, 23) that once upon a time flooded the soul of Adam before he bit the apple of society proffered by his false Eve. Nothing less than murder (he thinks) will absolve the self-hatred and overwhelming sense of loss that courses through his heart. Yet Adam is clever enough to realize that he cannot exist without a mate, a problem which dulls further his failing instincts, and to which he returns almost immediately after murdering Deborah as he makes a rendezvous with Cherry, the true Eve, while his horribly disfigured wife is being placed into an ambulance. A flaunting confession of all her past infidelities, however, rekindles the instinct that has brought Rojack to Deborah's "bower" with murder in his heart. He strikes her across the face, and she fights back like "a prep school bully" reaching with both hands "to find my root and mangle me. That blew it out" (AD, 30). Because his "body was speaking faster than my brain," and because the "seat" of his instincts, his root, is severely threatened, murder becomes inevitable. "Tightening my arm around her neck, I had the mental image I was pushing with my shoulder against an enormous door which would give inch by inch to the effort." Releasing the pressure on Deborah's throat, he is struck by the impression that the door to an unfallen world he seeks was beginning to close.

> But I had a view of what was on the other side of the door, and heaven was there, some quiver of jeweled cities shining in the glow of a tropical dusk, and I thrust

> against the door once more and hardly felt her hand leave my shoulder, I was driving now with force against the door: spasms began to open in me... and crack the door flew open and the wire tore in her throat, and I was through the door, hatred passing from me in wave after wave, illness as well, rot and pestilence, nausea, a black string of salts. She gave me one malevolent look which said: 'There are dimensions to evil which reach beyond the light,' and then she smiled like a milkmaid and floated away and was gone. And in the midst of that Oriental splendor of landscape, I felt the lost touch of her finger on my shoulder, radiating some faint but ineradicable pulse of detestation into the new grace. I opened my eyes. I was weary with a most honorable fatigue, and my flesh seemed new. I had not felt so nice since I was twelve. It seemed inconceivable at this instant that anything in life could fail to please. But there was Deborah, dead beside me on the flowered carpet of the floor, and there was no question of that. She was dead, indeed she was dead.
>
> (AD, 31-2)

The particular nature of the redemptive details from the above surely are enough to convince the most skeptical. The fallen Eve lies dead on "the flowered carpet" of her Oriental splendor of landscape." By his act of "honorable" murder, "a new grace abounds" for Adam, and his "flesh seemed new," cured like his illness, by the act of murder. Ironically, a re-entry into "the jeweled cities of tropical dusk" is accomplished lacking love. It is, though, just a foothold and will not be made a full possession until he has learned through Cherry, the true Eve, to integrate the flesh and the spirit, and through the father figure, Barney Kelly, that good and evil, God and the devil, are essentially the same. An added irony is that it taken an act of murder to convince Rojack that he is not evil, and not of the devil's party as Deborah had often taunted him.

This is not to say that no form of expiation for Rojack is

in order here, for in killing that social inhibitor, the false Eve, who stifled his instincts, Rojack still is plagued by the unsettling notion that perhaps there are "dimensions to evil which reach beyond the light." Perhaps Deborah, a summation of all the ills that formerly beset him, was just a surface cause of the evil that was denying his courage. And this nagging doubt persists in spite of the fact that "Deborah's death gave me a new life, I became a new breed of the old man" (AD, 93). But there are consequences to face stemming from the murder that will not allow Rojack to dissociate himself from the legacy of evil he fears has been passed on to him from his dead wife. He must learn, now that he is a complete alien from "straight" society, to use evil in such a way that he can elude the police and all those other forces that would entrap him and make it difficult to redeem his senses. Out of evil some good must grow. In this case, the growth arises from the liberation of an Adamic sensorium freely ranging through the circuits of New York society- as freely ranging there as the senses-led Natty Bumppo through the American garden or Abbie ("Free") Hoffman through the economic distortions of the garden. Courting evil to avert capture by telling brilliant lies to the police, or performing violent brutality on Cherry's former black lover, only further delays the complete re-birth and escape from history that Rojack's senses crave. From Shago Martin, whom he humiliates, Rojack learns that a restoration of his courage is almost complete; from Cherry he learns that body can release spirit- is indeed a source of Eden, which inspires him to impregnate her with life.

Shortly after having murdered his wife, Rojack engages with demonic fury in a sexual conflict with the more than willing German maid, Ruta, performing with her an act of anal intercourse that climaxes in Rojack's "seed perishing in the kitchens of the Devil" (AD, 50). The sterility of the act makes him aware, significantly, of his own foul breath, but the efficacy of the act, as Barry H. Leeds points out, strangely, educates him, for in the orifice of the Devil (Ruta) "a host of the

Devil's best gifts were coming to me, mendacity, guile, and the wit to trick authority" (AD, 44). These are the very qualities Rojack requires for his next confrontation with the police.[6] Gifts though these may be, there still comes to Rojack at the moment of his ejaculation the vision of "a huge city in the desert, in some desert, was it a place on the moon?" (AD, 44). This contrasts directly with the vision he enjoys when he impregnates the body of the true Eve with life.

> I was passing through a grotto of curious lights, dark lights, like colored lanterns beneath the sea, a glimpse of that quiver of jeweled arrows, that heavenly city which had appeared as Deborah was expiring in the look of my arm, and a voice like a child's whisper on the breeze came up so faint I could hardly hear, "Do you want her?" it asked. "Do you really want her, do you want to know something about love at last?" and I desired something I had never known before, and answered; it was as if my voice had reached to its roots; and, "Yes," I said, "of course I do, I want love."
>
> (AD, 128)

Through his love-making with Cherry, Rojack realizes a "glimpse" of the first garden, "the heavenly city" on earth, but it remains only a glimpse; for even though all "inside their room was right, everything outside was wrong"[7] (AD, 129). It is outside in a world of social restraints, a world controlled by president and king-makers like Tycoon Kelly, that Rojack must go in order to pass out of the no-man's land between God and the devil where in his Adamic evolution he is now installed. Eve, his mate, cannot help him. Only a final reckoning with the real nature of Kelly, the father figure, will provide him with a total understanding of how the unfallen world exists, or can exist, beneath the fallen.

The consuming fear that possesses Rojack as he stands before the heraldic medallion on his father-in-law's door is not without foundation. After all, Kelly is not just a man: he is a prime mover to all governments and Father-in-Law, de jure and de facto, to every man. Even his fearless daughter was

"terrified of him. Her lips trembled when Kelly spoke to her" (AD, 210). Furthermore, it is not guilt alone for having murdered Kelly's daughter that creates foreboding in Rojack, but the awful presence of the Father-in-law himself, his being. In his eight years of marriage to Deborah, Rojack has been summoned to the throne of Kelly no less than eight times. Now instinctively he knows it is for the last time. The scene warrants quotation in full:

> I went down the hall, a long hall with a carpet of civilized brown, much milk in it, and pale green walls, like a new leaf. Kelly's door was familiar.

The suggestion of a kind of mock-pastoral setting wherein a god might reside is too obvious to expand. Mailer continues:

> the door had a medallion beneath the knocker, a miniature of the coats of arms of the Mangravidia and the Caugline, quarterly, 1 and 4, gules, a lion rampant; 2, 3, sable, serpent, argent, crowned azure, vorant a child proper- so Deborah had delineated the blazons. And the motto: Victoria In Caelo Terraque. For a moment I began to shake, as from a chill.

(AD, 209)

The medallion, of course, is a key to everything, but its full significance will not be spelled out to Rojack by the Father-in-law until later. For the moment the sight of the medallion and its clarion motto sink through the Adamic soul of Rojack and communicate to him a character-emblem in which the naked Adamic child or hipster is being devoured by the heavenly ("azure") crowned serpent. (Proper: Her. Represented in the natural coloring; vorant: Her. Of animals: Devouring or swallowing something. O.E.D.) The double nature of God is at war with itself, good and evil in terrible struggle. In the inner conflict that ensues, it is Adamic man who suffers, who is devoured by the victory of evil in the mind of God both on heaven and earth. Finally, the victory of the serpent who devours the child "proper" is played out against a sable background- black, the traditional heraldic symbol of mourning, indicating an almost perverse sense of the inevitability of the

acceptance of this state of nature. Indeed, the Father-in-law himself jokingly confesses to Rojack, prior to the height of their confrontation, that it was he who placed the child "proper" in the mouth of the serpent, thus victimizing man while combining his two natures, the Mangaravidia and Onuphlin.

> Can you conceive of a shield with nothing but a naked babe in it? That was us. I managed to take the child and slip it into the mouth of the Mangaravidi's serpent when I decided to consolidate the arms.
>
> (AD, 238)

This exact medallion is nowhere to be found in any standard book of heraldry (that I have found); it is Mailer's own creation, and easily the most brilliant symbol in An American Dream- for that matter in any piece of fiction Mailer ever wrote. But I digress. Faced with such peremptory foreknowledge, it is little wonder that Stephen Rojack begins to shake. Perhaps knowing the full extent of the Father-in-law's participation in evil would turn him completely away from the door.

But a curious interlude occurs next, involving an interview in the apartment bedroom between Rojack and his twelve year old step-daughter, Deirdre. In the interview, Rojack is once again fortified with a knowledge of the possibility of a redeemed world of innocence. To his chagrin, Deirdre insists upon rehearsing Rojack's past life with her mother, whom Deirdre had grown to hate in proportion to a deeper love she had developed for Rojack.

> "Mummy told me once that you were a young soul and she was an old one," she said. "There was the trouble."
>
> "Do you know what she meant?"
>
> "I think she meant she had other lives. Maybe she was there during the French Revolution and the Renaissance or was even a Roman matron watching the Christians be tortured. But you were a new soul, she said, and hadn't had a life before this one. It was all-absorbing, but she had to go on to say you were a coward."
>
> "I think I am."

> "No. People with new souls have terror cause they can't know if they'll be born again."
>
> (AD, 213)

Deirdre is perhaps a little too precocious in her before-bed chatter, but this does not obscure the point. In order to be born again, Rojack must not only abandon the existential ground between good and evil, but he must storm the very gates of God the Father-in-Law himself and become what God, despite his alleged omniscience, thought he was, i.e., the divine in collective man. As a parting gift to Rojack, Deirdre recalls the first line of a poem she had written in Rojack's honor: "Forests are conceived in sorrow." The last line of the poem reads, "And share my fools for bread" (AD, 212-215).

For Rojack, Deirdre's poem takes on the proportions of an intense parable, and the first words to greet him in the living room from Kelly seem to uphold this judgment. "'Bless, bless,' said Kelly in a muffled voice" (AD, 217). But this benediction from an inherently corrupt man, surrounded by and delighting in his corruption, is more like a curse that Rojack must translate within himself into action. He will tell Kelly outright that he murdered his daughter; he will pull him down with the truth. With all the other guests having departed for the evening, finally, a field of battle in which no flags snap in the wind is prepared by the Father-in-Law, Kelly. They will talk privately in the library, a suggestion not much to the liking of Rojack who abhors the stink of the past that pervaded that "royal chapel" with those magnificent furnishings that reek of all the former pharaohs and kings and popes that had owned them.

> There was more: a Lucchese bed with a canopy encrusted in blood-velvet and gold; next to it, a Venetian throne. Golden mermaids twined up the arms to the shield at the head. The sculpture was delicate, but the throne seemed to grow as one regarded it for the sirens and cupids slithered from one to another like lizards on the vines of a tree: in the high silence of the room there was all but the sound of vegetation working in the night. Kelly sat down on his throne.
>
> (AD, 234)

But Rojack is not quite ready to sit. He retreats from the throne room to the living room to retrieve the phallic umbrella that he had appropriated from Shago Martin after having defeated him in a fight at Cherry's apartment. The umbrella is a weapon, too, but more important it is the externalization of an internal Mailerean strength that is still lacking in Rojack which he knows he will need in his inevitable battle with God the Father-in-law.[3] With the umbrella resting on his knees, Rojack gazes up at Kelly on his Venetian throne. Revelation is at hand.

> "I've never talked about myself to anyone," Kelly said. "It's spilling the seed. But I have wanted to talk to you. You see Deborah used to give me a hint of your beliefs. I was taken with your declaration- did you really make it on television?- that God's engaged in a war with the Devil, and God may lose."

Because he cannot decide on which side of the theological spectrum God the Father-in-law lies and because, as in the past, Kelly continues to wrap himself in robes of indirection and parable, Rojack, who "tonight had a terror offending God or the Devil," tries to side-step and delay the answer to the mystery that has been haunting him in his life and in his intellectual work for years.

> But there was contempt, as if the real mark was to chat at the cliffside of the disaster. "Well," he sighed, "it's all in curious taste, I know, but I like teasing the Jesuits with your idea. I get them to admit that the Devil in such a scheme has to have an even chance to defeat the Lord, or there's no scheme to consider."
>
> He looked up as if to call for a question and I, to be polite, answered, "Do I follow you?"
>
> "Since the Church refuses to admit the possible victory of Satan, man believes that God is all-powerful. So man also assumes God is prepared to forgive every last little betrayal. Which may not be the case. God might be having a very bad war with the troops defecting everywhere. Who knows?

> Hell might be no worse than Las Vegas or Versailles." He laughed.
> "But do you really think so?"
> "On occasion, I'm vain enough."
>
> (AD, 236)

Three lines of thought split off from God the Father-in-Law's rather astounding evaluation of himself. First, he is not collective man (what the Roman Catholics call the Mystical Body), as he sometimes thought he was. Second, if he is divisible, i.e., a part of good and a part of evil, I am assuming here that the devil or evil can only exist exclusively in God or exclusively in man, his omniscience is frighteningly limited in that he himself has no way of knowing who will be the victor in the inexorable movement toward Armageddon. Third, man, or God-like man, must inevitably defy him, which Rojack, after confessing to the murder, does, walking the parapet around the outside balcony of Kelly's Waldorf heaven. Realizing full well that Adamic man has put God on trial, Kelly attempts to push Rojack from the parapet; but he is thwarted in this act by Rojack's marvelous saving of himself with the phallic umbrella that he throws over the edge into the hellish streets of New York after first striking the Father-in-Law with it across the face. Now his phallic courage flows back into him. His rebirth is complete. As an aesthetic construct the scene works well; as a piece of theology, it is fantastic in the sense that, say, Germanic fairy tales are fantastic. Manicheanism somehow doesn't lend itself convincingly to Mailer.

Having defeated the Manichean God, Adam-Rojack is now free to return to the true Eve, Cherry, who is co-eternal with the false Eve or Lilith figure, Deborah, but triumphant even in her mistaken death. (In the logic of Mailer's system, to die is to live, and to murder is to create; Cherry's love has released the seed for Rojack's complete rebirth.) The slightly-more-than twenty-four-hour time cycle is brought full circle. As Cherry is being lowered into the ambulance, Rojack identifies her as his wife with a kiss which recalls a similar lowering in which he identified Deborah with a kiss, way back, twenty-four

hours ago on East River Drive. Through the strength of her imparted love, the true Eve has helped Rojack to break the holds of the dubious god,[9] Kelly, and the society over which he presides, just another part of the American forest that in Mailer's world is beyond redemption. At the level of the American Dream, nature curdles in the stomach of its most enthusiastic supporters.[10] In Las Vegas, which might be no worse than hell, Adam's luck returns to him at the gaming tables, and he is able to redeem all his old debts. The Hipster-Adamite, "a new breed of man" (AD, 269), is free of all such constrictions, free of all such history-ridden entrapments. Somewhere there is another unfallen garden beneath a fallen garden from which Rojack might lift the dross? "There was a jungle somewhere in Guatemala which had a friend, an old friend, I thought to go there. And on to Yucatan" (AD, 269).

The seminal importance of Mailer's essay on the American existentialist, "The White Negro," cannot be over-emphasized in any evaluation of the anarchistic drift of things in the United States from the late fifties to the middle sixties and beyond. Though not the first, Mailer was the most vocal in isolating this phenomenon and turning it into an aesthetic accounting in An American Dream; it is likely this will one day determine the height of his stature in the annals of American Literature- The Naked And The Dead being by his own admission something short of the mark. He was not, however, without a host of prototypes, (19th-century classical American Literature aside) who had already rendered or were in the process of rendering, the Adamic redemptive myth in both fiction and poetry. From at least half a dozen sources within his contemporary intellectual and cultural purview, the myth stared Mailer in the face. Yet when he did finally settle on his archetype, the Adamic Hipster, it is significant that he felt compelled to define him in terms of his hugging, Whitmanian bed-fellow, the Beatnik. The difference between these two anarchist types, Mailer maintains, is the different ways they react to violence.

> The Beatnik, gentle, disembodied from the race, is often a radical pacifist, he has sworn the vow of no violence- in fact, his violence is sealed within, and he has no way of using it. His act of violence is to suicide even as the hipster's is toward murder, but in his mind-lost way, the beatnik is the torch-bearer of those all-but-lost American values of freedom, self-expression and equality which first turned him against the hypocricies and barren cultureless flats of the middle class.
>
> For years now they have lived side by side, hipster and beatnik, white Negro and crippled saint, their numbers increasing every month as the new ones come to town. If there are hipsters and beatniks, there are also hipniks and beatsters like Kerouac and Ginsberg, and across the spectrum like a tide of defeat there are the worn-out beats of all too many hipsters who made their move, lost and so have ended as beatniks with burned-out brains.[11]

As is sometimes the case with Norman Mailer, one cannot take the above too literally- at least not with controversial figures like Jack Kerouac or Allen Ginsberg. To say that the beatnik is a worn-out hipster who made his move and lost is to expose only one eighth of the iceberg. More to the point in any kind of appraisal of this non-rationalistic modus vivendi, politely called an aesthetic by some critics, is Dorothy Van Ghent's insight. "The distinguishing characteristic of the Beat Generation is, it seems to me, the fact that they have a myth. The myth follows authentic archaic lines, and goes something like this. The hero is the 'angelheaded hipster.' He comes of anonymous parentage, parents whom he denies in the correct mythological fashion. He has received a mysterious call- to the road, the freights, the jazz dens, the 'Negro streets.'"[12] As a package, Mailer's and Van Ghent's analyses form the beginning of some kind of working definition of the Adamic beatnik, but only a beginning, for the multiple contradictions and nonsystematic utterance of this explorer sect are an intrinsic part of the point of view from which they interpret experience. "The system is to have no system"[13]- the Americanization of

Zen: a proposition- in which to build up the holiness and mystery of life, although at various stages of his pilgrimage the beatnik has appealed to the systems of others to contain his sense of the joy and simplicity of life. But in the end, these borrowings, from Blake and Christopher Smart, from St. John of the Cross and Kierkegaard, are superficial when placed beside the contributions of him who first took to the road and found running beneath it another unfallen road that opened on to our first world in redemptive glory.

Like Whitman, the beatnik would "unscrew the locks from the doors" that close out the expansion of consciousness in the New World garden in which man is God and all things in it are holy. "A glaring characteristic of most Beat writers, especially Ginsberg and Kerouac, is their celebration of intimate biographical detail which runs the gamut of autoeroticism, drug addiction, homosexuality, and the like. To the social conservative, theirs is shameless exhibitionism. To the authentic Beatnik, it is the denial of shame itself, a manifesto that nothing that is human or personal can be degrading."[14] In embracing nakedness and eschewing anything smacking of institutional isms or the logical mind- let logical positivists beware: Walt Whitman, America still has need of thee, the beat poet or novelist smashes with abandon the evils of dialectic on which the redemption-starved American mind feeds. The tragedy of all of this is that in destroying the dialectic, the beatnik is also at the same time destroying the sluice and tension at the heart of the creation of a Western work of art. But of that anon. What nakedness means to the beatnik is surely much the same thing it meant to Whitman: to be naked is to renounce the inhibiting qualities and restraints imposed upon one by society. It is the way in which man sees himself, really, for the first time. It allows the natural world to flow freely through the holy body that is reborn in that first world each time the clothing is shed by which the artificial ideals of society are removed. It is only through nakedness or the celebration of it in one form or another in a work of art that a prelapsarian

world may once again be redeemed. What stands between man and his reclamation is nothing less than society and its addiction to history. "At a recitation in Los Angeles, a man stood up and wanted to know what Ginsberg was trying to prove. 'Nakedness,' said Ginsberg. 'What d'ya mean, nakedness?' bawled the unweary customer. Ginsberg gracefully took off his clothes."[15] To prove nothing; to change nothing; to worship nothing; to accept everything, these are the qualities (sometimes) imperfectly gathered from the words of the Zen Buddhist that are destined to cimcumscribe the literature and simple every day circumstances of the brethern of the beats. Claiming repeatedly that theirs is not a religion, they stoutly maintain that life is holy and man is an angel, or an Adam, able to see before and after in the great "All" which is the eternal and timeless moment. One of their foremost spokesman, Gary Snyder, characterizes his peers this way:

> 1. Vision and illumination-seeking. This is most easily done by systematic experimentation with narcotics... 2. love, respect for life, abandon, Whitman, pacifism, anarchism, etc. This comes out of various traditions including Quakers, Shinshu, Buddhism, Sufism. And from a loving and an open heart. It is also partly responsible for the mystique of "angels," the glorification of skid-row and hitch-hiking, and a kind of mindless enthusiasm. If it respects life, it fails to respect heartless wisdom and death.[16]

Taking a cue from Mr. Snyder's non-sermon on the components of the Beat Generation, let us examine "the mindless enthusiasm" that so aptly describes the work of the Adamic Zen Beatnik, Jack Kerouac. Of the more than dozen novels this remarkable man has written, one might think that his second and most famous, On The Road, would be the best with which to illustrate the redemptive Adamism we are dealing with. But this is not the case, insofar as this novel, and too many of those which follow it, depends for the quality of its mind-expanding vision on an ill assortment of hallucinogenic drugs. In a court

of law, we would be forced to say that the drugs are inseparable from the testimony of the witness- from his vision. But of course nobody is on trial, and I would caution the reader that I am making a value judgment that probably makes me vulnerable to attack from a staggering host of _afficionados_ of the drug culture.[17] Apropos of drugs, it will be necessary to explore the mind-body problem later in an examination of Allen Ginsberg, but in dealing with Kerouac it behooves us to examine not only his drug-free and articulate rendering of Adamic redemption but also his most pure, evidenced from beginning to end in the novel, _The Dharma Bums_ (1958).[18]

The circular action in this relatively plotless novel can best be summarized as a narration studded with overtones of a biblical or anthropological nature. It ought to begin, as should many other fictions in the Adamic redemptive genre, "once upon a time" a mature man from the East, whence he had been driven by unsought malevolent forces, sifted the advice of a wiser man than he, who could, through words and actions, make manifest to him the path to wisdom on which all forms of self-frustration[19] would be left by the side of the road. After having found this wiser man, the Easterner began an ascent with him up a mountain, the top of which was denied the Easterner because he had not fully understood the precepts and examples of the wiser man. Gazing at his master on the top of the mountain, he grieved. Armed with a certain indefinable knowledge of his inadequacy, the man returned to the East to the bosom of the family he had denied and meditated in the forest surrounding their dwellings. Then in the Spring when the world greened again and yellow butterflies splattered the woods with their colors, the man took to the open road again and went West, back toward the mountains in which he knew lay the arcane redemption he had tried to gather from the wiser man. Alone, on the top of a mountain called "Desolation," his quest ended, the man heard a voice inside his heart say, "To the children and the innocent it's all the same" (_DB_, 244). Having heard

the news and rejoicing in it gladly, he returned to this world and the cities of men. The man's name was Adam.

Like Natty Bumppo or Stephen Rojack or the Indian in the primitive ritual, the hero of The Dharma Bums, Ray Smith, must, through trial and pilgrimage, earn his Adamic laurels. We first see him hopping a freight in the yards somewhere near Camarillo, California, "where Charlie Parker'd been mad and relaxed back to normal health"; Smith is on his way to San Francisco and an audience with Japhy Ryder, Adamic Zen Master and all-around wise man of the West. By his own admission, Smith designates himself an American religious wanderer. "I believed too I was an old time bhikku [mendicant seeker after truth] in modern clothes wandering the world (usually the immense triangular arc of New York to Mexico City to San Francisco) in order to turn the wheel of the True Meaning or Dharma, and gain merit for myself as a Future Hero in Paradise" (DB, 5). Perhaps at this juncture it would be well to establish clearly the relationship between Zen and Adamic redemption. Actually, they are virtually the same thing, in that both embrace the tenor of the orphaned religious wanderer, and both search for a vehicle that will communicate the same fundamental mutual postulate, i.e., "The Kingdom of God is within you." Kerouac early discovered convenient to hand the orientation of Zen Buddhism, but in doing so he merely fulfilled the dictate of an American blood-belief as alive as Whitman is today which is an intrinsic part of the national consciousness. Eric Fromm, as is his wont, states the case thus:

> What is the religious situation in contemporary Western society? It resembles in curious fashion the picture which the anthropologist gets in studying the North American Indians. They have been converted to the Christian religion but their old pre-Christian religions have by no means been uprooted. Christianity is a veneer laid over this old religion and blended with it in many ways. In our own culture monotheistic and also atheistic and agnostic philosophies are a thin veneer built upon

> religions which are in many ways far more "primitive than the Indian religions and, being sheer idolatry, are also more compatible with the essential teachings of monotheism. As a collective and potent form of modern idolatry we find the worship of power, of success and of the authority of the market; but aside from these collective forms we find something else. If we scratch the surface of modern man we discover any number of individualized primitive forms of religion. Many of these are called neuroses; but one might just as well call them by their respective religious names: ancestor worship, totemism, fetishism, ritualism, the cult of cleanliness, and so on.[20]

Thus, at most points in The Dharma Bums one might say that where Zen Buddhism and Adamic redemption do not complement one another, Zen functions as a veneer over a more basic fundamental American belief in which innocent man perambulating the New World Garden surrenders up only himself to himself, thus recognizing nothing above or below him. "God is not a symbol of power over man but of man's own powers."[21] When Ray Smith the Adamite, for example, tries mid-way through his pilgrimage to solace a potential suicide, his anarchistic, anti-authoritarian appeal rings through with insistence.

> "But you're getting these silly convictions and conceptions out of nowhere, don't you realize all this life is just a dream? Why don't you just relax and enjoy God? God is You, you fool!"
>
> (DB, 111)

Eden is within you, nor are you ever out of it, unless the innocent eye fails to penetrate the dross with which time has covered the unfallen garden in nature. This is the object lesson of the pilgrimage that Smith is ever on the verge of grasping but which always eludes him until his final illumination on the summit of "Desolation Mountain." Another example: at a rest point mid-way in his freight-hopping from Camarillo to San Francisco, lulled by the music of the Pacific, Smith awakes to a grey dawn.

> I saw it, I sniffed it (because I had seen all the horizons shift as if a sceneshifter had hurried to put it back in place and make me believe in its reality), and I went back to sleep, turning over. "It's all the same thing," I heard my voice say in the void that's highly embraceable during sleep.
>
> (DB, 9)

In the first instance, Smith, because he does not quite believe it himself, fails to convince the suicide who later throws herself out a window. In the second instance, the fact that he does not enjoy full consciousness precludes an acceptance that would allow him in a fully conscious moment to rejoice with "the children and the innocent" (DB, 244), as he does at the conclusion of the novel on the top of the mountain. But in order to expand his consciousness fully and to achieve the satori[22] of "God is you and Eden within you," he must seek the wisdom of the Adamic Zen Master, Japhy Ryder, or, as Smith prefers to call him, "Natty Bumppo, who cautioned me about snapping twigs (or 'It's too deep here'), dead serious and glad" (DB, 58).

As one might expect, Japhy Ryder is an anarchist with an old school tie- the IWW variety. He is also a vegetarian; and like his tyro, Smith, he is a maker of poetic meditations that concern themselves with processes of Eden within.

> His voice was deep and resonant and somehow brave, like the voice of oldtime American heroes and orators. Something earnest and stronger and humanly hopeful I liked about him.
>
> (DB, 14)

His first real insight into the character of Japhy Ryder settles upon Smith at a bacchanalia at Ryder's San Francisco dwelling where the master demonstrates for Smith the Tibetan Buddhist practice of the "yabyum." Japhy, and a young girl, who calls herself, "Princess, an old mother of the earth" (DB, 30), sit facing one another in the lotus position on the floor; this meditating position soon becomes a copulating position, which genuinely embarrasses Smith, who, at this point, (and

any other referring to sex) refuses to join in the general nakedness.

> "Take your clothes off and join in, Smith!" But on top of all that, the feelings about Princess, I'd also gone through an entire year of celibacy based on my feeling that lust was the direct cause of birth which was the direct cause of suffering and death and I had no lie really come to the point where I regarded lust as offensive and even cruel.
>
> (DB, 29)

Within the context of the continuous journey outward into mind expansion and an understanding of the dimensions of process, this scene is merely a sequence to which Smith in his celibacy cannot relate. More important, it is a non-acceptance of the life force itself, the Eden within motif, with all its manifold Zen contradictions. To overcome this denial Smith must learn to see everything with one eye, a Zen proposition that involves physical love and celibacy united on the same wheel of prayer. Sleeping under the tree of life in Japhy's front yard that same evening, Smith felt:

> The old tree brooded over me silently, a living thing. I heard a mouse snoring in the garden weeds. The rooftops of Berkeley looked like pitiful living meat sheltering grieving phantoms from the eternality of the heavens which they feared to face. By the time I went to bed I wasn't taken in by no Princess or no desire for no Princess and nobody's disapproval and I felt glad and slept well.
>
> (DB, 35)

Somehow the American Adam always seems to get on a little better, to survive with a little more dignity, without his Eve. It is possible that Leslie Fiedler's evaluation of this phenomenon is applicable here.[23]

On his apprentice climb to Matterhorn, free now from the cities of men, Smith watches his master up ahead making his way through the scree. "His eyes shine with joy, he's on his way, his heroes are Han Shan, Kropotkin, John Burroughs and Paul

Bunyan" (DB, 54). They are moving up out of a time-dependency into the heart of an experience that Smith will not partake of completely, try as he will. He searches for words that will contain his feeling, a haiku perhaps, but he is informed by his master, "Comparisons are odious, Smith" (DB, 55). The way up and the way down are the same; the side of a mountain and the side of a wave are one and the same. The important thing, according to the principles of Zen Buddhism, is to see how the wave and the mountain side participate in shared rhythms.[24] To do this, one must simply go along "as fresh as children writing down what they saw without literary devices or fanciness of expression" (DB, 59). All of which describes the major technique of the novel and certainly its major theme, i.e., one must not only write like a child "without literary devices," but he must also see as a child sees, with all the freshness and innocence men associate with the world of children. To see as a child sees, "with one eye in the All," is to see everything divested of dialectic, a world, in short, that is bathed in prelapsarian glory. At a later point in the climb, Smith muses on childhood and the joyous conditions of its wisdom. For the child, the purpose of life and the use of its unfallen gifts are unmistakably clear. Before reaching the age of reason, the senses of a child are as yet uncorrupted and with them he is able to see, hear, feel, taste, and touch the inherent truthfulness of things- at least according to theory.

> Like a little girl pulling her little brother home on a sled and they're both singing little songs of their imagination and making faces at the ground and just being themselves before they have to go in the kitchen and put on a straight face again for the world of seriousness. 'Yet what could be more serious than a child or to follow a deer trace to get to your water?' I thought.
>
> (DB, 88-9)

What is lost from the world of childhood as it moves into "the kitchen" (the word is ripe) or the illusory world of adult seriousness is, as Henry James would have it, "Practically

everything." And of course in order to maintain or preserve not childhood but the unfallen world it prefigures, one must prepare "a straight face," a mask, for the hardened faces one meets in the kitchens or cities of men. Such an attitude requires a particular style or system to contain it. Kerouac terms it, "Spontaneous Prose,"[25] a systematic disregard of syntax, spelling and punctuation by which the unnatural boundaries between the perceiver and the thing perceived, between man and the unfallen natural world are cast aside. Further, he contrasts this style, rather unfairly, against "I.A. Richards, John Ciardi and the Saturday Review bunch." (DB, 32) At its best, Kerouac's style, if not totally convincing, is charming; at its worst, it is mindless nonsense served up on the menu of the rugged American commarade [sic] who, besides hopping freights and hitch-hiking through the spining vortex of history, happens to climb mountains, where we left Smith and his master on the verge of an epiphany.

By the time Smith and his master reach the half-way point in their ascent, it is sufficiently obvious to the reader that, free of time, they are beginning to penetrate "a trial that had an immortal look" to it "through grass that seemed "clouded with ancient gold dust" (DB, 61). Below them the little road they had taken up from a lake to their present position appeared "tragic," and in the lake itself those "frightening black well holes," symbolic of the fallen world, "were still perfectly visible" (DB, 61). In vain they search the "tragic" trail for a companion, left behind because of a foolish concern for his automobile radiator that might freeze up as a result of the unpredictable weather below. Aside from his material concern with machines and the things of this world, Morley, the companion, is a bad poet, who makes "words descriptions of words" (DB, 169), thus making him incapable of celebrating the epiphany that Smith is about to experience.

> But it seemed that I had seen the ancient afternoon of that trial, from the meadow rocks and lupine posies, to sudden revisits with the roaring stream with its splashed

> snag bridges and undersea greennesses, there was something inexpressible broken in my heart as though I'd lived before and walked this trail. I felt like lying down on the side of the trail and remembering it all. The woods do that to you, they always look familiar, long lost, like the face of a long-dead relative, like an old dream, like a piece of forgotten song drifting across the water, most of all like golden eternities of past childhood or past manhood and all the living and dying that went on a million years ago. Ecstasy, even, I felt, with sudden flashes of remembrance, and feeling sweaty and drowsy I felt like sleeping and dreaming in the grass.
>
> (DB, 61-2)

The governing images in the passage above reveal themselves in terms of the lost son seeking the lost home buried in the heart. For Smith, "inexpressibly broken in his heart," who had "lived before and walked this trail" (going the other way), the fallen world has almost lifted itself from the unfallen world. Yet he cannot put off reason, cannot surrender to instinct that will allow him, as it has allowed Japhy Ryder dressed only in an athletic support, thus allowing the natural world to flow through him, "to dance in the light that was growing amber and gave you that immortal feeling again." Fully clothed and walking "ploddingly," a state conducive to intellectual reasoning and not to dancing- a state conducive to dreaming of unfallen worlds, Smith begins his own "ragged dance" across the boulders in an effort to catch up with Ryder.

> "The secret of this kind of climbing," said Japhy, "is like Zen." Don't think. Just dance along. It's the easiest thing in the world, actually easier than walking on flat ground which is monotonous.
>
> (DB, 65)

Though his tired leg muscles are about to fail him, Smith tries harder, pushes on, and is rewarded with a view of the campsite for the evening that loomed under a sheer cliff. In retrospect, he concludes that "Jumping from boulder to boulder and

never falling with a heavy pack, is easier than it sounds; you just can't fall when you get into the rhythm of the dance" (DB, 65). Unfortunately, Smith is still fallen and never does totally reclaim the rhythm of the dance; for the next day, when he and Japhy and Morley, who has finally caught with them, reach the last three hundred yards, straight up and down, Morley quits and is unable to go any further, and Smith, trying desperately to emulate his master, loses faith in the mystery and in man's ability to participate in it. "I looked back like Lot's wife and that did it" (DB, 83). Nevertheless,

> that whole afternoon, even more than the other, was filled with old premonitions or memories, as though I'd been there before, scrambling on these rocks, for other purposes more ancient, more serious, more simple.
>
> (DB, 80)

From the experience Smith resolves to "begin a new life with a rucksack and make it the pure way" (DB, 77), and this in spite of the fact that in the chain of being that hangs from the experience of the mountain itself, Smith, gazing up at Japhy on the very top and down at Morley on a plateau, occupies the middle ground or link by which he is a stranger in Eden and an alien in the cities of men. In a real way he has entered the temple of Zen, but he has yet to penetrate the Adamic inner sanctuary within. On another mountain, called "Desolation," only after he has tramped "over the East and West" and meditated in the deserts, this redemption awaits him. To be reborn again and again, to fall and rise, and fall and rise again; in short, to make new beginnings, one must die. "Twere [sic] good enough to have been born just to die, as we all are" (DB, 71).

On the eve "of the new life," Smith once again resumes a habit he had enjoyed as a child: "In keeping with my naming of little things with personal names, I called this spot 'Apache Gulch.'" Now nothing escapes his love, or is so low that it is denied his benediction. A homeless man "from the East," given to occasional fits of tears, he begins the first leg of the triangular circle that will take him East to Tidewater, North

Carolina, and back again to California and ultimately to Desolation Mountain in the state of Washington. It is a ragged circle, but a circle nonetheless.

> I was started on my new life with my new equipment: a regular Don Quixote of tenderness. In the morning I felt exhilarated and meditated first thing and made me a little prayer: 'I bless you, all living things, I bless you in the endless past, I bless you in the endless present, I bless you in the endless future, amen.'
>
> (DB, 123)

All of nature rejoices with him in the final phase "of the ritual in the desert" from a hummingbird to a colony of ants. But before he can enter the inmost part of the Adamic mystery, there is one final lesson he must learn from the wiser man, Japhy Ryder, and that is that as an anarchistic child of unfallen nature in the New World Garden, the Adamic child must be eternally absolved of history and ideology. In the rucksack revolution that Smith foresees in which "East meets West finally," Smith discerns an analogue to the early days of the Crusades when "Walter the Penniless and Peter the Hermit led ragged bands of believers to the Holy Land." But that is not the situation at all, says Japhy. "That was all such European gloom and crap, and I want my Dharma Bums to have springtime in their hearts when the blooms are girling and the birds," etc. (DB, 203-4). So the wiser man imparts his last parable to the Adamite and sails off to a Buddhist monastery in Japan, after first throwing an Eve-figure, the "Princess," off the steamship. "He wanted to get to that shore and get on to his business. His business was with the Dharma (DB, 215). Shortly thereafter Smith takes up a position as a fire warden on Desolation Peak, remaining on the top not just for the brief moment of conquest but for a solid two months in which he is finally admitted a first profound sight of his Adamic self.

> 'Desolation, Desolation, I owe so much to Desolation, thank you forever for guiding me to the place where I learned all. Now comes the sadness of coming back to cities and I've

> grown two months older and there's all that humanity in bars and burlesque shows and gritty love, all upsidedown in the void God bless them.
>
> To the children and the innocent it's all the same.'
>
> Then I turned and went on down the trail back to this world.
>
> (DB, 244)

The exact place from which the voice of the novel speaks is not clear, but wherever it is, the voice does not participate in this last joy, nor was the voice ever able to maintain the steadiness of the last redemptive vision. Fled is that music. The key to this judgment lies under the mat on page 5 of the novel where one could easily overlook it.

> I was very devout in those days and was practicing my religious devotions almost to perfection. Since then I've become a little hypocritical about my lipservice and a little tired and cynical. Because now I am grown so old and neutral...
>
> (DB, 5)

It is a simple, innocuous statement, almost lost in the general flow of "mindless enthusiasm" and the deliberate destruction of dialectic and history. It was all a dream. There was no other room in the house but the "kitchen." The frog was just a frog: no matter how hard one rubbed him or how high one took him on the mountain, he never really became an Adamic prince. The idea was there and even some inspiration, but there was no real evil against which it could be played. In destroying the dialectic, Kerouac failed to realize that he destroyed the tension in his fiction as well, for it is the unseen but readily felt phenomenon of tension, as Allan Tate[26] says in Western Art, that makes the inevitable evil that pervades man's soul something more than a toothless abstract word. And in going leaps beyond Tate, I would say that the presence of evil, the unfelt "cities of men," should be at least the sine qua non of any decent work of fiction. My quarrel therefore is with Kerouac's messy, tensionless use of the

Adamic redemptive theme which requires an evil as large and pervasive as, say, a Claggart, or a Barney Kelly, or a United States Government to make it work. As a parting shot I quote Leslie Fiedler:

> Salinger and Kerouac alike attempt to project images of their own lost youth in the guise of Huckleberry Finn, though like most Americans, they have confused him with Tom Sawyer. Rural no longer in their memories or nostalgia, they yearn still for boyhood, and speak in their books in a language as far removed from adult speech as was Huck's.
>
> Whether on the upper-middlebrow level of Salinger or the bohemian-kitsch level of Kerouac, such writers echo not the tragic Huckleberry Finn but the sentimental book with which it is intertwined. In On The Road whose characters heal themselves as they go by play-therapy, the inevitable adjustment to society is only promised not delivered.[27]

It is hard to disagree completely with Fiedler here, but at the same time one must register the protest that "adjustment" is an unhappy word to use to describe the manner in which many Americans now or ever have gotten along on the normative level of their society.[28]

On a wall in the New York subway at 116th Street and Broadway appears the following inscription: "Allen Ginsberg Revises!" Below it several years later an equally talented presumably Columbia wit inscribed: "He also sneaks to the Methodist Church." Strangely enough, both statements have some element of truth in them, for not all of Ginsberg's confessional poetry conforms to his professed master Kerouac's dictum of "Spontaneous Writing," and certainly Ginsberg is a very religious poet who succeeds in his form of redemption where Kerouac fails for exactly the opposite reason: where he makes a poem that works, he is able to create a tension in the ambience thereof, in which the good (the unfallen world) striving to overcome the evil (the fallen world) pulls believably one part against the

other. Nevertheless, there are certain real problems confronting any critic who would seriously examine Ginsberg's work, and these problems often outweigh any success Ginsberg may have achieved in creating a tension at the heart of his poem. While acknowledging at the outset that this study is not the proper forum in which to air old and sometimes worn out aesthetic controversies, it would be well in passing to understand clearly a few of the ground rules under which Ginsberg "confesses" poetry, and I propose to examine it. The most simple and forthright justification for the method of the Beat School of poets is provided by Kenneth Rexroth, aging priest of apologetics for the entire movement. "No avant-garde poet accepts the I.A. Richards-Valery thesis that a poem is an end in itself, an anonymous machine for providing aesthetic experiences. All believe in poetry as communication, statement from one person to another."[29] Certainly Rexroth's statement is open-ended and a fair description of the way in which Ginsberg in particular operates. But at the same time the door is left open for a variety of gruesome interpretations of the word communication. Using Rexroth's logic, one could say that two cows making love or the laying of one's hand on the wet nose of a cow are equally acts of aesthetic communication; for who is to say in the drug-inspired world of Allen Ginsberg that a warm cow is incapable of communication. When in Song of Myself Whitman says, "And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me," the source of the communication lies in the subject-verb-object by which men normally grasp their relationship to the natural world. With Ginsberg, the subject-verb-object is often purposefully obliterated either by drugs or a galloping enthusiasm in a foolish effort to make the self transcend time. For Whitman, the self is a unity of body and soul, reflecting and absorbing all of the created universe;[30] for Ginsberg, the self (under drugs) is a painful division, a warfare between mind and body that too infrequently succeeds in achieving the unity for which it howls. In this manner, he

sought to cast off his body from him like a superfluous piece of clothing and to embrace through drugs only the mind-imploded inner soul that he thought would show him the unfallen inter-relatedness of the timeless universe. Not until 1963 and a poem called "The Changes" was he able to re-integrate the mind with the body, "Return to body" from Howl being the one exception. In other words, the strong movement toward unity and purpose in Whitman is matched by an equally strong movement toward chaos in Ginsberg. One cannot be the successor to Walt Whitman, as Ginsberg says he is in a few places throughout the poems, simply by saying that it is so. It is inconceiveable that Whitman, fine craftsman that he was,[31] could find much to concur with in the following ungrammatical statement from Ginsberg:

> The problem is then to reach the different parts of the mind, which are existing simultaneously, the different associations which are going on simultaneously, choosing elements from both, like: jazz, jukebox, and all that, and we have the jukebox from that; politics, hydrogen bomb, and we have the hydrogen of that, you see 'hydrogen jukebox.' And that actually compresses in one instant like a whole series of things. Or the end of "Sunflower" with 'cunts of wheelbarrows,' whatever that meant, or 'rubber dollar bills'- 'skin of machinery'; see, and actually in the moment of composition I don't necessarily know what it means, but it comes to mean something later, after a year or two, I realize that it meant something clear, unconsciously. Which takes on meaning in time, like a photograph developing slowly. Because we're not really always conscious of the entire depth of our minds- in other words, we just know a lot more than we're able to be aware of, normally- though at the moment we're completely aware, I guess.[32]

There is no question but that Ginsberg is deadly serious in the above, mixed metaphors and the rather arresting figure of the poem as a slowly developing photograph, etc. but it does not and cannot justify the fact that in over half of Ginsberg's poems it is possible to take the last line and put it first and to take the first line (or stanza) and put it somewhere in

the middle of the poem in an agonizing kind of hysterical mix-up that one discovers in such poems as Howl and Kaddish. Think for a skinny moment of trying to reorganize the unitary progression of "The Poison Tree", by Ginsberg's guru, William Blake, or of trying to shift around the natural sequence of the Song of Myself by Ginsberg's Adamic mentor, Walt Whitman? Neither Alan Watt's Zen Buddhism- "Art exercises control over nature through selection according to unsystematic judgment,"[33] nor Charles Olson's inane- "Form is never more than an extension of content"[34] (plausible explanations though they may be), can justify the excesses to which Ginsberg has brought his poetry in an attempt to hammer out an Adamic redemptive vision in "The New World Auditorium."[35] Thus in his poems when the form is incapable of containing the ranting content, good as it often is, inevitably the poem "slides off" into chaos and sheer incomprehension. Such is the case with Ginsberg at his worst.

At his best, he is as good as or better than the models who served him in his early years and who taught him in direct sunlight the uniqueness of the American grain. In the four poems that preceeded the composition of Howl, "An Asphodel," "Song," "Wild Orphan," and "In back of the real," the influence of William Carlos Williams is everywhere apparent, particularly in Ginsberg's use of the end-stopped line. In "Wild Orphan," he explores the iden that the present life, fallen at every point, is incomensurate with,

> The recognition-
> something so rare
> in his soul,
> met only in dreams
> - nostalgias
> of another life.
>
> (Howl, 42)

Ginsberg knows another life exists in his body and in nature. It is "a mythology/ he cannot inherit," though, because in the frame of the allegory of the poem, his father, a "hot rod angel," is not dead but has "absconded," grieving "in a

flophouse/ a thousand miles away." In failing his Adamic son, God the Father has failed himself and forced his innocent "orphan" son to "create/out of his own imagination/ the beauty of his wild forebearers." The poem renders a clear impression that a God incapable of love is hiding from his son in whose eye "an insane gleam of recollection" lingers as he starts through the world "bumming toward his /father's/ door" and redemption. What he seeks in particular from his Father is a sharing of the love in the universe denied him by the insistence of time- "this clock of meat bleakly pining for its sweet immaterial paradise" (Empty Mirror, 25). But the indifference of the Father continues and the Adamic voice that beseeches him "to share that Love in Heaven/ which on Earth was so disinherited" (Empty Mirror, 25) begins to howl in proportion to the indifference. The voice must learn and does eventually learn that the only heaven is that on earth and the only angel is man. The American has created through Moloch a hell of the American garden.

> They broke their backs lifting Moloch
> to heaven! Pavements,
> trees, radios, tons! lifting the city
> to heaven which exists
> and is everywhere about us!
>
> (Howl, II, 18)

But Moloch too is within. "Moloch whose poverty is the spectre of genius! Moloch whose name is the mind!" (Howl, II, 17) resides in the self co-eternal with the soul (read body). "O Victory/ forget your underwear we're free" (Howl, III, 20), the Adamic voice screams to his Whitmanian fellow, Carl Solomon, through the bars of the madhouse. Moloch cannot be conquered because he is a natural part of life and therefore, according to Ginsberg's canon, "holy, holy the angel in Moloch" ("Footnote to Howl," 21). Everything is to be accepted; nothing denied. But the position of nakedness and the total acceptance of Moloch (mind) are untenable at this point in Ginsberg's career, and they form the basis for a crippling contradiction that is at the heart of Ginsberg's poems from 1955 to 1963,

when he underwent (temporarily at least) a real conversion and was able to see that it is through pure instinct and the natural resources of the body that the unfallen world is to be redeemed both in the self and in nature.[36] He realized at this point, in a poem entitled, "The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express" (Planet News, 55), that the world of drugs could not deliver the authentic consciousness of an Adamically redeemed world. Some months before "The Change" was written, Ginsberg recounts in a Paris Review interview, the mere thought of drugs made him vomit. "But I felt I was duly bound and obliged for the sake of consciousness expansion, and this insight, and breaking down my identity, and seeking more direct with primate sensation, nature, to continue."[37] The rambling in the former quotation and others like it from the Paris Review interview indicate just how twisted Ginsberg was at this time. On the train ride from Kyoto to Tokyo, burnt-out and having made his move- and lost as Mailer would have it- Ginsberg suddenly realized the divinity of the Kingdom of God within himself- the closest he ever comes to a real identification with the unitary vision of Whitman.

> Live in the body: this is the form you're born for. Too many holy men and too many different conversations and they all have a little key thing going. But it all winds up in the train in Japan, and then a year later, the poem "The Change" where all of a sudden I renounce drugs, I don't renounce drugs but suddenly I didn't want to be dominated by the non-human anymore, or even be dominated by the moral obligation to enlarge my consciousness any more. I was suddenly free to love myself, and therefore love the people around me, in the form they already were. And love myself in my own form as I am. And look around at the other people and so it was again [i.e., the experience of a Blake-inspired vision] the same thing like in the bookstore. Except this time I was completely in my body and had no more mysterious obligations. And nothing more to fulfill, except to be willing to die when I am dying, whenever that be.

> And be willing to love as a human in
> this form now. So I started weeping, it
> was such a happy moment. Fortunately,
> I was able to write then, too, 'So that
> I do live I will die'- rather than be
> cosmic consciousness, immortality, Ancient
> of Days, perpetual consciousness existing
> forever.[38]

The dominant metaphor that structures the poem "The Change" is that of a homecoming in which the mind returns to the body and the senses rejoice in a festival atmosphere.

> Come home: the pink meat image
> black yellow image with
> ten fingers and two eyes
> is gigantic already: the black
> curly pubic hair, the
> blind, hollow stomach,
> the silent soft open vagina
> rare womb of a new birth
> cock lone and happy to be home
> again
> touched by hands by mouths,
> by hairy lips-
>
> Close the portals of the festival?
>
> Open the portals to what Is
> Tears alright, and laughter
> alright
> I am that I am-

(Planet News, 55)

The equation of the mind with the phallus and the body with the vagina is not intended to shock: rather, it is intended to suggest a kind of apotheosis of nakedness celebrated in terms of all the vital and humanistic things one associates with love and birth. Indeed, the poem seems to be saying that the interaction between mind and body is the ultimate form of the act of love. "It is the pink meat... home again" voice in the poem that poses the rhetorical question, "Close the portals of the festival?" like a groaning through tears and laughter. For crudely put, when the "mind fucks the body,"[39] the Adamic self becomes not just holy but God himself- "I am that I am"- echoing thus the Hebrew God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, meaning "he who is I am."[40] Having finally realized

the Adamic redemptive credo that God is man and Eden is within- and this quite independent of drugs, Ginsberg in the second section proceeds to lament the amount of life and years used up in the search: "home,/ Come sweetly/ now back to my Self as I was." It is at this point that the concept of redemption and plenitude is no longer a superficial dream induced by drugs and a pathetic dependence on foreign Buddhisms.

> I am that I am I am the
> man & the Adam of hair in
> my loins. This is my spirit and
> physical shape I inhabit
> this Universe O weeping
> against what is my
> own nature for now
>
> Who would deny his own shape's
> loveliness in his
> dream moment in bed
> Who sees his desire to be
> horrible instead of Him
>
> Who is, who cringes, perishes,
> is reborn a red Screaming
> baby? Who cringes before
> that meaty shape in
> Fear?
>
> In this dream I am the Dreamer
> and the Dreamed I am
> that I am Ah but I have
> always known
>
> oooh for the hate I have spent
> in denying my image & cursing
> the breasts of illusion

(Planet News, 60)

To deny selfhood and the sacred human image in the only universe our senses can show us is to commit sacrilege of the worst kind, for it precludes rebirth and obstructs the natural movement toward redemption. Through the inducement of love consummated in a work of art, as in Keats' poem Lamia, in which Hermes awoke and found the dream real,[41] the natural world and man in it participate in glory with

> The Sun the Sun the
> Sun my visible father
> making my body visible
> thru my eyes!

(Planet News, 60)

Everything is sufficient in the natural universe; the Father in the Sun is seen not with but "thru my eyes." (The borrowing[42] from Blake is most effective here, but it almost gets out of hand.) There is no serious mind-body problem anymore; dialectic has been effectively absorbed in the act of love. As a final note apropos of this poem, I might point out that the love act in which mind and body recreate a Self that is redeemed vis a vis an unfallen world of innocence is a heterosexual act as opposed to the usual homosexual stance that proliferates in Ginsberg's work. Like the Adamite Rojack in An American Dream whose anal intercourse with the maid Ruta spelled infertility and evil, Ginsberg in "The Change" would not spill his seed in an unnatural "kitchen" that would violate the aesthetic process of creation. Moreover, like Rojack, Ginsberg came to understand, too, that it is often necessary to traffic in the "natural" evil of the devil in order to advance in Adamic glory to the throne of God within the Self- a fact he probably learned from Rimbaud.

Somehow the poems that intervene between Howl (1956) and Ginsberg's last collection of poems, Reality Sandwiches (1968) never measure up to the exciting Adamic standards of "The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express," both as poems that work and as expressions of expansion. Some are splendid failures; most are organically flawed either by drugs or inordinate enthusiasm. The poem on accompanying Whitman in "A Supermarket In California" is charming and witty but trails off in the emotional fog of a "smoking bank" where Whitman takes leave of Ginsberg amidst unanswered questions about what the American garden has become without its foremost gardener, and an implication that Ginsberg must take Whitman's place in that capacity. There is a MacFleknoe-under-current to the end of the poem that I am sure Ginsberg didn't intend. The poem that immediately follows it, "Transcription of Organ Music," is a more complex attempt at a poem, but it too fails to resolve its own questions. It is, among a number of Ginsberg's poems, indebted

to two English poets to at least bring it to its feet: The first debt is to Andrew Marvell and his use of the passive verb in "The Garden" wherein all of nature reaches out to unfallen Adamic man to nourish and sustain him.[43] In Ginsberg's poem (probably drug-induced) all inorganic things flow back into organic existence and conspire to contain the innocent narrator, "so lonely in his glory." For him "the closet door is open, where I left it, since I left it/ open, it has graciously stayed open./ The kitchen has no door, the hole there will admit me should I/ wish to enter the kitchen./ There are unused electricity plugs all over my house I flow into." (Howl, 26, 27) And so it goes in a zany litany that recalls the second debt in the poem to Christopher Smart whose driving incantatory rhythms- in especial, those derived from the magnificent "Jubilate Agno"[44]- lend whatever dignity to his poems that Ginsberg might enjoy. "America" is sharp and amusing and in no way obscure. It is lovely. "Sunflower Sutra" evidences a persistent belief in most of the Adamic poems in general that beneath the ugly Moloch-infested dross of America lies the untended and unfallen garden of the "New World Auditorium." Beneath the veil of "darkened railroad skin" on a dying sunflower in the railyards of the West, Ginsberg is able to make a mediate connection between an unfallen, phallic sunflower and phallic unfallen man: "we're all beautiful golden sunflowers/ inside, we're blessed by our own seed & golden hairy accomplishment bodies," etc. Like his brethren Stevens, Dickey and Roethke, Ginsberg is always looking for the hole to open up that will reveal a world unfallen. Unfortunately, the means to that end are sometimes "Laughing Gas,"

> The universe is a void
> in which there is a dreamhole
> The dream disappears
> the hole closes
>
> It's the instant of going
> into or coming out of
> existence that is
> important- to catch on
> to the secret of the magic
> box.
>
> (Kaddish, 66)

or "Lysergic Acid" in the paranoid visions in which-

> I Allen Ginsberg a separate
> consciousness
> I who want to be God
> I who hate God and give him a name
> I who am doomed,
>
> (Kaddish, 86)

Thus the Adamic voice is lost and has forfeited its birthright amongst the other conflicting voices of the poem.

The three notable exceptions in which Ginsberg is able to breathe the Adamic redemptive air he exhaled upon the world in "The Change" are- "Who be kind to," "Kral Majales," and "Wales Visitation." All three poems are, significantly, from the period 1963-1967, and all three are contained in Planet News (1968). The reason for their success is apparent: all three demonstrate some treatment involving revision. There are few mixed metaphors; the Whitmanian catalogues give one unto the other in an organic progression called poetry. They cannot be switched around with the last coming first and the middle coming last. The gentle air of mortality in them is antiphonal to the horror of the enormity of Moloch in the garden, and these voices pull against one another in the kind of music that makes redemption-in-the-flesh, despite a time-awareness, not just possible, but desirable. Ginsberg really believes what he is chanting and confessing. The mask of drugs is barely noticeable. The Moloch-lion lies down with the Jewish American-lamb, and Hicks "Peaceable Kingdom" is redeemed, extended into Czechoslovakia where the American Manchild Adam is "Kral Majales in the Czechoslovakian tongue,

> and I am King of May, which is old human poesy,
> and 100,000 people chose my name
> And I am King of May, naturally.
> And I am the King of May, that I may be expelled from
> my Kingdom with honor, as of old,
> To shew [sic] the difference between Caesar's Kingdom
> and the Kingdom of the May of Man-
> and I am King of May, tho paranoid, for the Kingdom
> of May is too beautiful to last more than a month-
>
> (Planet News, 90)

With a "mind-fuck" fait accompli, old Adam comes back with honor, "as of old," innocent, shining, singing, to reclaim the garden, even if redemption in the garden is for no more than a month. To be reborn is to celebrate "the May of Man" again and again and again. The rest of the poem is an eclectic catalogue of an admixture of historical villians, capitalist and communist, who deny the birthright of the "May of Man," and who refuse to acknowledge any word "written on a jet seat in mid heaven" where mind and body assume one another in pure grace. In "Who be kind to," the warnings are very clear: "Be kind to this place/ Be kind to/ the prophesies of the Crucified Adam/ Be kind to the Gates of Eden [which] are named/ in Albion again," and forget not,

> The prayer is to man and girl, the only
> gods, the only lords of Kingdoms of
> Feeling, Christs of their own
> living ribs-
>
> Be kind to the universe of self that
> trembles and shudders and thrills
> in XX Century.

(Planet News, 127)

Divinity lives within the Self or not at all- where mind and body can balance- assume, one another outside history, a "new kind of man comes to his bliss/ to end the cold war he has borne/ against his own kind flesh/ since the days of the snake."

In "Wales Visitation," Ginsberg finally brings together a final redemptive statement. The Adamite, "Bardic, O Self," revisits Blake's people in Albion "whose physical sciences end in Ecology,/ the wisdom of earthly relations," and their knowledge of the snake consists in a refusal to separate mind from body. In this world, "daisies push inches of yellow air/ vegetables tremble,/ green atoms shimmer in grassy mandalas" in the gospel of redemption. As it is with Blake, these people see through; they,

> Stare close, no imperfection in the grass,
> each flower Buddha-eyed, repeating the story,
> the myriad-formed soul

Kneel before the foxglove raising green buds, mauve bells
drooped
doubled down the stem trembling antennae,
& look in the eyes of the branded lambs that stare
breathing stockstill under dripping hawthorn-
I lay down mixing my beard with the wet hair of the
mountain side
smelling the brown vagina-moist ground.

(Planet News, 139-142)

The redeemed see no imperfection in the flesh that is grass. "Branded lambs" though they may be, they can nevertheless see through the dross of the fallen world the perfection that lies beneath. Assuming everything unto themselves outside of time and history, they reconcile "the wet hair" of the mind with the "vagina-moist body" in which process, called by Ginsberg "mind-fuck," the Self is brought home, restored. This Adamic ambience is,

so balanced, so vast, that its softest breath
moves every floweret in the stillness on the valley
floor,
trembles lamb-hair hung gossamer rain-beaded
in the grass,
lifts trees on their roots, birds in the great
draught
hiding their strength in the rain.

The American garden and the Adamic redemption it contains potentially has been extended via Blake back to England where Adam's "skull and Lord Hereford's Knob /are/ equal,/ All Albion one" (Planet News, 142) in a triumph of redemption.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Norman Mailer, Advertisements For Myself (New York, 1959), 339. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Dial Press edition.

2 Ibid., 354.

3 Ibid., 354-5.

4 Norman Mailer, An American Dream (New York, 1965). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Dial Press edition.

5 Advertisements For Myself, 355.

6 Barry H. Leeds, The Structured Vision of Norman Mailer (New York and London, 1969), 146.

7 Compare John Donne's "The Rising Sun"- "She is all states, and all princes, I,/ Nothing else is." This entire passage in the backstreet apartment and indeed the love affair itself is reminiscent of Donne's poem. The difference between Donne and Mailer, however, is that with Donne the idea is a joke; with Mailer it is a philosophy.

8 Leeds goes on to great lengths about this umbrella in a way that I think distorts the real meaning of the scene. See Leeds, pp. 149-151. The phallic significance of the umbrella is maybe too obvious, and Mailer seems to be self-conscious of it in its use as a symbol. For my part, I see it as one referent of a greater symbol as I have tried to show in the text. For another point of view on this matter, see Samuel Holland Hux, "An American Myth and Existential Vision: The Indigenous Existentialism of Mailer, Bellow, Styron and Ellison," (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1965), pp. 48-51.

9 "In constructing his major characters, Mailer seems to have drawn on Talmudic and Cabalistic lore and has so enlarged the evil personages with ancient meaning as to make the novel a parable of the conflict between good and evil. Deborah, Rojack's wife, appears to be Mailer's version of Lilith. According to Jewish tradition, Lilith was a demon and the first wife of Adam. He lived and cohabited with her for 130 years, and during this time had no desire for Eve. After he purified himself, however, he mated with Eve and she gave birth to Seth. It is not until Rojack has 'purified' himself of Deborah that he can meet and love his Eve, Cherry." David Helsa, "The Two Roles of Norman Mailer," from Adversity and Grace: Studies in Recent American Literature, ed. Nathan A. Scott, Jr. (Chicago and London, 1969), 226.

10 "Yet America was also the country in which the dynamic myth of the Renaissance- that every man was potentially extraordinary- knew its most passionate persistence. Simply, America was the land where people still believed in heroes: George Washington; Billy the Kidd; Hemingway; Joe Louis... And when the West was filled, the expansion turned inward, became part of an agitated, overexcited, superheated dream frontier life. The film studios threw up their searchlights as the frontier was finally sealed, and the romantic possibilities of the old conquest of land turned into a vertical myth, trapped within the skull, of a new kind of heroic life, each choosing his own archetype of a neo-Renaissance man... And this myth, that each of us was born to be free, to wander, to have adventure and to grow on the waves of the violent, the perfumed, and the unexpected, had a force which could not be tamed no matter how the nation's regulators would brick in the modern life with hygiene upon sanity, and middle brow homily over platitude; the myth would not die." Norman Mailer, The Presidential Papers (New York, 1963), 39-40.

11 Advertisement For Myself, 375.

12 Dorothy Van Ghent, "Comment," The Wagner Literary Magazine (Spring, 1959), 27.

13 Van Meter Ames, Zen And American Thought (Honolulu, 1962), 17.

14 Thomas F. Merrill, Allen Ginsberg (New York, 1969), 19.

15 Paul O'Neil, "The Only Rebillion Around," Life (November 30, 1959), 123.

16 Gary Synder, "Note On The Religious Tendencies," Liberation, IV (June, 1959), 11.

17 See, for example, Ginsberg's appeal to the authority of the Lake Poets. "The gas drugs were apparently interesting too to the Lake Poets, because there were a lot of experiments done with Sir Humphery Davy in his Pneumatic Institute. I think Coleridge and Southey and other people used to go, and DeQuincy. Serious people. I think there hasn't been very much written about that period. What went on in the Humphery Davy household on Saturday midnight when Coleridge arrived by foot, through the forest, by the lake?" Allen Ginsberg, "The Art of Poetry," Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews, III (New York, 1967), 311. In examining Ginsberg, later in this study, I move behind the precedent that what's good for Coleridge is not necessarily good for Ginsberg. Coleridge is guilty of writing only one poem (that we know of) under the direct influence of drugs, whereas Ginsberg's work, sixty per cent of it, anyway, was written under the influence of one kind of drug or another.

18 Jack Kerouac, The Dharma Bums (New York, 1972). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Viking Compass edition.

19 "The Fourth Noble Truth describes the Eightfold Path of the Buddha's Dharma, that is, the method or doctrine whereby self-frustration is brought to an end. Each section of the path has a name preceded by the word samyak (Pali, samma), which has the meaning of "perfect" or complete. The first two sections have to do with thought; the following four have to do with action; and the final two have to do with contemplation or awareness." Alan Watts, The Way Of Zen (New York, 1957), 51.

20 Eric Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion (New Haven, 1950), 28-9.

21 Fromm, 49.

22 "Satori- the immediate experience of truth as distinct from understanding about it." Christmas Humpherys, Zen Buddhism (New York, 1970), 33.

23 Leslie Fiedler, Love And Death In The American Novel (New York, 1961). One of Fiedler's points in this book is that the American male has always been too immature to have a "sound" relationship with a woman such as one finds in the European novel.

24 Shinjin-no-Mei, "On Believing In Mind," from D.T. Suzuki, Manual of Zen Buddhism (New York, 1960), 76-82.

25 Jack Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," Evergreen Review II (Summer, 1958), 72.

26 Allan Tate, The Man of Letters in The Modern World (New York, 1947), 23.

27 Fiedler, 289-290. For a completely different point of view relative to the American's failure to adjust to the society of his own making, see David Noble, The Eternal Adam (New York, 1968), 5.

28 Mailer entering the lists maintains that any adjustment to a diseased society as ours is madness- especially any kind of adjustment extended from the analyst's couch. It is the analyst, according to Mailer, who is the principle slayer of the Adamic redemptive dream in American life. For a spirited discussion of this problem, see Norman Mailer, "Reflections On Hip," from Advertisements For Myself (New York, 1959), 359-371.

29 Kenneth Rexroth, "Disengagement: The Art of the Beat Generation," New World Writing, No. 11 (New York, 1957), 39.

30 Gay Wilson Allen, A Reader's Guide To Walt Whitman (New York, 1970), 35.

31 Allen, 159-160. Allen's consistent reference to Whitman's method is expressionistic.

32 Allen Ginsberg, "The Art of Poetry," Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews, III (New York, 1967), 296.

33 Alan Watts, Beat Zen, Square Zen And Zen (San Francisco, 1959), 13.

34 Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," The New American Poetry, ed. Donald M. Allen (New York, 1961), 387.

35 Allen Ginsberg, Kaddish (San Francisco, 1961), 74. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the City Lights Books editions of different books of poems by Ginsberg.

36 Somewhere in the back of his mind this suspicion has always haunted Ginsberg. It is the resolution to the second poem he ever published in 1954.

> yes, yes,
> that's what
> I wanted,
> I always wanted,
> I always wanted,
> to return
> to the body
> where I was born.
>
> ("Song," Howl, 41)

37 Ginsberg, "The Art of Poetry," 314.

38 Ibid., 316.

39 The phrase "mind-fuck" was used by Ginsberg in a reading at the University of South Carolina, 28 November 1970, where I heard it.

40 Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J., Forward To The Old Testament (Weston, Massachusetts, 1954), 9.

41 See in Lamia lines 126-145.

42 William Blake, "The Everlasting Gospel," The Poems of William Blake (London, 1961), 152-3. The borrowing in context reads:

> This life's five windows of the soul
> Distorts the heavens from pole to pole,

And leads you to believe a lie
When you see with, not thro', the eye.
(lines 101-105)

43 I have in mind in particular here lines 33-40.

44 Christopher Smart, "Jubilate Agno," The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart, ed. Norman Callan, Vol. I (London, 1949), 249-347.

Chapter 3

The Adamic Redemptor: "That Suffering Joker."

If the scope of Norman Mailer's utterance is directed by some "inner navigator," so too does Saul Bellow enjoy a prompter. In Bellow's case, the Adamic force is designated (by Bellow himself) as a "primitive commentator, from whom come words, phrases, syllables; sometimes only sounds which I try to interpret, sometimes whole paragraphs, fully punctuated."[1] This commentator is an "observing instrument" lost to most men while passing out of childhood, but retained by the artist and santified by him as a means to discover the first light of things in a world darkly fallen. Bellow's observation, if one looks closely enough, is simply another definition of the peculiarly American habit of naming, in the tongue of innocence, disparate realities flowing through and gluing around the observer. One might almost say that in American letters, naming or cataloguing, if you wish to start the process with Whitman, is like an ancient rifle passed on from one Adamite to another that shoots not bullets but rather nets of words over phenomena so disparate, so utterly lacking in cohesive unity that the catalogue or net becomes a force of tension, drawing together multiple unlikelihoods from the pastoral to the urban, the organic to the inorganic and finally from the fallen to the unfallen. To see the one in the other, the accepted in the embrace of the accepting, then, is to see the self and the world Adamically Redeemed. After having written three novels[2] in succession, Bellow came to realize that he was not listening to his "primitive commentator" and that, in order to do this, he must no longer "hobble himself with formalities- with a borrowed sensibility,"[3] or with formulae for writing novels that came to him in a package via the university from Europe. To discover therefore what was uniquely American in the process of cataloguing or naming, Bellow found it first necessary to jettison the Flaubertian standard of his earlier novels and to reject the

traditional standards of the mythic school and the tone of elegy that characterizes it. Clearly, to Bellow, the alien posturing of the mythic school, and its debunking of the holiness of the individual out of tune with his traditions, was an impairment impossible to reconcile with the use of the catalogue. Addressing himself to Eliot, Tate, Ransom and others like them in the mythic school, Bellow comments:

> Sensibility absorbed this sadness, this view of the artist as the only contemporary link with an age of gold, forced to watch the sewage flowing in the Thames, every aspect of modern civilization doing violence to his (artist-patrician) feelings. This went much further than it should have been allowed to go. It descended to absurdities, of which I think we have had enough.[4]

It is not only the perverse denigration of the potentialities of the present moment to which Bellow objects in "watching the sewage flowing in the Thames," but it is the historical burden summed up, as Eliot would have it, by the very word Thames itself. The evocation of the mythical and historical past is anathema to Adamic ears. These versions of history that gobble up the self have nothing in common with "the primitive commentator" that directs the drift of things in the catalogues of the meaning of American life. The past points only toward disillusion, the collective rantings of "ourselves," and will not admit that possibly each man is his own work of art constantly evolving out of himself worlds that defy the examination of historical processes.[5]

It follows therefore that to release the self into a world as it ought to be, the self must first reject the versions of self dictated by history. If this sounds utterly preposterous when applied to such highly intellectual Jews as Bellow or Malamud, I can only say bear with me and keep in mind the following: Who better than the American Jew to dump his nightmare history (while retaining the habits of his Jewishness) and reformulate the self free of the old historical dispensations?[6] One thinks immediately of Tommy Wilhelm (who changes his name), but the problem is really deeper than simply changing one's

name. And it is much deeper than the superficial handles stuck on Augie March, such as Bolingbroke (the exile?), by another of those "life counselors" he often frequents. Anyway, using representative examples from Bellow, Barth and Malamud, let us "To Horse" and pursue the problem further.

I have suggested that at least an attempt at the rejection of history is a prerequisite for the building and completion of Adamic Redemption. I would suggest now that there is a middle ground in the work of Bellow, occupied by The Adventures of Augie March, Henderson The Rain King and Herzog on which is constructed those illusory mansions of Adamic perfectibility known only to those who reject or have attempted to reject the past. That is to say, in Bellow's work, Adamism is not a final solution to the problems of life, but at least it provides the vitality and frame for the comic antics of the protagonists in the Novels and their wild ritual quests and intellectual pilgramages. The same thing may be said about Barth's Sotweed-Factor and Malamud's A New Life, or even Pictures of Fidelman, all of which demonstrate laughter in the highest degree and are incapable of sustaining a fundamental tragic vision of life. Why? This is not as difficult a question as it may appear on the surface if one reflects that deTocqueville[7] warned Americans that not just tragedy but literature itself was incommensurate with an egalitarian Adamic way of interpreting the world. Like Henderson, Americans hate and fear death: "We've just got to do something about it; it's the biggest problem of all" (Henderson The Rain King).[8] They do not wish to face up to it because they cannot or will not believe in anything beyond now. For example, Herzog hates death because it will cut off thinking. But this is a freak show of the American circus, and I must ride back to the point. Bearing in mind Bellow's injunction toward literary symbol hunters in The New York Times,[9] let us examine the broad Adamic outlines of the three novels under consideration.

The Adventures of Augie March (1960) is a Bildungsroman whose Adamic urban hero is never too far from the city, which

gives him dimension and the wherewithal to manufacture his most impressive catalogues. Like Henderson and Herzog, Augie broods to excess over his "orphancy" (AM, 127) although none of the three is, strictly speaking, an orphan. Augie is a "Luftmensch"[10] (144) a "featherhead" (226), an "angelhead" (450) a "larky" wag (464) "knee deep in June" (279) with a rosy complexion and a face that is so prepossessingly mask-like and innocent that he is the despair of all those in the world of the novel who would try to make him over to their particular version of historical reality. From Einhorn to Mintouchian, from Mrs. Renling to Thea Fenchel, he slips out from under and defies them all. He cannot adjust to the "reality situation" and wants "there to be Man, with a capital M, with great stature. O godlike man!" Clem Tambow labels him in the context of a "bower" in a Chinese restaurant. "You don't keep up with the times. You're going against history" (451). And earlier in the same context: "Among us poor drips at the human masquerade you come like an angel" (450). But Augie is only as innocent as time will allow him to be as he moves, "the byblow of a traveling man" around the great arch, like his Adamic peers, back and forth between the city and the country in his struggles to fulfill his Redemptive mandate and to establish a pastoral home in the unfallen garden for all the children in the world "who have had it rough" (474).

> I often found myself studying him /Thea's father/ his white shoes of far manufacture off the ground, in his white suit and I thought what there was to such a being picked for special distinction. He was sitting in a human taxi. Around him spectators from the millions gaping at him, famine-marks, louse-vehicles, the supply of wars.
>
> (AM, 361)

The great orphan who failed to come to terms with the image of Yahweh presented by Thea's heavenly father[11] (cf. the Father-in-law in Mailer) would now become "foster-parent" and "holy father" to all those poor little children of the world that Yahweh has overlooked.

> No, really, I could live with them. I could be very happy. My brother George could be the shoe-making instructor. Maybe I'd study languages so I could teach them. My mother could sit on the porch and the animals would come around her, by her shoes, the roosters and the cats, etc.
>
> (AM, 474)

And one might add, so could the lions and the lambs in the heroically reclaimed American garden that Bellow has formed from a strange mixture of naturalism and transcendentalism.[12] That he has failed to make his meek adjustments with over-god, however, does not in the least dismay the lucky Augie, who seldom thought about "where I came from, parentage, and other history, things I had never much thought of as difficulties, being democratic in temperament, available to everybody and assuming about others [like Whitman] what I assumed about myself" (AM, 147). It is thus because of a compelling innocence that Augie is pulled into so many different schemes that destroy the healthful instincts of the self and absorb him into the theatre of the lives of others- the great masquerade. Before going into the Merchant Marine he resolves, "I'd never loan myself to any guy's schemes again" (AM, 473), but somehow the reader is not convinced. It will take his last fall into the Atlantic, in a series of many, to finally give some credibility to Augie's resolution. Let us look at the more important ones.

The first fall in a series of many is not so much a "fall into the quotidian and where were we standing when it happened?" (Herzog, 49) as Moses Herzog inquires of Dr. Heidegger in one of his many letters to the living and the dead, as a "slip" that culminates the first part of the novel. After graduating from high school, Augie is given a graduation present by the crippled "Father" Einhorn, the primary symbol of history in the novel- a trip to one of Southside Chicago's parlors of joy. In the close relationship between Einhorn and Augie there is an exact correspondence between the ascendency of the Adamic Augie and the decendency of the history-saturated, prince of Realpolitick,

Einhorn, who does his best to shape Augie into his version of a successful life. History is a burden Augie must carry on his back, and its residual load, after having finished, more or less, in his obligations to Einhorn, he dumps bit by bit as the novel progresses. Now, with the crippled Einhorn riding his back and standing in the shadows of a tenement, Augie begins to grasp the historical import of the master of "cranks and chains" who clutches him about the throat.

> He used to talk about himself as the Old Man of the Sea riding Sinbad. But there was Aeneas too, who carried his old dad Anchises in the burning of Troy, and that old man had been picked by Venus to be her lover.
>
> (AM, 123)

The scene is an epiphany for Augie, and in it he is able to see the inherent dangers of a man like Einhorn. Here, and throughout the novel, "the process of literary echoing and allusion goes to lend a rejection of authority."[13] But the passage does have meaning beyond Augie's habit of seeing himself in relation to historical and mythic figures in a half ironic, half mock-heroic light. After all, he does become Sinbad the Sailer prior to his marriage. But he is ill-suited to become Aeneas the founder, in spite of the fact, according to English legend (Layamon's Brut), Aeneas could trace his ancestry back to Adam. The real meaning of the passage lies in Augie's recognition of the realm of historical myth to which Einhorn belongs and from which he must escape and travel, if he is to find his proper Adamic level. Their business completed at the whore house, Augie, with Einhorn "clinging to his back in his dark garments," gropes his way down the ice-covered back stairs of the tenement fearful of "a spill." It is obvious that a spill has already occurred where Augie is concerned, though his essential innocence is easily repaired through his mode of perception in his use of the redeeming and synthesizing catalogue. Never again will he lug Einhorn around on his back, though he is unable at this point to cast the entire weight of history from him. "From here a new course was set" (AM, 131). As Einhorn's

horizons lower because of his "sensitive plant" son, Arthur, and the painful effects of the Great Depression, Augie's horizons are extended and raised in exact proportion. Returned from Mexico and dressed in his now wealthy brother Simon's soft flannel, Augie, acquainted with sorrow, the man "who has been there and so forth," can now see Einhorn in his hour of decline more clearly. "King" Arthur, his heir to the throne of history, has got with child a Lizzy from the wrong side of the Loop. "The gleaming vault where he (Einhorn) had kept this reserve wealth now let out the smell of squalor. Einhorn didn't even look at the kid" (AM, 309). Much matured and having risen from innumerable falls, Augie, on his last visit to Einhorn, is at last able to put Einhorn in clear perspective. Again, wearing one of Simon's suits, his family no longer rising, but already risen to an economic pinnacle in a Chicago Jewish upper middle class, Augie appears satisfied that Einhorn and family have sunk to a state "where the house stunk. The books were falling off the shelves. The busts of great men were lost up near the ceiling" (AM, 446). Leaving, Augie reflects, "Now maybe was my chance to pass them by." In his next campaign with life, hard on the heels of his farewell to Einhorn, Augie hooks up with Robey, "who depended on me like Einhorn in the old days" (AM, 463), and who is in the process of writing a Swiftian "Short History" of the world in five parts. By this time, however, Augie is sophisticated enough to deal with this philanthropic "screwball," historical, syncretist and with his usual blend of charity and compassion, he can see his way to dismissing him. Robey and his visionary historical scheme do nothing more to Augie now than impress upon him the desire to be a "shoemaker," presumably like his enfeebled brother in the home, George. Instinct has brought him to a threshold of knowledge on the other side of which sits the key to his existence- love, which to Bellow brings redemption. Love, in itself, however, is no final solution to what Herzog, the Meliorist, paraphrasing Pope, calls "this long convelescence my life." There is too

much clutter that intervenes between the Adamite and the potentially Redeemed world around him.

> Since I've been working for Robey I have reached the conclusion that I couldn't utilize even ten per cent of what I already knew. I'll give you an example. I read about King Arthur's Round Table when I was a kid, but what am I ever going to do about it. My heart was touched by the sacrifices and pure attempts, so what should I do? Or take the Gospels. How are you supposed to put them to use? Why, they're not utilizable! And then you go and pile on top of that more advice and information. Anything that just adds information that you can't use is plain dangerous. Anyway, there's too much of everything of this kind, that's come home to me, too much history and culture to keep track of, too many details, too much news, too much example, too much influence, too many guys who tell you to be as they are, and all this hugeness, abundance, turbulence, Niagara Falls torrent. Which who is supposed to interpret? Me? I haven't got that much head to master it all. I get carried away.
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> (AM, 473)

Inevitably one asks himself what element renders unto Augie the ability to discriminate and ultimately to reject "the gyps of previous history?" (AM, 345). It is instinct fostered by an endemic Jewish upbringing which inspires in the Adamite his particular use of the synthesizing catalogue- the full significance of which I shall examine presently. But for the moment, it would be well to point out a few important facts about the Jewish sensibility and religion and the dramatic effect it has had on almost every Adamic Jewish writer I have been examining. The very first thing one notices in his examination of the world picture of the Jew is his general acceptance of the push and shove of existence. Within the general structure of the totality of a world of Jewishness, there is an unmistakable note of acceptance of very different elements that beset man in the time-space continuum. There is passivity; there is reconciliation; finally there is that uncanny ability to see the unfallen in the fallen, the divine or holy in the quotidian

(Herzogs of the world: Take heart); there is a feeling, finally, of a rightness to things if one would take counsel from his heart. Airing out the moth holes in Pope's Essay on Man, Augie says, after barely escaping another of the "great currents where I can't be myself"- he has just missed indulging the anarchist in him by refusing a part in the instant theatre of playing "an American Cousin" to Trotsky on the lamb in Mexico, who reminds him of Einhorn:

> Death discredits. Survival is the whole business. The voice of the dead goes away. There isn't any memory. The power that's established fills the earth and destiny is whatever survives, so whatever is is right. That's what passed through my mind.
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> (AM, 433)

In a way, this is as dangerous a philosophy today as it was when Pope first soothed the eighteenth-century brow with it. While accepting dualism and dialectic, it at the same time obviates both. "Yea, they're there," Augie, might say, "but so what? What I assume, you shall assume, and it will all come out in the wash." Such innocence, a defining characteristic of Augie, Henderson and Herzog, conquers by virtue of its very nakedness; but only after mountains of pain and aesthetic Jewish suffering have first been scaled. Isaac Rosenfeld has wonderfully summed up the problem:

> It is for such reasons, among others, that the Jewish religion enjoys the reputation of being one of the most worldly and immanent, one of the most closely connected with daily life. What Sacred Communion is to Catholics, the everyday Mealtime is to the Orthodox Jews.
>
> There is great charm in a religion that can thus run coalesced along the two lines of sacred and secular without any apparent break; it avoids the usual dualism, the conflict in belief or realm against realm.[14]

One asks, where does nature fit into this scheme, and is it redeemed along with those who inhabit it, or is it quite the opposite? To which Augie, as spokesman, would answer: "Sure it is redeemed. If not today, surely tomorrow."

> It takes some of us a long time to find out what the price is of being in nature, and what the facts are about your tenure there. How long it takes depends on how swiftly the social sugars dissolve. But when at last they do dissolve there's a different taste in your mouth, bringing different news which registers with dark astonishment and fills your eyes. And this different news is that from vast existence in some way you rise up and at any moment you may go back. Any moment you may go back. Any moment; the very next, maybe.
>
> (AM, 377)

In the American garden new beginnings or new versions of the self- either one's own or somebody elses's- are always possible for Augie- even though his Redeemed world more often than not, flourishes in the city of Chicago and becomes through his catalogues a kind of New Jerusalem, resplendent with Adamic perfectibility. But he doesn't have to be in Chicago for his catalogues to do their stuff. He could be in Mexico, in New York, Paris or even motoring along a dusk-swept road on his way to Bruges. He defines his movements always in a circle of beginnings, "Countless disks" he tells Mintouchian. Moving out of one, he expands into another, rising and falling as time permits. Searching always for the "axial lines," he has to settle for "the circular experience of the race"[15] (AM, 165). God writes straight with crooked lines; the American Adam scratches in circles.

Because Bellow's use of the catalogue is so important it is in order to examine it here. Foremost, what it attempts to do within the context of a Jewish sensibility is to reconcile the inorganic of an urban culture with the organic of a pastoral culture that always hovers in the background of Augie's mind. The process doesn't always work. Sometimes the disparity between what Augie yearns to synthesize and the material he is trying to synthesize with is a source of great pain to him. But when the catalogue does work it is an affirmation of the potentiality of Adamically perfectible man. The marvel of the process is that it does not hurry along, totally ignoring the

dialectic of evil that permeates created existence. (Recall it was Augie who released all of Thea's snakes in Acatia.) The process simply makes evil unnecessary. Where Augie succeeds with the uses of catalogue, Herzog fails and for exactly the opposite reasons. In Augie's world instinct is transcendent; in Herzog's world it is mind that is transcendent, and Herzog's mind will not turn off so that he might bring to bear on irreconcilables an instinct that is quite "lerky". But the biggest difference separating the two is that Augie is a poet (his catalogues scan perfectly) whereas Herzog is a self-annointed innocent theoretician, the application of whose theoretical catalogues to the real world constantly elicits from him a "whoopa!" There is yet another way to refine this distinction between these two different manipulators of the catalogue. Because Augie is a namer and an Adamic poet, we are more inclined to accept his ability to see the unfallen in the fallen, to humanize the many-handed engines of man (ideally) and to view them totally subservient to man, because implicitly he postulates this as an ideal. Herzog, on the other hand, the great syncretist, invariably sees reconciliation between man and nature not as potential ideal but as a theoretical possibility ending up not in a catalogue (which accounts for the flesh and the steel) but in an intellectual category. Augie's catalogues proliferate in the novel; space will allow me to quote only one of them.[16] The principle catalogue upon which I have based my judgment of Herzog may be found in the later pages of this study.

It is important to note the context in which the following two catalogues appear. Augie and his false Eve, Thea Fenchel, are on the road, hurtling toward Mexico and their first trial with Caligula, the hunting eagle. Like Adam and Eve they sport in nature, and do all the things that Adam and Eve would naturally do while occupying that happy place. But Chicago is never far from Augie's mind and it figures dramatically in the second catalogue. In the first, Augie's instinctual, Adamic mode of perception is emphasized and is quite self-explanatory. Lying naked on a hillside with Thea, an awareness of his relatedness

to things comes over Augie.

> Some things I have an ability to see without feeling much previous history, almost like birds or dogs that have no human condition but are always living in the same age, the same at Charlemagne's feet as on a Missouri scow or in a Chicago junkyard. And often that is how the trees, water, roads, grasses may come back in their green, white, blue, steepness, spots, wrinkles, veins, or smells, so that I can fix my memory down to an ant in the folds of bark or fat in a piece of meat or colored thread on the collar of a blouse. Or such discriminations as where, on a bush of roses, you see variations in heats that make your breast and bowels draw at various places from your trying to correspond; when even the rose of rot and wrong makes you attempt to answer and want to stir.
>
> (AM, 342)

Augie's instinctive recognition of the Redeemed world of the lion and the lamb, timeless, "always living in the same age," is a place from which he feels the mysterious pangs of the exile. But that perfect and timeless world can be re-claimed, as Augie does in all his beginnings, and made to live again in the rising and falling flow of the catalogue. That deep-down, terrible sense of loss that the American Adam experiences in trying to re-correspond to the Jeffersonian covenant with nature almost stirs Augie to Rousseauian tears. Only the heart is capable of plumbing the depths of loss for the American Adam. Herzog, who has "committed a sin of some kind against his own heart, while in pursuit of a grand synthesis" (Herzog, 207), throws himself upon the thorns of life, and bleeds. "And then? I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed again. And what next? I get laid, I take a short holiday" (Herzog, 207). And Augie? What of Augie? Well, he throws himself upon the thorns of life, and the thorns become a part of him, turning into what the bees missed in their study of the rose. He absorbs all. He tries to assume everything, and that, too, we as a reader must assume.

The second catalogue occurs in roughly the same context. Augie and Thea are still on their way to Mexico and are watering, as it were, in a small cow pasture in the Ozarks. Because of a lack of real harmony between Augie and the goddess-daughter of Yahweh or the Plotinian over-soul, that overwhelming sense of awful barriers that exists between Adam and the things to which he naturally relates, rises in his soul.

> Meanwhile the birds, clouds, cattle in the water, things, stayed at their distance, and there was no need to herd, account for, hold them in the head, but it was enough to be among them, released on the ground as they were in their brook or in the air. I meant something like this when I said occasionally I could look out like a creature. If I mentioned a Chicago junkyard as well as Charlemagne's estate, I had my reasons. For I could look into any air, I could recall the bees and gnats of dust in the heavily divided heat of a street of El pillars- such as Lake Street, where the junk and old bottleyards are- like a terribly conceived church of madmen, and its stations, endless, where worshipers crawl their carts of rags and bones. And sometime misery came over me to feel that I myself was the creation of such places. How is it that human beings will submit to the gyps of previous history while mere creatures look with their original eyes.
>
> (AM, 345)

"I myself was the creation of such places," says Augie, but it is naive to assume that such places are not capable of containing the legacy of the Adamic covenant with nature. To be able to look out on the external world "like a creature" and not merely juxtapose but reconcile the sanctity of human life in junkyards that nature forms like churches, where worshipers "crawl their carts" and make the stations of the cross, is to see meaning and depth such as the generality of mankind (to use Arnold's favorite heavy phrase) cannot perceive. Still, the reader might object that Augie feels a misery come over him when he reflects that these are his origins. But it is only history, "a gyp," that creates misery. Augie's capacity to absorb, assimilate and re-create "out of rags and bones," "Charlemagne and

junkyards" is the very heart of a struggling Adamic Soul in the technocratic, gift-not-given-back, Twentieth Century. But at times the barriers are too high and the walls too thick to allow an Adamite to penetrate with "original eyes" to the organic within the inorganic. And no amount of instinct will do to see growth and light in Jefferson's O most untended garden. It is only in his innocent and perfectly tuned moments, however, that Augie can reconcile the one thing in the other, "dirty lumps of kerosene light burning, like persimmons streaked with black" (AM, 352).

Always "in opposition to fixity" (AM, 219), forever seeking the "axial lines" that will repudiate a totally fallen nature and affirm a totally perfectible man, Augie rises and falls and rises again into new beginnings so many times it is almost past counting. His first "spill" is a happy spill (O Felix culpa), for it allows him to see himself posited against unabsolved history, which gobbles the individual and makes him shape behavioristically himself to history's many versions. He falls in a coal yard (like the Invisible Man) and rises from the stifling influence of his brother Simon, who plays the game the historical way and gets rich. He falls from a horse and rises from the corrupting influence of the daughter of an indifferent over-God, who looks on Adamic man and nature absconditas from his human taxi, a rickshaw. He falls from the long boat of a torpedoed American merchantman into the great American Lake, the Atlantic, and rises, after first floating around with a mad historical visionary who tries to conscript Augie into helping him foist a "serum like a New River Jordon" upon America's desperate need for redemption, and rises to reclaim the true Eve through whom he can see more clearly that the foster-home and Adamic academy for all the suffering children in the world, "a private green place like one of those Walden or Innisfree wattle jobs under the kind sun" (AM, 534) is impractical- a cooking of butterflies in lard, "millenarian notion" (AM, 535). But at this point the reader knows Augie March better than that and he can appreciate that this distance from the garden is

only a low point induced by the realities of love and marriage in the quotodian. Augie will bounce back, forever resilient, forever new, and like the "Columbus of those near-at-hand" (AM, 557), who goes everywhere, re-discover the unfallen garden in America. If not today, tomorrow. But surely the next day. And all of us, "inside your breast, the entire cast"[17] will share in the redemption.

There is no violation, I should think, in not treating the three novels under consideration seriatim. For this reason, therefore, I shall pass over Henderson The Rain King and move directly into Herzog (1964), my reason being that an understanding of Herzog, a mock-Adamite who has lost his intuitive and instinctual powers, provides a better insight into Henderson, who is the real stuff, the Adamic prince, redeemed and wonderfully gone astray into the primal world rather than into the intellectual swamps of his own mind à la Moses Elkanah Herzog. For it is with Herzog like this: The upper reaches of his mind, steeped in dialectical history and always on the prowl looking for the grand synthesis- "What this country needs is a good five-cent synthesis" (207), "haunt the past" (143) rather than studying it, and for this reason, among others I shall discuss presently, his mind is incapable of stasis or "potato love" or the peace that passeth understanding. The lower, Adamic, instinctive reaches of his mind, however, are always trying to reject history and process and achieve (though rarely) an unbidden synthesis of the fallen and unfallen world that tragically or comically (you pays yer money) they cannot communicate to the upper reaches of his mind until he learns to shut up at the end and accept his "occupancy" as a "sad-ass" American Adam. "The last dust-and-water image is a full, easy nod toward his mother's illustration that Adam is dust and sweat. Herzog is no longer in motion, he is not bathed in words; he chooses silence, 'At this time.'"[18] (204).

But I have the cart before the horse. It is really necessary to establish this "Rube Goldberg" intellectual, who wrote a brilliant Ph.D. dissertation on "The State of Nature in the

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century" as a mock-Adamite before we can begin to accept these two antithetical compartments in his mind.

Herzog is a novel of circular proportions. In terms of place, it begins where it ends in the Berkshires in the country at Ludeyville, (sounds like Looneyville) Mass. At his "American estate" (Herzog, 322), Herzog's untended garden home, he projects a thought into time and space that is broken up only by his moving from hammock (man swinging between trees- cf. Ashphalter's monkey, Rocco) to Recamier couch (an apt parody of the psychiatrist's couch) to the grass (an Adamic parody of mortality) to the john (a parody of the death by defecation[19])- and this while reading Pope, and finally out amongst men in Ludeyville with his brother, Will, and thence back to his pastoral debacle where the novel ends in silence. The thought cut off. Nothing more to say. I suppose what I am trying to say is that, strictly speaking, there is no plot to the novel. And there is nothing drastically consistent about Herzog's mind, either. His mind does to ideas what Henderson does to the frogs in the cistern: he blasts them everywhere and they lie dying for being out of their element. He is at once capable of juggling in his mind the most profound philosophical thoughts and the most egregious kinds of parody ("O Lord, lead me not into Penn Station"). (Was it Herzog who wrote on the wall of the New York subway, "Allen Ginsberg sneaks to the Methodist Church?" I don't doubt it.) Anyway, abstracting from the general run of Herzog's circuitous thought one message stands out very clear. "Go through what is comprehensible and you conclude that only the incomprehensible gives any light. This was by no means a 'general idea' with him now" (266). But how is it possible, one asks, for a man dedicated to intellection to come to such conclusions? Bellow himself provides the answer. "We have to dismiss a great number of thoughts if we are to have any creaturely or human life at all. How does one live if it is necessary to render ceaseless judgments?"[20] One should not infer from Bellow's statement that he has written an anti-intellectual

novel. Far from it. He has simply made allowance for the fact that of itself, the process of thought leads back upon itself and does not provide either the forum or the frame of redemption for the "convalescence of life." It is instinct finally that leads us to God, or out into the "creaturely" garden, or helps us mercifully to shut up, and shut off the mind.

But again, I repeat my own question. Wherefore Herzog as mock-Adamite? Well, to begin with, he confesses to us openly near the end of the novel that what he knows of ideology, in fact, he has learned from his blue-stocking, sex-extortionist, second wife, Madeleine (Eve), and what he learns is that ideology "has something to do with catastrophe" (334). Although he had fallen into Herr Dr. Heidegger's "quotidian or ordinary" (106) before having coupled with Madeleine, his feet never felt the heat of the city pavement or the grass of the pastoral fair until she arranged for his fall.

> A man in years he then was, but in years only, and in his father's eyes stubbornly un-European, that innocent by deliberate choice. Moses refused to know evil. But he could not refuse to experience it. And therefore others were appointed to do it to him, and then to be accused (by him) of wickedness.
>
> (AM, 176)

Herzog's form of the mask which he learns from the walls of the New York Subway serves him little: "If they smite you, turn the other face." Even as class orator in his high school in Chicago, Herzog could affirm that "every man should be open to ecstasy or a divine illumination," which in retrospect he weighs as something uniquely American. "He believed his American credentials were in good order" (160). As it is with Augie March and "Leo" E. Henderson, Herzog cannot escape the Adamic heritage of being an orphan. "A man is born to be orphaned," he says, "and to leave orphans behind him" (29). What this sentiment communicates to the lower Adamic reaches of his mind is that he needs to be delivered back "to the species for a primitive cure" (93) by which he can relate to life but not synthesize it.

Lacking this second alternative, mock-Adamic Herzog must suffer through "the post-Cartesian dissolution, next door to the void" (93). Is it any wonder, Herzog cries out "that man is formed like a cross?" Of course it is little wonder that he suffers when at times it comes upon him that the fate of Western Civilization "depends on the successes of Moses E. Herzog" (125). An antidote to such illusions consists in the "Reality Instructors" from the ordinary who lay on the lumps "of the Real" (125). Into this category fits everyone Herzog knows and some dead people he doesn't know. To escape these, his Adamic reaches send him into the garden, where, guilt-stricken (why is Herzog guilty about anything? His wife is a moral criminal!) he hangs storm windows amidst the "drooping tomato vines" of his Chicago version of the American garden. Inside the house, Madeleine has just read Herzog the news in Welsh; in time present, lying on the Recamier couch, "with no more style than /Ashphalter's/ chimpanzee" (10), Herzog can see himself in retrospect with killing detachment- Lilliputian style, "through the front end of a telescope, a tiny clear image. That Suffering joker" (11). What we have here is a perfect example of what the upper reaches do to the lower reaches in Herzog's mind. By this I do not mean to imply that gardening, according to the upper reaches, is the activity of childlike men, but that it is <u>inutile</u> as a means to realize the synthesis toward which the lower reaches are instinctively striving. Herzog "understands that he himself has been one of the bungling child-men, pure hearts in the burlap of innocence" (126), but he cannot accept the fact that mind can do no more than amuse itself like the hands of an old man over a young woman's body. I speak here specifically of the American mind torn apart by its inherent need for redemption[21] and everywhere at odds with the complexity of a culture it secretly does not endorse. It is thus that Herzog never seems to be able to focus or come to the point. "Come to the point. What is the point?" he agonizes. (51) Well, there are enemies of life who would destroy mankind, but what to do about them if you cannot seem to square with the beastly point.

Perhaps if we could "lie down in the streets" (51) in the capitols of the world and cry, "Let life continue- we may not deserve it, but let it continue" (51). But he never completes the thought pattern; a new letter is started which in the Adamic reaches of his mind Herzog knows to be another one of the "canned goods of the intellectuals" (74): like debating the pros and cons of Enthusiasm with himself, trying to fit together nicely, Bacon and Locke (read lochs), or Methodism and William Blake in a chapter from his first book, Romanticism and Christianity. But the alternative to the "canned sauerkraut of Spengler's 'Prussian Socialism,' the commonplaces of the Wasteland outlook" (75) et cetera, the upper reaches of his mind tell him, is equally unattractive.

> I could be Moses, the old Jew-man of Ludeyville, with a white beard, cutting the grass under the washline with my antique reel-mower. Eating woodchucks.
>
> (Herzog, 49)

Herzog is no American Adamic prince à la Henry David, nor was he ever meant to be, say the upper reaches. "You are just going through a change of outlook" (207) brought on by the pressures of city life. Your job is to synthesize, bring together a meaningful past to a grateful present. Your Eden in Ludeyville, the upper reaches continue, is a "nursing home," a lovely "green hole" (331), and that is all. It is natural for you, a highly civilized intellectual man to hate "and resent the civilization that makes [your] life possible" (304). Keep in mind your new article:

> It all involves historical analysis. I would argue that we have fashioned a new utopian history, an idyll, comparing the present to an imaginary past, because we hate the world as it is. This hatred of the present has not been understood.
>
> (163)

How odd that Bellow is able to resist sticking in a sic probo here and there to highlight the fun.

But Herzog's Adamic reaches have their day in court, too, and it is not unusual to find him concluding a polemic against

himself thus: "But my emotional type is archaic. Belongs to the agricultural or pastoral stages" (265). Further, his Adamic reaches counsel him through the ghost of Jefferson[22] that all life belongs to the living, "the dead, dead," should be "without effect on the new generation" (114). And so it goes, back and forth throughout the novel, the conspiracy of the upper reaches against the lower, Adamic reaches. Who wins? Nobody and yet everybody in the process of shutting up. "Here comes practically everybody. Here comes Bloom"- Ben Moses Elkhanah Herzog Bloom whom "God has gilded all over. I like that, God has gilded me all over" (321). But what has turned off Herzog's intellectual taps? A legitimate question. Perhaps somehow Herzog has been frightened by Nietzsche's The Gay Science and its categorical imperative to the effect that man is "what he thinks no less than what he does, and his religion and philosophy are of his very essence no less than his physique."[23] A frightening thought to shut up anyone, let alone a sensitive mind such as Herzog's. Could he have seen what Rocco saw, he would most assuredly have shut up. (And where does this haunting monkey come from? My Lord Rochester?)

> All the while, the large brown monkey, with arms folded over his chest, and red, dry eyes, was looking on, silently disseminating his grimness. Death, thought Herzog. The real thing.
>
> (Herzog, 44)

Though Herzog sees death in the monkey's visage, the monkey sees reflected in Herzog's eyes, all of Herzog's past instant theatrics, such as guns at the window on the other side of which "potato love" Gersbach bathes Herzog's little daughter, June, the girl to whom the ever-unwritten Adamic "Insect-Iliad" is dedicated.

Herzog writes (makes) categories, not catalogues, and unlike Augie March, he is unable to realize the synthesis for which he yearns like the calf after the cow's tit. But there is an exception to this as there is to everything except death, and it takes its form from the uncalled for, unbidden metaphor

that every now and then obtrudes upon the categories of Herzog's mind. In the process, the one becomes the other, the inorganic become the organic, the fallen becomes the unfallen, and the American garden becomes once again the place where the Jeffersonian covenant is restored in resplendency. This passage is not atypical:

> The short oaks bristled like metal. The fields turned blue. Each radio spire was like a needle's eye with a drop of blood in it. The dull bricks of Elizabeth fell behind. At dusk Trenton approached like the heart of a coal fire. Herzog read the municipal sign- Trenton Makes, The World Takes!
>
> (Herzog, 105)

Here is a world, unbidden, that comes to Herzog when he least looks for it. It is a world in which "oaks" and "metal" complement human "blood in the needle's eye," and Trenton (with all its suffering humanity given purpose) has "a human heart beating in unison with the products it sends throughout the world." Could Whitman have desired any more? Could even he have brought together elements more disparate? The second passage is more complex yet more controversial.

> This was his station, and he ran up the stairs. The revolving gates rattled their multiple bars and ratchets behind him. He hastened by the change booth where a man sat in a light the color of strong tea, and up two flights of stairs. In the mouth of the exit, he stopped to catch his breath. Above him the flowering glass, wired and gray, and Broadway heavy and blue in the dusk, almost tropical; at the foot of the downhill eighties lay the Hudson, as dense as mercury. On the points of the radio towers in New Jersey red lights like small hearts beat or tingled. In midstreet, on the benches, old people: on faces, on heads, the strong marks of decay: the big legs of women and the blotted eyes of men, sunken mouths and inky nostrils. It was the normal hour for bats swooping raggedly (Ludeyville), or pieces of paper (New York) to remind Herzog of bats. An escaped balloon was fleeing like a sperm, black and quick into the orange dust of the west. He crossed

> the street, making a detour to avoid a fog of grilled chicken and sausage. The crowd was traipsing over the broad sidewalk. Moses took a keen interest in the uptown public, its theatrical spirit, its performers- the transvestite homosexuals painted with great originality, the wigged women, the lesbians looking so male you had to wait for them to determine their true sex, hair dyes of every shade. Signs in almost every passing face of a deeper comment or interpretation of destiny- eyes that held metaphysical statements. And even pious old women who trod the path of ancient duty, still buying kosher meat.[24]

(Herzog, 178-9)

This is the most important and revealing passage in the entire novel, and I quite agree with Forrest Read that "these are indeed metaphysical statements in addition to being reflections of Herzog's own Ramona-dominated destination."[25] (192) I do not, however, in any way agree with his manner of reading them, which is basically right for the wrong reasons. I would have him speak first. The image pattern reveals to Read a city become "a lush jungle, a human womb, a sterile onanistic giant whose denizens have bettered nature by 'creating' of themselves inverted biological mechanisms."[26] I would submit that the process to which Read refers is not onanistic but reciprocal and brings to mind James Dickey's Adamic exchanges in such major poems as "Cherrylog Road," "The Wreck" and "Firebombing,"[27] where the organic and the inorganic are successfully married in Adamic ceremonies at which time has been denied admittance. Most assuredly, the process is not an "encroaching mechanism" reflecting "emotional deformity,"[28] and a quick examination of the nature and ground of the particular images used in the metaphors allows the reader to assume what Herzog (unwittingly) assumes when the lion lies down with the lamb; when the upper reaches successfully coalesce with the lower Adamic reaches in the unbidden, not-to-be-conjured, American garden. It is not a question of parallel lines that meet somehow by fiat or miracle: rather it is a question of one circle of mind expanding out into

another, and thus becoming self-creating. I do not think "onanistic" is an accurate word to describe the process, and the phenomenon does not exactly "better nature" as reveal an exchange that has been going on without surcease since the organic world first began to surrender up to the inorganic world in the first light of the time of matter. Being an Adamic innocent, Herzog is able to penetrate this world and synthesize its opposites, even if it is just for a fleeting moment. A special light attends the Adamic wedding; it is "the color of strong tea," and it changes to "blue" as Herzog reaches the top entrance to the subway. What confronts him here is inorganic windows that are "flowering" and a Broadway that has become "tropical" and lush as the Hudson River flows into "mercury" and back again into its prescribed element. On radio towers in New Jersey the "red lights" on the very top beat like "small hearts" that testify to the Adamic Redemption of the organic from the inorganic. And over all, a "fleeting balloon" is released into the process "like a sperm" into Herzog's amazing "ordinary" with somehow the promise of life and meaning in Jefferson's unsought and most untended garden, the American city. But the vision will not hold; "the metaphysical statements" fade out in the eyes of those who pass. It now becomes possible to determine the true sex of "the lesbians looking so male" who at the height of the vision, were inscrutable. Life slips back not to the normative but to the normal. Thus comes synthesis, unbidden and unheralded, triggered undoubtedly by an endemic Jewish quality that can see the divine in the daily, a religious ceremony in the partaking of a pickle on Fifty-Seventh Street and Seventh Avenue at high noon or anytime of the day you please. Because of his inordinate ratiocination, Herzog has virtually lost the Jewish Adamic touch, the wand of unity that formerly he enjoyed as a small boy on Napoleon Street in Montreal.

> My behavior implies that there is a barrier against which I have been pressing from the first, pressing all my life, with the conviction that it is necessary to press, and that something must come of it.

> Perhaps I can eventually pass through. I must always have had such an idea. Is it faith? Or is it simply childishness, expecting to be loved for doing your bidden task.
>
> (Herzog, 231)

On the other side of "the barrier" is, of course, the New American Jerusalem, Eve-less, yet abounding in love. One cannot buy a ticket there with the mind alone. Yet there is something there on the other side of the barrier, and Herzog's instincts, attenuated as they have become, cannot communicate to his mind how they can get together. Thus Herzog becomes grotesque in a complicated manner: a mock Adamic. I do not mean to imply by this that the book is "anti-intellectual," as some early reviewers have said. It simply points to the comic "impossibility of arriving at a synthesis that can satisfy modern demands."[29] Ironically it was Einhorn who pointed out to Augie, "you can't save your soul by thought" (AM, 117).

If redemption for Augie March takes the form of freedom from the historical versions of "ourselves" and redemption for Herzog takes the form of freedom from thought, it must be confessed that neither of these two positions accomplishes anything like total Adamic redemption, which would be contrary to Bellow's intentions: i.e., to use the myth as a convenient apparatus in trying to explain the need for redemption in American life.[30] Augie accepts his own "shady" mortality and even cherishes its imbalanced accidents; Herzog "in occupancy" is hopefully on the way. Both have rejected the possibility of total Adamic redemption in the American garden as not only visionary but even a little dangerous. Desperately desiring love in the Adamic ideal, both must learn, however, to accept love in the quotidian--a substitute that has its ups and downs and requires careful handling on the part of the lover. With Eugene Henderson, however, alias "Leo" E. Henderson, as he signs himself in the letter to his wife, Lily, after having received "Reichian lion therapy"[31] from King Dahfu and having been converted from the imaginative to the literal by Dahfu, the Adamic redemption is

total and joyous but in a way in which mind and body are no longer mutually exclusive but happily married. It was Dahfu who pointed out to Henderson, "you fled what you were; you did not believe you had to perish" (HRK, 87). Thus where Herzog would be free of his mind, Henderson would be free of that thing which most reminds him of death: his body. By accepting death as the inevitable reality, he begins "life anew," squarely facing the death he can now embrace as natural, as a surcease from suffering. "Maybe time was invented so that misery might have an end. So that it shouldn't last forever? There may be something in this. And bliss, just the opposite, is eternal? There is no time in bliss. All the clocks were thrown out of heaven" (HRK, 328). Casting off the body or the less desirable effects of the animal in him, Henderson therefore moves up the evolutionary ladder by degrees to the throne of Adamic Man at the conclusion. Returned to America via Newfoundland, he has combined the two contraries of his personality in such a manner that he is now complete and brimming over with love. Having lifted the curse on himself, he can now tackle the curse on the American garden that he recognized in his drunken rantings at the train station in Danbury, Connecticut: "Whatever gains I ever made were always due to love and nothing else" (HRK, 339).

For as long as he can remember, there had always been a voice inside Henderson demanding, "I want, I want". Finally, at age fifty five, "all his decay having taken place upon a child" (HRK, 84), this great hulk of a man with a face "like an unfinished church" (HRK, 76), leaves his "misleading" ancestral home and wife on the Hudson and sets out, rejecting human history, to primal Africa to satisfy the inner voice that demands redemption- the restoration of himself to himself and his reclamation of an harmonious and hence original place in nature. In the process, what is accepted becomes the acceptor: "he, she, they" (HRK, 286) is successfully blended with I. Literally, "Leo" E. Henderson lies down with the lamb, Lily, back in the good old American garden which Henderson is about to redeem. How all of this comes about I shall now attempt to put into sequence.

The American Adam leaves his Eve and tries to discover in the psychological depths of Africa a cause for the sense of loss and displacement that has tormented him all his life. Goaded on by the inner redemptive voice (in more ways than one, like Young Goodman Brown), he finds amongst two primitive tribes, and their customs, different correlatives for the sense of having fallen that he himself cannot shake off, and this despite all the wealth and influence he had enjoyed as the son of a great American family. Amongst the first tribe of pastoral herdsmen, who do not eat their cows, Henderson succeeds not only in not lifting the curse on the tribe, but he makes matters worse and intensifies their suffering. Escaping, he comes upon another not so primitive tribe (King Dahfu was almost a medical doctor in the American University in Beirut), in which unwittingly he lifts the curse of sin from himself and the curse of drought from the tribe. In this way he becomes Sungo, the rain god,[32] a mixed blessing that comes to the novel from The Golden Bough by means of a lost bet to King Dahfu. He is reborn and able to make a new beginning that will allow him to accept the realities of "he, she and they" divided by I. On the runway of the airport at Newfoundland, he dances Zorba-style around the shell of a silver aircraft with a small American orphan boy enroute to Nevada, who, raised in Persia (perhaps at the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers where Eden is supposed to have been according to medieval scholars), cannot understand the message of plentitude that one American Adam is trying to pass on to another. Apparently the boy will have to learn the American (as opposed to English) language and go through the same ritual into the non-historical past that has occupied Henderson. Perhaps without even leaving the country the boy will be able to satisfy the inner voice that cries out for redemption when he learns to love himself through others. Thus, the balancing act is complete: rejecting the orphan child brought to him by his daughter, Dicey, in the beginning of the novel, Henderson now through love has learned to embrace an orphan. The symbol works in two ways: being himself the "original"

orphan, he has learned that through loving others he can now love himself. Of course I do not claim that mine is the only way to read the novel. There are referents in it pointing to everything from Swift's Gulliver or Melville's narrator in Typee to parodies of anthropological fertility quests or psychoanalytical hijinks involving bears, pigs, pussy cats and lions. All of this notwithstanding, I must point out that these influences are peripheral when compared to the core of Adamic structure and imagery at the center of the novel. But let me return my attempts at documentation.

That Bellow intends us to understand Henderson in terms of an Ur-American is quite clear. He "came from a stock that had been damned and derided for more than a hundred years" (HRK, 86), yet he has within his blood "a service ideal" that explains his inbred desire to lift the fallen world from the unfallen world, which in practical terms takes the form of wanting to be a doctor. But there is a streak of selfishness in him that he must first cast off before he can assume the full meaning of his Adamic "service motivation." All his life he has been trying to raise up or break through to the unfallen place where instinctively he knows redemption obtains. But how? demands the voice in him that "wants"? The playing of his violin, one of his most consistent and earliest attempts, will never do, as he tells Lily in his letters home. "I am giving up the violin. I guess I will never reach my object through it, to raise my spirit from the earth, to leave the body of this death. I wanted to raise myself into another world" (HRK, 284). Like Herzog, Henderson feels the unfallen place lies on the other side of a barrier that he must play through (his attempts on the violin), dynamite (the unholy frogs in the cistern), or lift (the totem of Mummah, Queen of Clouds) that he might penetrate to the unfallen world of the child, which Jefferson maintained was an Eden on earth if the American would not betray his original sources in nature. But Henderson is no longer a child. He is a "nosy, gross phantom" (HRK, 283), who exists in nothing less than a child-like acceptance of his own original and

meaningful place in nature. He has been there before, he tells Lily in the letter that Sacho Panza, Romilayu, failed to post.

> It is very early in life, and I am out in the grass. The sun flames and swells; the heat it emits is its love, too. I have this self-same vividness in my heart. /Because he has 'burst the hour of the Spirit's sleep.'/ There are dandelions. I try to gather up this green. I put my love swollen cheek to the yellow of the dandelions. I try to enter into the green.
>
> (HRK, 282)

And now he is returning, though the clouds of glory he trails behind him are a little shopworn. To become Adam again, not written off like "the auk and the platypus and other experiments illustrating such and such a principle," to become "Man again" (HRK, 105), it is first necessary to become, paradoxically, Sungo the Rain King, who, in lifting the Queen of Clouds, Mummah, and bringing rain, lifts at the same time the tattered clouds of glory that have obscured the vision of Henderson his entire life. What Bellow is accentuating, in other words, is all the difference between being a Manchild and being a child-like man. In his role as child-like man, Henderson carries his innocence like a club; in his role as Adamic Manchild his innocence, tempered by suffering, is an instrument of love that will enable him to lift the curse from the American garden. "Bellow's heroes are moral masochists, cut off by despair and self-hatred from those they love, cut off from humanity by their need to go beyond human life- to be more than human. They create ideal versions of themselves and create more, a version of reality in which they can live. A self and a world: but the 'real' human being and the 'real' world don't go away."[33] Before coming to Africa, Henderson the child-like man "with ancient roots that crossed and choked one another" (HRK, 107) did hate himself, and as an "artist of himself" (HRK, 268) his self-creations, were lies to protect his innocence from Henderson himself. Upon leaving Africa, however, King Dahfu has helped Henderson to convert his innocence from imagination to literalness, from the

realm of self to the realm of the "real" world where it can do some "real" good.

> 'The career of our species,' Dahfu said, 'is evidence that one imagination after another grows literal. Not dreams. Not mere dreams. Imagination is a force of nature. Is this not enough to make a person full of ecstasy? Imagination, imagination, imagination! It converts to the actual. It sustains, it alters, it redeems!
>
> (HRK, 271)

From lion therapy Henderson the beloved has converted love to the actual, from which he abstracts lamb therapy that he will apply for the rest of his days, not just as a doctor, but as a loving human being as well. Henderson is not blind to the extremes to which Dahfu has carried his "conversions," but he loves him just the same- one step away from idolatry. After all, "he was a guy with a program. And when I say he lost his head, what I mean is not that his judgment abandoned him but that his enthusiasms and visions swept him far out" (HRK, 235). From Dahfu, Henderson takes the best and leaves all the rest back in the tomb of the strangled kings of the Wariri, knowing full well that a lovely lamb must one day become a full grown sheep in a world that eats sheep. For this reason, he takes along back to America the small lion cub that is a symbol in Bellow's world of the balance that Henderson will now be able to strike in loving fashion between the lion and the lamb. He has learned finally that it takes a little bit of lion to be a man, but a whole lot of lamb to be a human being.

As I mentioned earlier, Henderson goes through a rebirth, a series of them. The first two fail as object lessons because, as he tells Romilayu, "Figuring will get me nowhere, it's only illumination that I have to wait for" (HRK, 204). Flying over Africa for the first time, his departure in itself a rejection of his former porcine nature, Henderson looks down and sees the interior as "an ancient bed of mankind," and he defines his position relative to heaven and earth in terms of "an airborn seed" (HRK, 42) whose deposit in the earth will

bring the illumination his soul requires. Once set down on the seed bed, the earth, however, he is accepted amongst the pastoral Arnewi as a guest with a "body toughened by grief." This body wins him an audience and a wrestling match with Queen Willatale's nephew, Itelo; but he is not received as a redeemer, an important fact he fails to note. Acting the role of a combination Peace-Corps Moses, he sets a bush on fire with his Belgian lighter to impress the natives with his Old Testament, Yankee "know-how." The natives are not impressed, and it finally dawns on Henderson that he has come to Africa to learn something terrible about himself and that these people, through their queen, might have something to teach him. But then when asked by the queen who he is, he cannot say because at this point he does not know. Instead, he gives to her a foolish gift of a waterproof coat in a time of drought that indeed he should keep for himself, given the realities of rain on a man who cannot put down his roots. But she is delighted and invites him to place his head in the folds of her great stomach, and he feels himself sinking, trying frantically to get back to the womb in a way that will allow him rebirth and redemption. The sensation that flows over him is preparatory to the "hour that bursts the spirit's sleep," but the hour has not come (the whole passage has corny Freudian overtones to it), though the experience has inspired in him the insight that "living among such people might change a man for the better" (HRK, 77). If rebirth is not possible at this point, it is because the seed in the African ground is not ready to germinate. Henderson counters the instinctual attempts of the Queen to raise him again (three times he calls himself Lazarus) from the dead by an inane presentation of a pretty gift reciprocated by, ironically, the skin of a lion. But he is not done. Henderson feels a compelling inadequacy that obliges him to lift the curse (drought) from the Arnewi, and he fashions a flashlight-shell molotov cocktail to rid the cistern of the frogs in the cows' drinking trough. He is a man on a holy errand that, of course, miscarries and sends him into exile once again. Queen

Willatale has told him that he is a man of suffering "who-want-to-live," but because of his ineptitude, she bids him, "goo'by. Fo'evah" (HRK, 111).

Once again as the besotted American on the road, Henderson and his side-kick, Romilayu, explore the wilds of the human heart in opposition to itself, although Romilayu, a simple, dedicated Christian man never brings himself to pass judgment on the redemption-seeker, Henderson. But his hour is at hand- only the formula to bring the hand around is incomplete. And Henderson finds it by acting the folk-legend American hero who can move either a mountain or cony a stone queen (Mummah) whose displacement requires a little more than naivete and enthusiasm, for he-who-moves-her becomes Sungo, heir-apparent to the king, the failure of whose sexual prowess (at any age, let alone 55) results in strangulation. That he is up to it may be a tribute to either American cereal or to the instinctualism that motivates Henderson in all his quests. He prevails over weight and sheer density, however, and moves the Mummah toward the place of his viable redemption, which has its risks, as mentioned above. For no sooner does he become the Sungo, after having moved Mummah, than he, in a few words, becomes subject to laceration, floggings, whippings, stones and terror in his bowels, culminating in a dumping in a cowpond, six inches deep, from which he will arise, no longer a seed, with a "coat of earth" (HRK, 202). In displacing the Totem, Queen Mummah, he has almost displaced the clouds in his own cancerous and life-obscuring innocence. Standing naked in the driving rain bewailing his "condition," Henderson is not yet fully aware that "the hour that burst the spirit's sleep" is upon him. As a seed, he is now ready for a germination, leading toward Adamic redemption.

We next find him clothed in a most logical manner, considering the fact that he is a seed in the process of germination. Thus he wears a helmet, the outside shell of the seed; he is given, in his new capacity as Sungo, a strange pair of silken green pantaloons, the inside covering of a seed that

both protects and nourishes in germination, the inner core, the white jockey shorts under the pantaloons, the innermost source of new life. In terms of botany these complementing parts would correspond to the testa, the endosperm and the cotyledon respectively. Finally, it is worth noting that Henderson remains covered with earth and dirt until he is fully reborn in the light of his viable innocence. This rebirth he sets in motion by descending down through fallopian tunnels, with Dahfu, who is also seeking rebirth in trying to break through to his father. These tubes, empty out into a womb-like-chamber in which the lioness, Atti Queen of the "inherent," resides. Having been soaked by the rain and baked by the sun, all conditions are now propitious for the rebirth that will take place in full when Henderson escapes from the tomb of the strangled kings of the Wariri near where Dahfu had been emasculated by the lion both were trying to contain. Once inside the womb, the process of converting the imagination to the actual begins. Repeated exposures are necessary, however, before Henderson's "birthright" (HRK, 233) of "I want, I want" can be fulfilled, or expedited through exposure to and imitation of the inherent in the lioness, Atti. What passes between the lioness and Henderson is not just new sources of courage but "a spirit of love making and pressing and squeezing unbearably inside me" (HRK, 234). From the courage of the lioness is reborn the love of the lamb, and for this reason Henderson is able to go around the village in his capacity as Sungo and to bless every living thing with a gourd shaped like a censer. After the fact of his first exposure to Atti, (though the ritual is not complete until he escapes from the tomb) the only terms in which Henderson can express what has transpired within him are drawn from The Scientific American:

> Before I left home I read in a magazine that there are flowers in the desert (that's the Great American desert) that bloom maybe once in forty or fifty years. It all depends on the amount of rainfall. Now according to this article, you can take the seeds and put them in a bucket of water, but they won't

> germinate. No, sir, Your Highness, soaking in water won't do it. It has to be the rain coming through the soil. It has to wash over them for a certain number of days. And then for the first time in fifty or sixty years you see lilies and larkspurs and such. Roses. Wild peaches. I was very much choked up.
>
> (HRK, 234)

Henderson is obviously talking about himself, and though self-explanatory, the passage does invoke the Great America desert that Adamic Henderson will presently redeem insofar as he is now able to reconcile the lion and the lamb within him. A final proof that the object lesson of love passed on to him by Atti has not been lost is witnessed in the escape from the tomb where, after some deliberation, the redeemed Henderson refuses to "break, beat or strangle" (234) any of those responsible for the death of King Dahfu or his own spiritual and physical imprisonment. Triumphans Agno! Now fully germinated, no longer "a lazarus type" (329), it is possible "the grass should be my cousins," and this in spite of the fact that he knows nature will continue to "throw the book at me" (HRK, 33). Now that he can reconcile and accept the rhythmn of all life, it is appropriate that in Rome, he should discard the weeds of germination and put on "a corduroy outfit, burgandy colored, and an alpine hat with Bersagliere feathers, plus a new shirt and underpants" (HRK, 332). He is the flower full blown, redeemed, and no longer a seed.

On the aircraft home, just before touching down at Newfoundland, Henderson is brought together with the orphaned American Adamite from Persia, who went straight to his heart "like a fall-bruised apple" (HRK, 335). In the small boy's eyes, "new to life altogether" Henderson could see "new life. They had that new luster. With it they had ancient power, too. You could never convince me that <u>this was for the first time</u>" (HRK, 339). This small boy has been to the New World before; he has been and gone away many times and he is now coming back again to take from Henderson the message of plenitude that can only be passed on through creaturely instinct in the "Peaceable

Kingdom" that is always just around the corner in America. There is room to dance. So they do.

For Saul Bellow, "nothing ever runs unmingled" (HRK, 339). Augie March accepts that fact but with reservations. Herzog will continue to try because he no longer hates his creature-self with whom he is destined to be in occupancy. Henderson now loves not just the world but himself through it, and he is "leaping, leaping, pounding and tingling," in company with the boy and the lion cub, toward a redemption in America, for which, the technocracy notwithstanding, no curse is too great for these Redemptive American Adams.

Kerouac's The Dharma Bums should begin, "Once upon a time." Malamud's A New Life should begin in a similar fashion. That it does not, however, should not obscure the relative similarities that do exist between the two novels, although the hero of the former is a Zen radical, and the Adamic hero of the latter is an alleged "frustrated Union Square Radical"[34] (NL, 346). Like Ray Smith in The Dharma Bums, S. Levin is an exile from the East, "formerly a drunkard" and no stranger to dissolution and despair, who comes to a small agricultural-technical college as an English instructor in North-East Washington to discover "the new life" that he knows by instinct is his natural Jeffersonian heritage. The depth of his fall in the East (New York) notwithstanding, he remains an innocent (by Jewish definition, a schlemeil), who wears his self-created Adamic personality behind a mask, consisting of a raincoat, a hat, and an umbrella. None of the "rugged Westerners," being God's chosen democratic people in nature, need to wear such extraneous things: "the progress of his consciousness, like Lear's, urges him to stripping in the wilderness."[35] When completely stripped, it is Levin's fondest hope that he will be in the presence of love, which will serve up the formulae for the full Adamic redemption he sincerely hopes is close at hand. This does not, however, turn out to be the case; for when love does come to this Dimsdale-like sufferer in the form

of the wife of his department chairman, Levin discovers, like Mr. Eliot's lady in the mind of Prufrock, "That is not what I meant at all. That is not it, at all." Further, not only does love fail to provide the formulae for the redemption he so sorely needs, but it becomes, in spite of Levin's good intentions, the efficient cause of his being thrown out of the democratic Eden before he ever really has a chance to sniff around its gates. Playing Hester Prynne to Levin's Arthur Dimsdale, Pauline Gilly both stalks and seduces Levin in a forest scene reminiscent (in a mock-analogical manner) of Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter. It is the adultery, of course, that earns Levin his summary dismissal from the college, and coincidently allows him to pick up a burden of his own making (in part), and to assume the role of husband and father to a woman he no longer loves and in whom he sees clearly the real source of his failure to create the "new life." "Adam" and "Eve" drive away from the Western mountains and head East again through the gates of the college that has condemned Levin to no letters of recommendation and a future wife (probably) who will bear their child in hassle and confusion; and in so doing, they depart from Malamud's satiric version of democratic Eden, Western-style. Always arriving a little late for everything, nature, mechanics, gardening and now women, Levin secretly fears that perhaps he is a little late for the "new life itself" and that even his (now) untenable attachment to Jeffersonian foundations will not be quite enough to lift him up again. Why such a bleak situation should evoke laughter from the reader is a key to the humor in the novel and a good illustration of Malamud's intentions throughout: that is, to play off against one another the Adamic role in which some Americans continue to cast themselves with the realities of a modern life that continually tests that role both for its droll character and its cathartic effect on the rest of American society.[36] It is in much the same way that Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "does his stuff" with the Adamic structure as we shall see presently. And as we have already seen, the

Adamic redemptive mode is one of the more effective ways by which Saul Bellow has tested the wings of this great American illusion. Let us in passing, therefore, examine the relationship between some of Bellow's heroes and Malamud's S. Levin. By any comparisons, I am not in the least trying to show indebtedness one way or the other. In fact, it is just the opposite, for both writers arrive where they do, often asking the same questions, quite independent of one another- Malamud with his starkness working in charcoal and Bellow with his luxuriance working in oils.

The characters I have discussed in the works of both these artists discover at some point in their careers that living in the present under the shadow of the past (either historical or personal or a combination of both) is a burden that atrophies the quality of life in the present and makes of the future a nightmare not much to be looked toward. The Eternal Now seems to be a philosophical position in which all would like to share. Finding this impossible in the complexity of a society "gone crackers" over modernity, they all attempt a retreat into nature or close to it, hoping to find there evidence for the Jeffersonian pastoral redemption they have read and implicitly felt to be their natural heritage on this earth. It is only Henderson who succeeds in this enterprise, though. Finding the barriers between themselves and the unfallen place all but impenetrable and feeling cheated of the redemption that King Dahfu calls Henderson's "birthright," the rest are forced into various forms of sublimation that will satisfy their minds until the top of the next hill is reached and courage to go down and up another is summoned in their hearts. It is in the up and down that the humor resides: one part of the Adamic self meeting the other non-Adamic part of the same self coming from opposite directions. It is self-hatred that often inspires all the new beginnings in which potential tragedy resides, and thus the falls that occur, many times, are from no higher than the dizzy heights of the Adamic imagination. To fall from a dais or a throne is one thing: to fall

from the generator of all innocence in the mind of man, the imagination, is quite another. Rarely does Bellow or Malamud feel that the alleged covenant between man and nature in the pastoral garden is a living and viable possibility- if indeed it ever was. But it is a structure around which many Americans have based their values and their faith in redemption, twisted and distorted as it may appear. What is important is that while not being deceived by the myth and its multiple illusions (some American poets excepted here), many have been able to make the best of a bad situation and at least to make use of the apparatus that remains, as it was in the 19th century, quite intact. Where then does one find solace? The alternative to the illusion is an even greater illusion in which everyone psychiatrically adjusts to the values of a national society that is one step away from complete madness.

Consider Seymour, See-nothing, Levin. What keeps him going? What allows him to rise after each successive fall other than his belief in new beginnings and the possibility of redemption? If it is a lie, a myth, an illusion, so what? It never enslaved multitudes or dropped an atomic bomb. Having no religion himself, his Jewishness apparently forgotten with his past, it is inevitable that, while not seeking money but rather the peace that surpasseth understanding in the far west, Levin would traverse the up and down path of Adamic redemption. Browsing through Gilly's library less than an hour after reaching the college town from New York, Levin gravitates toward Henry James' The American, poring over it until interrupted by Pauline with an article by her husband. Gerald has given himself over to the rotary club, and a kind of half-baked Hemingway dedication to sport and the active life in the great outdoors. Her comment, "Nature here can be such an esthetic satisfaction that one slights others" (NL, 15), produces in the 30-year-old reformed Adamic drunk from Manhattan an instinctive shrug, for he has not yet immersed himself in the great American garden which to date he has only known in books. But his reasons for coming to the great Northwest are more or less clear to him, although he purposefully

obscures them from others. He has come to the land of "mid-winter eternal spring" to "reclaim an old ideal or two" (NL, 18) which had been his, according to his Jeffersonian heritage. He has had his fill of cities, and he wants "the open sky on his head"; but Pauline warns him that "Eastchester is paradise" and that those who remain under its open skies for too long soon become guilty of the sin of omission. "I blame it on nature," she says (NL, 19). Levin is not to be denied, however. He has come too far and waited too long for redemption to heed closely the words of the figure who will ultimately prove to be his downfall. Leaving the Gilly house on his way to his new lodgings at Mrs. Beatty's, the purity of the night air and the smell of the forest "almost made him cry out" (NL, 22) so great is his emotional need for some meaningful place in nature. To this end he begins an immersion in nature that proceeds by gradual stages, most of which are either comic or pathetic, and which will culminate in his meeting in the forest with "Hester" Gilly mid-way in the novel. Often thinking of himself as "a latter-day Thoreau" who probably has come "too late to nature" (NL, 56), Levin nevertheless throws himself into his new job and what the natural world offers to any man so freely. "Without investment to speak of he had become rich in the sight of nature, a satisfying wealth" (NL, 59). His long walks dressed in his disguise (mask), after his obligations at his school, take him deep into the heart of nature where the animals in the barnyards and the rich fields- "marvelous"- stare at Levin as he walks by. This perception of such peace in nature he has never before beheld. Tramping for miles over dirt roads, Levin is inspired to try his hand at epigram and short essays.

> 'The new life hangs on an old soul,' and 'I am one who creates his own peril.' Also, 'The danger of the times is the betrayal of man' - S. Levin. He exhorted to himself to 'keep the circle broken.' He was a conscientious becomer but worried that it had taken him so long to get started.
>
> (A New Life, 58)

Levin would "keep the circle broken" because to complete it would bring him back to a beginning from which he has grave doubts he will ever arise. Moreover, the spectre of the past, which he is not convinced that he will jettison still hangs circling in the back of his mind." He knows that he must reject the past before his new life will ever be complete. Thus he retains his mask, and with the help of nature- "already in his eye, though he did not compel it, as he had in the past compelled every flower and tree, to solace or mourn with his spirit" (NL, 60)- he carries on, soothed by the thought that in the midst of nature redemption and the new life is more than a mere possibility. After all, "had not Concord" and "nature... the true history of Eastchester," "been for Thoreau a sufficient miniature of the universe?" (NL, 74). But the movement toward redemption is not without its false starts, and surely in the most comic scene in the novel, the not-quite Adamic Levin (with Malamud echoing Flaubert and Whitman again) prepares to seduce the waitress Laverne. This occurs in her brother's barn in front of cows. "Now I belong to the ages" (NL, 82). Just as he is about to take his joy, however, his rival, the Syrian Sadek, enters the barn with a flashlight and makes off with the clothing of the two lovers. Thus they are forced to return back to town virtually naked, moving along the drainage ditches and from bush to bush, lest the police pick them up- Laverne wrapped in a horse blanket and Levin without even his shoes, still not "belonging to the ages" as he had hoped. In their parting on the porch steps Laverne reminds Levin not only that has he failed as Adam but that he has "behind his whiskers" failed as a man. "This broke Levin up" (NL, 85).

On the afternoon of his seduction by "Hester" Gilly, a "late March day in January"- a time Eliot in "Little Gidding" calls "Sempiternal," the "improved" Levin, who "eternally hunted 'a new birth in freedom'" (NL, 194), is on the verge of redemption, though he does not notice the cracks under his feet. Leaving the "right" path and going off so deep in the

forest that he fears being lost, Levin is struck by a gentle sadness in the rhythm of life around him.

> Although Levin rejoiced at the unexpected weather, his pleasure was tempered by a touch of the habitual sadness at the relentless rhythm of nature; change ordained by a force that produced, whether he wanted it or not, today's spring, frost, age, death, yet no man's accomplishment- change that wasn't change, in cycles eternal sameness, a repetition he was part of, so how win freedom in and from self? Was this why his life, despite his determined effort to break away from what he had already lived, remained so much the same? And why, constituted as he was and living the experience he engendered, he had not won anything more than short periods of contentment, not decently prolonged to where he could stop asking himself whether he had it or not? If only I could live as I believe, Levin thought.
>
> (A New Life, 195)

As he penetrates deeper into the forest, he begins to worry that he might be "trespassing" on something sacred in the temple of nature, and he who had "never been a boy scout" is momentarily panicked by the thought that he is lost. But he is driven on by the mystery "of unseen life in natural time, and the feeling that few men had been where he presently was." Malamud's sense of irony runs unchecked at this point. "Levin, woodsman, explorer; he now understood the soul of Natty Bumppo, formerly paper" (NL, 196). Few historical men have stood on the exact spot where Levin now finds himself, with the exception of the archetypal American Adam, who has been longing to reclaim that unfallen place and time ever since Eve drove him out of it. Her appearance on the scene is startling. It is as though she came out of nowhere, looking like someone "he had never expected to see again... a trick on himself to protect what was left of his unused virginity?" (NL, 197).[38] At their first kiss he is warned by his inner Adamic self, "Take off, kid, and in their deep kiss he saw himself in flight, bearded bird, dream figure, but couldn't move" (198). Earlier

intimations about the real nature of "Hester" Gilly- that she was like "the American prairie" (17), that she smelled "like a garden" (127) had forewarned Levin, but now he cannot fly and he cannot hear his own heart. They make love in the grass; Levin now finally belongs to the fallen ages, and later he explains to her for the first time something of his sordid past. She swoons, and he further confesses to her his desperate need for redemption and his former inability to respond to experience and to nature. He concludes by telling her that one day in the East it struck him for the first time that "he must get back what belongs to me" (202), and from that day forward he placed himself on the road to redemption in the American garden, that which "belongs" to him from his Jeffersonian heritage, giving him some "sense of well being" and the courage to go on. "Hester-Eve" Gilly responds to this last confession by telling Levin, "I sensed it. I knew who you were. You became Levin with a beard." Even the mask of the beard was not enough to hide Adam from the destructive American Eve whom he had never "expected to see again the American side of paradise." It is as though he had given the entire campaign plan over into the hands of the enemy. And suddenly Levin's allusion to himself as Natty Bumppo is given a new meaning when, upon leaving the spot that will drive him further from his redemption, Pauline explains to Levin that in this heavy forest, with shades of light and dark drawn probably from Hawthorne, foresters are trained, and Eve is surely one of their chief instructors.

> "Then it's no miracle you came here today?"
> "I've been often, on picnics with forestry friends, and sometimes I come alone to walk in the woods."
>
> (A New Life, 202)

On the road to town later, although the sun is shining brightly, Levin "opened the unbrella over their heads" (203).

Fallen again, but not down for long, Levin is finally able to extricate himself from his painful affair with Pauline Gilly. As time passes, he is cured of the love that stands

paradoxically between him and redemption. He no longer thinks of Eve. He shaves his beard and sheds his disguises. "For the first time since he had parted from Pauline the world seemed home, welcome. He had, as men must, given birth to it; he was himself reborn" (273). As proof of this to himself, Levin measures the perfect harmony he feels with all created things. "Vast fires in cosmic space- all nature flowing in Levin's veins. He felt tender to the grass. 'God's handkerchief,' Whitman called it" (273). He even goes so far as to have visions of "service to others" in which he would lift up the dross from a fallen world. But the vision blows up in his face as he finds it increasingly difficult to adjust to the insanity and cowardice of the McCarthy era principles of democracy, so much different from his Jeffersonain idealism, that Eastchester, that "Western Paradise," waves in his face. Throwing himself into the viciousness of departmental politics and the George F. Babbitts who aspire to run the department, Levin is once again dragged down, his Jeffersonian banner is around his ankles, and it is not long before Pauline Gilly comes around once again to collect him. Fallen, fired, broken, a sinner resinned, an Adamic idealist unfrocked, Levin in his final humiliation sees the leafy birch tree before Humanities Hall being cut down by workmen to make room for a heat tunnel. Whatever meaning the place ever had is now taken completely from him. Just before passing through the gates of the college, his old Hudson auto filled with crying children and an Eve whose body once again "smelled like fresh-baked bread," Levin catches sight of Gerald Gilly with a camera. "Got your picture!" he yells after them. In an interview in the New York Post Malamud proclaimed that in the novel he was trying to invoke the spirit of Stendhal,[39] i.e., the young man from the city who goes to the country to find his ideals shattered one after another. This is difficult to accept, for if Levin invokes the spirit of anyone it is Flaubert and his lovely Emma. Finally, who else but a man like Homais would presume "to get your picture!"

I would be slightly less than honest if I were to maintain that S. Levin is able to reject his past and the historical lessons that it imposes upon his future. With John Barth, however, we reach a point in this chapter where we can safely affirm that the rejection of history and the irrelevance of time past is an absolute prerequisite to the gates of redemption in the American garden. Epistemologically speaking, we are dealing here with a man, a novelist, who affirms everything as a possibility and nothing as a certainty. "What fictionist," he asserts in his insane essay on Jorge Luis Borges, "would not wish to have dreamed up the Britannica?"[40] To this, what does one say? Which trunk does he open to come up with arguments that will, with moral cunning, put down such philosophical anarchistic posturings, struttings, now-you-got-me's, now-you-don'ts? One replies to Barth, "well, if you wish to play the game that way, why, I'd rather not. I'll just take my cricket bat and shuffle on home." Which, of course, is a kind of argument in itself, a moral argument of the most cowardly unpersuasive nature in the manner of a bully. It is rather like Dr. Johnson's refusing to stand up and fight with the good Bishop by kicking the stone, "thus, Sir!" In examining Barth's Sot-Weed Factor, therefore, we are dealing with a novel that not only rejects history as a first premise but also denies man's ability to infer knowledge or anything else from historical data. Everything is possibility. No one thing is better than another if measured by a standard of quality. Everything is a game; he who wins does so because, like Burlingame, he is in possession of the most clever masks in which he cannot even recognize himself- whoever he might be. (Does Burlingame ever really learn?) Clinging firmly to Hume's conviction that belief is never rational, Burlingame re-writes what is usually taken for historical record and takes clever advantage of everything and everyone in the novel from the New World itself to its besotted Adamic bard, Eben Cooke. Speaking of the concept of liberty, for example, and making history dance to his own tunes and drums, Burlingame cries out: "'Tis more than just political and religious liberty-

they come and go from one year to the next. 'Tis philosophic liberty I speak of, that comes from want of history. It throws a man on his own resources"[41] (SWF, 171). In this way Burlingame can justify his many roles in which sometimes he is his own enemy, and Eben can justify the creation of his own virgin innocence with which he hopes to redeem the world and his heaven on earth, beloved Malden, in whose very name is the key to Eben's violent readjustment and re-appraisal of himself and nature. As far as Barth is concerned, the action of the novel could take place anywhere, at anytime. "It really has little to do with Maryland and the eighteenth century and a great deal to do with the mental world of John Barth."[42] What is it about, then? Simply put, it is a spoof on mock-Adamic American redemption using all the artifacts of the novel from its very beginning to its present use. Just about everybody, from Cervantes to Fielding is represented in a way that does not in the least embarrass Barth. "If this sort of thing sounds unpleasantly decadent, nevertheless it's about where the genre began, with Quixote imitating Amandis of Gaul, Cervantes pretending to be the Cid Hamete Benengeli, or Fielding parodying Richardson."[43] Barth goes on to say that anyone who would attempt to write a nineteenth-century romantic symphony or novel in the twentieth century without that same kind of ironic distance between himself and the form he is working with, would indeed be playing the fool. Finally, Barth "confesses" to us (if that is the right word) that The Sot-Weed Factor and Giles Goat-Boy are "novels which imitate the form of the Novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author."[44] In short, the inability of any form to contain historical record in a way that can be affirmed as truth is the existential mock-crisis that Barth is playing around with. And he is very funny at it, especially in his re-writing of the story of Pocahontas.

Because Ebenezer Cooke tells us time and again throughout The Sot-Weed Factor (1960) that he is an Adamite of the American stripe is no reason, given Barth's use of slight of hand,

to automatically assume that he is. What convinces us, however, is not so much what Eben says but what he does. Indeed, a character so diverse as Burlingame has, in a way, almost as much in common with the Adamic hero as does Eben, judging by what he says rather than by what he thinks he is doing. He is stunned by the possibilities of life and forced to choose one of them, and he sees "such virtue in each alternative that none outshines the rest" (SWF, 225). All of which sounds like Herzog. But it is what Eben does, really, that brings him into the Adamic camp. With this in mind, therefore, let us reconstruct in a general way, what Eben does and what the world, "a Shameless Playwright," does to him. It is important to note at the outset that Eben was born in the New World, spending the first four years of his existence at Malden on the Choptank. Because of financial obligations in London, however, and loneliness, Eben's Father, Andrew, retired and left Malden in the hands of an overseer named Spurdance. Privately tutored with his twin sister, Anna, until he was eighteen Eben left his father's house for Cambridge and thence to the coffee house, for which he was best suited- his education at best having made him dreamy and eclectic and unable to maintain anything stoutly except his innocence. After first receiving a mandate from his father to reclaim his legacy in the New World and a mandate from Lord Baltimore (Burlingame in one of his numerous disguises) to become the Poet Laureate thereof, Eben is delivered from Lockit's into the hands of one fate after another, until finally he is within a few miles of Malden (Read Evil-Eden), which for Eben, under one description or another, is Eden. It is at this stage of his career that he unwittingly gives away his legacy in reversing a court ruling that he by chance happens upon. All the American redemptors in the courtyard thunder their approval, and Eben, who is shortly to become literally one of them, is carried on their shoulders into a nearby "Gin-sink." What predominates over this action of criminal generosity and innocence is a heavy chain of causality from which hangs the fate not only of

Adamic Eden but the fates of just about everyone who is close to him. Whereas in the past the fourberie of Burlingame has been chiefly responsible for all his woes, from this point forward it is Eben himself who must shoulder the burden of responsibility and make some heroic effort at reclaiming what has become the illusory, unfallen place in his heart. The difficulty in shouldering this burden, however, arises from the fact that Eben already has a substantial burden of virginity resting on his shoulders, and there is hardly room for more. When he learns to dump this innocent virginity in the end by swiving his pox-ridden wife, the former London Harlot, Joan Toast, Malden is restored to him through an acceptance of the proper inheritance of mankind by which some good must be compelled or "bribed" out of evil, O felix culpa. "We ne'er asked for't, but there it is, and as we do choose to live, why- we must needs live with't" (SWF, 741), McEvoy jibes. But first he must come to recognize that Malden, a den of whores and opium traders is not a little Eden for the redemption of European cripples of any sort. It is a hard reckoning for "Father Adam," who suggests to his sister Anna (despite all the suffering he has experienced from his foolish innocence) that they escape it all by becoming "the only folks on earth":

> Adam and Eve? The poet's face burned. 'So be it; but we must be God as well, and build a universe to hold our Garden.'

But to play God is to play the fool, American style. When Eben is on the verge of his homecoming to Malden, and after numerous adventures up and down the Bay that contribute to his anagnorisis only insofar as they indicate the depths to which we have all fallen and the difficulty we experience in rising again in a world that will not conform to causality, he learns from McEvoy the selfishness of his stubborn adherence to innocence, but to no purpose.

> The fallen suffer from Adam's fall, Eben wanted to explain; but in that knowledge-which the Fall itself vouchsafed-how more must Adam have suffered! But he was too gripped by cold and despair to essay such philosophy.
>
> (SWF, 742)

In the last scene of the novel a benediction of sorts prevails. Eben with perfect certitude confesses that it was "redemption" he always craved, not from sin ironically, but from innocence. When Anna hastens to comfort him by pointing out that of all the men on the planet, he is "the freest from sin" (SWF, 788), Eben counters,

> 'That is the crime I stand indicted for, the crime of innocence, whereof the Knowledged must bear the burthen. There's the true Original Sin our souls are born in: not that Adam learned, but that he had to learn-in short, that he was innocent.'
>
> (SWF, 788)

If the reader objects that Eben is a little late in coming to this wisdom- he has, after all, seen just about the entire range of man's inhumanity and treachery to man- probably Barth, through Eben, would respond that for every turn there is a counter-turn of infinite possibilities; and that no form of belief is rational, even belief in a fallen world from which redemption might take place. The final words of the novel are ambiguously addressed to the servant, but they might just as well transcend the kitchen and affirm the possibility of the acceptance of redemption in the fallen, so-easily-corrupted here and now. 'Grace? Grace! 'Sblood, Grace, fetch us a rundlet!'

And some good does come out of evil after all. The pox-ridden Joan dies and the fruit of her marriage dies beneficently with her. Anna cannot marry her half brother, Henry Burlingame, and he happily returns to an island in the Chesapeake to quell (probably) an imaginary insurrection. Before he goes native, however, he leaves behind a child in the womb of his sister, whom Eben promptly adopts and upon whom he confers the redoubtable title, Andrew Ebenezer Cooke III. The final irony in the novel is Eben's commendation for his Hudibrastic by the real Lord Baltimore by which he is made a legitimate poet laureate of Maryland, and hence the instrument for an onslaught of public relations regarding immigration there, the exact reverse of which Eben intended. "However,

either his warning got about or else his complaint that Maryland's air- in any case, Dorchester's, ill supports the delicate muse was accurate, for to the best of the Author's knowledge her marshes have spawned no other poet since Ebenezer Cooke, Gentleman, Poet and Laureate of the Province." (806)

According to Barth's logic, who can prove that Jefferson wasn't around at this time? He might have been John Coode or Henry Burlingame. He might even have been a tree on Tangier Island.

Notes To Chapter 3

1 Saul Bellow, "The Art of Poetry," Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews, III (New York, 1967), 184.

2 The Dangling Man, The Victim, and Seize The Day.

3 Bellow, 183.

4 Ibid., 188.

5 "In this analysis of the creation of the self and of the illusion of a world, we are strongly reminded of Genet's The Balcony and The Blacks. But for Bellow, unlike Genet, there is a reality underneath all the versions." John J. Clayton, Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man (Bloomington, London, 1968), 92.

6 This is a common mythological hazard of being a Jew. There are few Jews who would deny it.

7 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York, 1964), 149.

8 Saul Bellow, Henderson The Rain King (New York, 1959), 31. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Viking edition.

9 Saul Bellow, "Deep Readers of the World, Beware! New York Times Book Review (February 15, 1959), 1, 34.

10 Saul Bellow, The Adventures of Augie March (New York, 1960), 144. All subsequent references in parentheses are to the Fawcett Publications edition.

11 Compare the Father-in-Law in Mailer's An American Dream.

12 Richard Chase, "The Adventures of Saul Bellow: Progress of a Novelist," Commentary, 27 (April, 1959), 49.

13 Marcus Klein, After Alienation (Cleveland, 1962), 51.

14 Isaac Rosenfeld, The Age of Enormity (Cleveland, 1962), 183-4.

15 Irving Malin, "Seven Images," from Saul Bellow and The Critics, ed. Irving Malin (New York, 1967), 165.

16 For a review of other significant catalogues, see pages 240, 249, 300, 383, 476.

17 Saul Bellow, Herzog (New York, 1964), 207. All subsequent references in parentheses are to the Viking edition.

18 Forrest Read, "Herzog: A Review," from Saul Bellow and The Critics, ed. Irving Malin (New York, 1967), 204.

19 Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (Middletown, Connecticut, 1959), Chapter xiii.

20 Saul Bellow, "The Art of Poetry," 195.

21 Stephen Spender, "America," Partisan Review, No. 2, Vol. XXXIX (Winter, 1972), 172.

22 Daniel J. Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1948), Chapter II, "The Sovereignty of the Present Generation."

23 Walter Kaufman, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (New York, 1956), 255.

24 See p. 254 for a similar experience; see also, 175 and 181 for Bellow's version of the busk. For Herzog's vainglorious attempt to shut out history, see 289.

25 Read, 192.

26 Ibid., 192.

27 See Chapter 1.

28 Read, 194.

29 Bellow, "The Art of Poetry," 192.

30 The most resonant though least successful statement concerning Adamic redemption in Bellow's work remains his monumental Broadway flop, The Last Analysis. In this play, the protagonist Bummidge's sloughing off of the past and gradual rebirth involves not only himself, but in Pirandello fashion, the entire audience whom he has drawn into the play and thereby redeemed. See for example his telegram from Klabfuss, "a man of blood. Living from dead beasts. Who wishes to be redeemed." The Last Analysis (New York, 1965), 105. As the fully "transfigured" American Adam, Bummidge has thought his way through to an "attained rebirth. I am in a pure condition which cannot be exploited. Noli me tangere. Noli, Noli, Noli." (LA, 111) This to be sure is in direct contrast with Moses Herzog. In the last scene of his redemptive performance for the New York intellectual audience, Bummidge goes so far as to think in terms of missionary work, for he has without doubt achieved

"a new life. A new man. I really am reborn. Sprinkles water on his head from water jug. I baptize myself" (LA, 118).

31 Richard G. Stern, "Henderson's Bellow," The Kenyon Review, XXI (1959), 655-56 and 658-61.

32 My indebtness here is primarily to Jesse L. Weston, From Ritual To Romance. For an interesting related discussion see Michael A. Goldfinch, "A Journey to the Interior," English Studies (October, 1962), 439-43.

33 Clayton, 97.

34 Bernard Malamud, A New Life (New York, 1961). All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Farrar, Straus and Cudahy edition.

35 Klein, 282.

36 A good example of this kind of thinking is the following from a speech before the U.S. Senate in April, 1969. "If we have to start over with Adam and Eve, I want them to be Americans; and I want them on this continent and not in Europe."

37 Raymond M. Olderman, Beyond The Wasteland: A Study of The American Novel in The Nineteen-Sixties (New Havan and London, 1972), 119.

38 To my way of thinking there is something remarkably similar to this scene and that scene in Chapter XVII of The Scarlet Letter when Hester takes Dimsdale by surprise one day when he is out strolling under clouds of guilt.

39 Quoted from After Alienation, 282.

40 John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," from The American Novel Since World War II, ed. Marcus Klein (New York, 1969), 272.

41 John Barth, The Sot-Weed Factor (New York, 1960), 171. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to the Grosset & Dunlap edition.

42 Tony Tanner, "The Hoax That Joke Bilked," Partisan Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1967), 106.

43 Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," 275.

44 Ibid., 275.

Chapter 4
Redemption Gone To Seed

To label Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. a science fiction writer, as many critics have done- and even as Vonnegut himself has done on merry occasions- makes as much sense as to label the author of The Partridge-Bickerstaff Papers a learned astronomer or my uncle Toby as a profound philosopher. With Vonnegut, Science Fiction is merely a convenient metaphor of the absurd, as workaday and structured in his vision as the controlling metaphor of travel in the literature of the 18th century. Those who fail to see any relationship between Lemuel Gulliver and Malachi Constant or Billy Pilgrim do Vonnegut a great injustice. Like John Barth in The Sot-Weed Factor, however, and unlike his 18th century prototypes, Vonnegut does have a libido for re-writing history for his own amusement. In the re-writing he is free to reject historical lessons as they are contained in the great libraries of the world, and to give us an Adamically re-populated universe as it ought to be "more or less," he is quick to remind us. By far the most extraordinary example of Vonnegut's rejection of history, one universally applicable throughout his work, comes from The Sirens of Titan, where we learn that all civilization and the monuments of human history from time immemorial have been nothing more than a series of communications in a language known only by Tralfamadorians to Salo, who is attempting to deliver a "Greeting" from one end of the universe to the other. In the Tralfamadorian language, for example, Stonehenge means, "Replacement part being rushed with all possible speed.

> Stonehenge wasn't the only message old Salo had received.
>
> There had been four others, all of them written on Earth.
>
> The Great Wall of China means in Tralfamadorian, when viewed from above: "Be patient. We haven't forgotten about you.

> The Golden House of the Roman Emperor Nero meant: "We are doing the best we can."
> The meaning of the Moscow Kremlin when it was first walled was: "You will be on your way before you know it."
> The meaning of the Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, is: "Pack up your things and be ready to leave on short notice."
>
> (The Sirens of Titan, 271-2)

Thus Vonnegut's drift toward Adamic Redemption from the evils of faith in what history has to teach us (a position that unequivocally baits Santayana's famous maxim) is reflected in almost all the major novels, from the earliest, Player Piano (1952), to the theme's ultimate exorcism in the fire-bombing of Dresden in Slaughterhouse-Five (1969). Further, like another of his Adamic mentors, Nathaniel West, Vonnegut is prone to see the inherent seeds of apocalypse storming out of an American nature that has failed in its Jeffersonian mandate and made a mockery of redemption. "The United States of America was meant to be a Utopia for all," says the bemused narrator in God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, but because of greed and the fatalistic turnings of American capitalism, "the American dream has turned belly up, turned green, bobbed to the scummy surface of cupidity, filled with gas" in the bogus Rosewater canal. "The point is that Vonnegut rejects both Western religion, with its insistence on God's acts in history, and the novel, the Western art form which more than any other finds meaning in history."[1] Although "thise been the cokkes wordes and nat mine," I do somewhat agree with them for reasons different from those advanced in the context which, of course, obliges me to qualify both assertions.

First, from scattered sources throughout his writing, it is evident that Vonnegut is a self-proclaimed atheist, who, for the life of him, cannot accept the viability of anything closely resembling a God immanent in the affairs of men or nature. Nor, for that matter, can he accept anything closely resembling a God transcendent: i.e., a God who simply walked away from his creation and left it with a kind of atomistic

self-propulsion. For Vonnegut, each man is responsible for himself, creating out of that self either a meaningless heaven or a painful hell. Indeed, Vonnegut's version of Hazel Motes' "Redeemed Church of Christ Without Christ," from Wise Blood- an Adamic redemptive humanism that brutally acknowledges the burdens of mortality and tries to make the best of them through a shared innocence thwarted by linear time and history- is repeated in one form or another in every Vonnegut novel, with the exception of Mother Night. Adamic redemption, generally speaking, fails as an alternative to the collective madness that presses in on the self in its attempts to be reborn in the work of O'Connor, West, or Vonnegut, but this failure does not diminish the heroic proportions of the quest. In Player Piano, for example, Adamic redemption is manifested in the "Ghost Shirt Society"; in The Sirens of Titan, in "The Church of God The Utterly Indifferent" wherein the first precept reads, "Take Care of the People, and God Almighty Will Take Care of Himself"; in Cat's Cradle, in Bokononism, in which the irrational, meaninglessness of existence is palliated by "foma" (lies) and collected between the covers of a "calypso" as a defiance to the Unknown; finally, in Slaughterhouse-Five, it is a time warp which provides the frame for redemption in that it defies death by insisting that death occupies only a snap of the fingers in a circular continuum that leads back inevitably to rebirth. That is to say, one is dead only from a particular perspective in the third dimension, as the Tralfamadorians (who occupy the fourth dimension) explain to the time-traveler, Billy Pilgrim. From another perspective, one may be quite alive, and if he is not reconciled to them, at least he may ignore the nightmare of the twisted "supreme fictions" around him. The second assertion by Meter, regarding Vonnegut's attitude toward the form of the novel itself and his alleged rejection of it, reminds one of the reformed whore who continues to pay the butcher in trade. It is foolish to assert that Vonnegut does not write novels, or that he is so highly innovative that he has taken the form well beyond its

traditional measures as Susan Sontag and friendlies such as James Mellard[2] claim. Neither should one take Vonnegut's own pronouncements on the novel, say in Slaughterhouse-Five, too seriously.

> The master of ceremonies asked people to say what they thought the function of the novel might be in modern society, and one critic said, "To provide touches of color in rooms with all-white walls." Another one said, "To describe blow-jobs artistically." Another one said, "To teach wives of junior executives what to buy next and how to act in a French restaurant."
>
> (Slaughterhouse-Five, 206)

No matter what particular form any given novel takes, no matter how many multiple narrators there are, each contradicting the other, Vonnegut remains firm in the belief that the "supreme fiction" of each man, his life, should be or may be a redemptive process the meaning of which, if it has any "meaning" (and here I.A. Richards is of little use to us), can only be interpreted through a work of art. The lady protests, but the butcher is paid. If there is a major difference between Vonnegut's use of fiction and Wallace Stevens' use of "supreme fiction," I confess I fail to appreciate it. And if the distance between Lawrence Sterne and Kurt Vonnegut is any more than across an intimate room filled with windows that look out on to the abyss, then I am very confused. But it is not my intention to defend the life-breath of the novel or even Vonnegut's use of the novel, but merely to establish paradoxically that the best way to interpret a fiction called life is through a fiction called art, which is uncircumscribed by the boundaries of historical remedies. For according to Vonnegut, history is now (the idea is a lovely parodic debunking of Eliot in "Little Gidding"); the future has already happened, and cannot be changed by the past. Like Billy Pilgrim we must have "memories of the future"[3] (S-F, 105) if we are to survive. With this in mind, let us begin with Vonnegut's first published attempt at the novel, Player Piano.

One of the more successful techniques of Vonnegut's satiric thrust is his use of the Swiftian reductio ad absurdum by which an apparently logical activity that is inherently wrong is taken one last logical step beyond the borders of sanity. Such is the situation in Player Piano, where the United States, after absorbing another war, is enjoying the fruits of a victory realized not by men but by technocracy. The novel is set, as much of Vonnegut's fiction is set, in Ilium, New York, which classically "Is Divided Into Three Parts."[4] The Northwest consists of the managers and engineers; in the Northeast are the machines, who won the war; and in the South, across the Iroquois River, are the "Reeks and Wrecks," the left over, useless generality of the population that has been displaced by the machines. This third group is a clear example of a question that arises with varying degrees of irony throughout this novel and all the others that follow. The question is: "What are people for?" to which Vonnegut does not have any ready answers. In the midst of this tripartite sociological division emerges Vonnegut's hero, Dr. Paul Proteus, who occupies an important managerial position from which, as his name implies, he must change and reclaim a position in life more consistent with nature. Secretly, he desires to give up his station and to return to the "out-of-doors," to deal directly with nature, and thus to become dependent upon basic cunning and physical strength for survival" (PP, 118). Proteus is gradually introduced to his intrinsic need for redemption by his engineer comrade, Ed Finnerty, who dropped away from the system in order to find himself and to see clearly the system's life-denying processes. One evening after the conclusion of a "drunk" on the "South" side of the river, Proteus' subterranean dissatisfaction comes to the surface in an overwhelming desire to redeem, not only himself, but the "Reeks and Wrecks" around him. The thought came to him "inspirationally, with no conscious effort on his part. He had only to deliver it to ... make himself the new Messiah and Ilium the new Eden. The first line was at his lips, tearing at them to be set free" (PP, 91).

But the occasion and his drunken state will not allow him to redeem anything, and the last thing to pass through his mind before he passes out is the mindless clanging of the player piano in the background. Yet so far from nature and a Jeffersonian pastoral heritage has this Adamite and his society been driven, that the unfallen place and the search for it has become a curse rather than a blessing.

> If his attempt to become the new Messiah had been successful, if the inhabitants of the north and south banks had met in the middle of the bridge with Paul between them, he wouldn't have the slightest idea of what to do next. He knew with all his heart that the human situation was a frightful botch, but it was such a logical, intelligently arrived-at botch that he couldn't see how history could possibly have led anywhere else.
>
> Paul did a complicated sum in his mind and wondered if he didn't have enough to enable him to simply quit, to stop being the instrument of any set of beliefs or any whim of history that might raise hell with somebody's life. To live in a house by the side of the road...

(Player Piano, 99)

The first step toward achieving at least his own redemption comes to Proteus in the form of an inexpensive unmechanized farm purchased for the establishment of a new Eden for himself and his Eve, Anita, who later in the novel, betrays Adam in characteristic fashion and helps to abort the revolution for which Adam-Proteus serves as the nominal leader. As his Adamic destiny slowly draws over him, Proteus comes to realize that history and its imperative fictions have separated him from the Adamic ideal to which he naturally aspires, and that he is only a hapless actor in the instant theatre of a behaviorist society. "He wanted to deal not with society, but only with Earth as God had given it to man" (PP, 119). Like Eliot Rosewater and Billy Pilgrim, Paul Proteus assumes that it must be possible to counter the fiction of re-invention and re-birth if only the unilinear movement of technocracy has not become irreversible-which, of course, it has. Vonnegut through his Adamic protagonists in all the novels is forced to face up to this fact.

Still, what virtue resides in private fictions exists for the sole purpose of throwing off anything that is non-human and of confusing and conspiring against the fictions of history and the state.

Prior to his re-birth in being enlisted as the titular head of the redemptive Ghost Shirt Society, and while leading the Blue Team on the Meadows- a good illustration of the way in which industrial capitalism makes clever use of American myths of pastoral redemption- Proteus sees himself as one of the living dead, a servant of the fiction he despises most. "The light gave his skin the quality of corroded copper, and his lips and eye rims were lavender. He discovered nothing disquieting about seeing himself as dead. An awakening conscience, unaccompanied by new wisdom, made his life so damned lonely" (PP, 191). Completely dead to his old world and its values and about to be reborn into another, Proteus is now called upon to play the double agent by the "benevolent" president of the entire Ilium Works, Dr. Gelhorne. Because he cannot get in a word to Gelhorne to repudiate the corporate system that Gelhorne represents, Proteus appears to agree to the plan; he is thus driven from the Meadows by his former colleagues and associates in a way mockingly reminiscent of Adam being driven from the garden of Eden by God's archangels. Once back in Ilium, he is abducted by the inner members of the Ghost Shirt Society and given sodium pentathol to assure the members that he is not indeed what he appears to be, i.e., a double agent. As Proteus wakes from the Pentathol injection, Vonnegut lays down a pattern of imagery consisting of dancing away from one identity and dancing into another. Proteus is reborn, naturally restored to his Adamic self. It is at this point that the inner group explains to Proteus the exact nature of the Ghost Shirt Society, probably one of the most pathetic and meaningful symbols of redemption in American life. Historically, the dance of the Ghost Shirts was given to the Sioux tribe by the Paiute Messiah, Wovoka, who passed it on to Kicking Bear and thence to the great Sitting Bull, who, in his desperation with the American

Army, would try anything once. Therefore, from the month of the Drying Grass Moon (October, 1890) until the month of the Knee Deep Grass (June, 1891) the Sioux Indians in their shirts of invulnerability danced to fulfill the Indian Messiah's promise to restore and renew the Indian's land and to redeem it from the white man. "Now Christ had returned to earth as an Indian, and he was to restore and renew everything as it used to be and make it better."[5] During the summer of the year 1891, the United States Government forbade the dancing of the Ghost Dance, hearing in its music other-worldly tones of revolution. With the murder of Sitting Bull in the Fall of 1891 and the massacre of the remainder of his tribe at Wounded Knee the following winter, the Ghost Dance came to a violent end. Vonnegut draws from this redemptive symbol for use in Player Piano two elements both of which the Indians before him celebrated and understood by the use of the Ghost Dance: re-birth and restoration. In his dreams Paul Proteus dances from corporate man, and all the values associated with that state, to Adamic man, hungry for any attempt that will help him restore himself to a natural harmony with nature. Finnerty's explanation of the revolutionary meaning of the Ghost Dance to Proteus- "that the world should be restored to the people" (PP, 248), is now an academic consideration. The revolution of the Ghost Shirt Society, now already in effect, is a last straw for those who have been crushed down so far that they feel, like the Sioux Indians, a need to justify their very existence; the finale of the novel, "with its thrust back into the circular, trival, and acoustical world of nonliterate man makes all of this clear. The corporate and governmental structure the Ghost Shirt Society would displace is rectilinear, feudal, and visual- however much it plays at tribal values at the Meadows' sing-alongs, games, and symbolic central tree. But the Ghost Shirt rebels institute their tribal values in their organization, their secret meetings, and their symbol- the Indian shirt. And they intend to implement them by declassifying society and returning to a life style that would break down the lines between the social classes in

Ilium, by resacralising machines and returning some of them to the people as tools, and by resacralizing human life and returning to a harmony among people and objects, natural and artificial."[6] The fly in the ointment here, however, is that this, like the French Revolution, is a revolution of intellectuals, who, though they do not fall out with one another, are in love with idealism, which never stormed a palace, and will never storm 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Further, it is impossible for idealism to deal with the nature of man, which, according to one of Vonnegut's formulas, is grown "in almost pure cat excrement" (PP, 275), a fact which cannot be minimized. "I suspect that all people are motivated by something pretty sordid, and I guess the clinical data bears me out on that." Proteus confesses to the judge in his trial on conspiracy charges. "Sordid things, for the most part, are what make human beings, my father included, move. That's what it is to be human, I'm afraid" (PP, 275). But idealism aside, and even taking into account the fundamental mortality of man, the Ghost Shirt redemptive revolution is a failure as are all its leaders failures; for in the world of Player Piano man is fallen so far and into such depths divorced from nature, that he cannot function without his machines, as is demonstrated by the young boy lacking the essential part for his automatic drum-playing machine, and the crowd's fascination with the Orange O stand at the conclusion. The revolution has been a little Big Horn, one qualified "isolated victory against an irresistable tide" (PP, 291). Like his revolutionary Adamic colleague, von Neumann, Proteus comes to realize that "he had been less interested in achieving a premeditated end than in seeing what would happen with given beginnings" (PP, 295). Though the people of Ilium "will recreate the same old nightmare," new beginnings are always possible in a world that lends itself to redemptive fictions of the self. Vonnegut's next attempt at a new beginning, The Sirens of Titan, other-worldly as it may appear on the surface in its new frontier of consciousness, is very much a part of this world in its emphasis upon a new Eden outside the fictions of time.

For starters, the novel is a massive put-on, and the plot is so purposefully complex that a good computer might have difficulty in tracing its turnings back on and into itself. The novel's parading of man's irrationality helps us see why "Vonnegut's canonization by the Yippies, for example, makes perfect sense; both Abbie Hoffman and Vonnegut use the put-on, radical irony, as an analytical tool for stripping away the masks of the absurd."[7] Also, like Flannery O'Connor in the use of large and startling figures, Vonnegut often finds it necessary to shout and to scribble with a cosmic crayon in the deceptively innocent manner of a child. In The Sirens of Titan, at every corner Vonnegut coaxes us with a child-like notion that the Kingdom of God resides within, and that we should love one another by re-inventing our fallen selves. The Adam and Eve figures, Malachi Constant and Beatrice Rumford, Mal and Bee, who emerge from a meaningless universe to begin life again in a new Eden or Titan, are hard pressed almost up until the death of Eve to accept "the chronosynclastic infundibulated" idea that "everything that ever was will always be, and everything that ever will be always was" (ST, 287)[8] taught to them by Salo, the self-manufactured, altruistic Tralfamadorian. Without Eve life is simply too lonely for Adam.

> Constant rubbed his hands together. The only company he had left on Titan was whatever company his right hand could be for his left. "I miss her," he said.
>
> "You finally fell in love, I see," said Salo.
>
> "Only an earthling year ago," said Constant. "It took us that long to realize that a purpose of human life, no matter who is controlling it, is to love whoever is around to be loved."
>
> (The Sirens of Titan, 313)

An earlier attempt at re-birth without Eve had been a failure for the Adamic Malachi Constant. It was "after the war with Mars" when he had returned to a churchyard in Barnstable, Massachusetts, U.S.A., wearing a "clinking breechclout made of wrenches and copper wire to cover his shame" (ST, 217) that Adam realized how futile was his life without Eve upon whom

earlier in the novel he had forced himself. Even though his arrival coincides with "springtime for mankind" (ST, 220) and he bestows humanistic blessings upon the population, he cannot find meaning within himself until he finds something to love. After their re-unification and redemption back on Titan, they are able to pass on their new wisdom concerning love to their son, Chrono, who has gone Adamically native amongst the Titanic bluebirds- the only organic life on Titan that indulges in sex. With Eve dead, however, and himself redeemed and old enough to be the father of all mankind, Constant decides to return once more to the planet earth- Indianapolis, to be exact, "to just look around" and perhaps to redeem America with his Adamic knowledge of the fourth dimension. As a gesture of kindness, Salo hypnotizes the rapidly expiring Adamic Space Wanderer, Constant, and leaves with him a post-hypnotic suggestion that will allow him to imagine his death and the ultimate paradise to which most men aspire. Constant dies in the midst of a light snow while waiting for a bus to take him to downtown Indianapolis. In his last redemptive fiction he is reunited with Stony, the Englishman whom Constant had, while lobotimized, strangled on Mars, and he looks forward to seeing his Eve once again. He is smiling through the falling snow at perhaps the heroic knowledge that man makes up the whole show- even unto the first and last actor. As another Adamic prototype in Vonnegut's development of a series of them, Malachi has more in common with Billy Pilgrim and his Eve, Montana Wildhack, than he does with the Adamic Eliot Rosewater and his jet-setting Eve, Sylvia. The common denominator running through all three Adamic sets, however, is "to make it new," to start afresh toward a new beginning that will reclaim what is natural and innocent in man from the machines that have slowly but inevitably stripped not only Adamic man but the Jeffersonian heritage that is his birthright as an American in nature. Underlying Vonnegut's efforts in all these novels, of course, is the subjunctive mood that, by means of the conditional absurd, threatens to expose anything like a meaningful fiction. But if we consider that

one fiction is almost as good as another in the grand struggle for survival, we come very close to understanding Vonnegut's over-view of things. Consider Eliot Rosewater's Adamic fiction as opposed to Senator Rosewater's Goldwaterian Adamic fiction, both of which meet head on in the novel, God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater.

In this his fourth novel, Vonnegut comes dangerously close to libel, for old Senator Rosewater from Indiana is the proponent of a philosophy that is more than just an echo of the ignominiously defeated American presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, in 1964. Charles Harris calls this philosophy "Social Darwinism";[9] a better description might be naked greed, dressed in the holy cloth of Emersonian Self-Reliance. Both these figures thrive on corporate slogans easily translatable into political philosophy. Both deplore the "useless and unattractive" (GB, 36)[10] members of a class system based on money, which Adamic Eliot Rosewater, for his part, is only too happy to disburse to the poor. Finally, both old Senator Rosewater and his mirror-image, Senator Barry Goldwater, are fond of haranguing in the rhetoric of the Puritan Ethic, hearing in its words an excuse for their own incredible selfishness. In bringing this up, I am trying to make the point that old Senator Rosewater's beliefs in historical progress upwards by which the old values and the old nature can be redeemed through self-reliance is an Adamic distortion rather commonplace in American political life. To Eliot's observation that the poor, downtrodden and sick-of-it-all have a "rotten time" of it (recall Miss Lonelyhearts), Senator Rosewater snaps back that if the poor had more incentive, "If they got to work, they would stop having such a rotten time" (GB, 88). Although we have all heard that song many times before, it would be accurate to say that Vonnegut, who is quick to affirm himself a part of middle class America,[11] does not appreciate some of the material effects brought on by the industry of the Puritan Ethic. Which is as much to say that he would not indeed throw out the flushing toilets along with the "Orange O machines" and

dehumanizing computers. On the other hand he deeply feels the great wrongs in American society and the profound need for redemption there, and he is thus able to counter Senator Rosewater's distorted Adamic fiction with the only other fiction fantastic enough to laugh it down: Eliot's conspiracy of love and innocence by which history and time surrender to the Adamic redemptive fiction that, in God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, anyway, is quite triumphant. One final word in passing: one must never confuse Vonnegut with his fictions. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., existing in a different time dimension, is not Eliot Rosewater or Billy Pilgrim and could never bring himself to accept what Billy bullishly affirms and Eliot cannot see-which when the last bell sounds is rather without point as far as changing anything in absurd man or in his absurd and meaningless universe. If there is any meaning in life, it resides exclusively in nature. Hence, the song of the bird, "Po-tee-weet" in Slaughterhouse-Five. Nothing finally is changed by human charity. "The outside world has not been even microscopically improved by the unselfish acts of man" (GB, 42). It remains, however, for Eliot to try, and this is what constitutes his dignity above all the depravity of those around him.

To establish the Adamic innocence of Eliot Rosewater it is necessary to skip beyond God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater to Slaughterhouse-Five where Eliot and Billy Pilgrim are recovering in a veteran's hospital from essentially the same disease: battle fatigue from life. While conversing, each learns from the other his great devotion to the unheralded science fiction writer, Kilgore Trout. Later, at a dinner party to which Trout has been invited, Billy reveals to Trout, Eliot Rosewater's great admiration for him. A further revelation, that Eliot Rosewater is the Eliot Rosewater, much celebrated in the press, shocks Trout, for he had always assumed from Eliot's fan mail that Eliot was an innocent young boy.

> "My God- I thought he was about fourteen years old," said Trout.
> "A full grown man- a captain in the war."

"He writes like a fourteen-year old,"
said Kilgore Trout.

(Slaughterhouse-Five, 170)

This is not too far from the truth, for Eliot's innocence is cultivated beyond its natural limitation, thus becoming mask-like and covering up his extreme vulnerability. But beyond his natural and cultivated innocence, Eliot is suffering from the same Adamic disease that destroyed Nathaniel West's Miss Lonelyhearts and almost destroyed his Eve, Sylvia, who for self-preservation, was forced to flee Rosewater (Eden), Indiana. The last stages of the disease called "Samaritrophia" by a young psychiatrist, Dr. Ed Brown, induce a break-down and "hysterical indifference to the troubles of those less fortunate than oneself" (GB, 41). There is a point apparently where even the desire for redemption ceases to function, and the futile search for the unfallen place in the human heart that characterizes Eliot Rosewater's career becomes a nightmare in which everything vicious about man suddenly gathers in too constricted an area, symbolized by the fire-bombing of Indianapolis near the end. The first stages of the Adamic fall, though, are brought about by means of the conscience's efforts to right the wrongs of unenlightened self-interest. The process is instinctual, and there is nothing that can be done about it. "If you would be unloved and forgotten, be reasonable" (GB, 68), Eliot had written in the height of his delirium. Once in the terrible Adamic grips of the disease, the heart swells from an uncontrollable love of Volunteer Firemen and their altruistically motivated kindness. Ironically, Eliot accidentally murders a fireman while on patrol in the second war.

Before reclaiming "Eden" in the county of Rosewater, Indiana, that "had always been his home" (GB, 35), Eliot goes on a drinking bout all over the United States visiting Volunteer Firehouses in Elsinore, California and writing letters to his wife, Sylvia, in New York, signing his name, Hamlet. His Adamic "sickness" is almost ready to claim him. "I don't hear voices. But there is that feeling that I have a destiny far away from the shallow and preposterous posing that is our life

in New York. And I roam. And I roam" (GB, 31). In Vashti, Texas, he lectures the Voluntary Firemen of that happy place on the mysteries of Kilgore Trout's 2BON2B and the Jeffersonian dictum that revolution- preferably led by Volunteer Firemen and infantry veterans- should take place in the United States "one in every twenty years" (GB, 32). Arriving in Rosewater, Indiana, Eliot tells Sylvia over the telephone that he is "in America among the rickety sons and grandsons of the pioneers" (GB, 33), who have been denied their pastoral heritage by the naked grabbing and financial whoring of Eliot's ancestors. It has finally come to him: his Adamic destiny is to administer the interest from the principle of the Rosewater Foundation (a tax dodge) to "the useless and unattractive" Americans of "New Ambrosia" and Rosewater and all the towns surrounding that Edenic paradise in Rosewater County. New Ambrosia, "A heaven on earth," was originally a utopian community made up of Germans, "communists, and atheists who practiced group marriage, absolute truthfulness, absolute cleanliness, and absolute love. They were scattered now to the winds, like the worthless papers that represented their equity in the /Rosewater/ canal" (GB, 37-8). Eliot feels certain that together he and this besotted group can "re-invent themselves" and make a new beginning in the "old place" that could be a foothold on the redemption they all of them sorely need. Not just money but bags and bags of uncritical love will perform the creation he has at his finger tips.

> "I look at these people, these Americans," Eliot went on, "and I realize that they can't even care about themselves anymore- because they have no use. The factory, the farms, the mines across the river- they're almost completely automatic now. And America doesn't even need these people for war- not any more. Sylvia, I'm going to be an artist."
>
> "An artist?"
>
> "I am going to love these discarded Americans, even though they're useless and unattractive. That is going to be my work of art."
>
> (GB, 36)

Like the fictive rebirth that Eliot is celebrating in the unpublished novel which he is writing while Vonnegut's novel progresses, Eliot's Adamic creations with broken people and the tattered human heart are still-born and amount to little. They are fictions. But then that is right up the alley of the Adamic artist. Besides, all of life is a preemptive fiction, anyway, according to Vonnegut. One does what he has to do when he has an Adamic "Destination there" (GB, 45). To ask why is to beg the question and thereby affirm some belief in a rational universe. For Vonnegut that is an idle pastime.

Once set up in the "home place" in Rosewater, Adamic-Eliot and his Eve, "The king and queen," begin the creative process of redemption by courting a class of people old Senator Rosewater calls "the maggots at the bottom of the pail." The first thing Eliot tries to instill in them is some appreciation for their Jeffersonian pastoral heritage. "Eliot tried to popularize Thomas Jefferson and Socrates, too, but people couldn't remember from one visit to the next who they were. 'Which one is which?' they'd say" (GB, 54). Eliot is firm in this educational program because, unlike Vonnegut, "he would argue that the people he was trying to help were the same sort of people who, in generations past, had cleared the forests, drained the swamps, built the bridges, people whose sons formed the backbone of the infantry in time of war- and so on" (GB, 56). But the narrator does not agree with Eliot's uncritical love and futile attempts at redemption.

> The people who leaned on Eliot regularly were a lot weaker than that- and dumber, too. When it came time for their sons to go into the armed forces, for instance, the sons were generally rejected as being mentally, morally, and physically undesirable.
>
> There was a tough element among the Rosewater County poor who, as a matter of pride, stayed away from Eliot and his uncritical love, who had the guts to get out of Rosewater County and look for work in Indianapolis or Chicago or Detroit. Very few of them found steady work in those places, of course, but at least they tried.
>
> (GB, 56)

Inevitably, all of this is lost on Eliot, whose only advertising is drawn from Thomas Jefferson and a poem by Blake that marks the stair risers on the way up to Eliot's office over a seedy restaurant.

> The Angel
> that presided
> o'er my
> birth said,
> "Little creature,
> form'd of
> Joy and Mirth
> Go love
> without the
> help of
> any Thing
> on Earth."

At the foot of the stairs old Senator Rosewater has scratched on the wall his rebuttal, also from Blake.

> Love seeketh only Self to please,
> To bind another to Its delight,
> Joys in another's loss of ease,
> And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.

Vonnegut's point here quite obviously is that Blake's insight in the latter poem is much closer to the fallen nature of man than the former, and that Eliot's evaluation of the myth and the people he is trying to redeem has no foundation in the "real" world. Americans may well have been a redeemed and redeeming people during the age of Jefferson and Jackson, but self-interest has so diluted the magic of that original covenant that anyone who is even remotely a carry-over from that period is an anachronism. Bunny Weeks, himself the son of New England Whalers, points this out to the ladies looking out the window of his Jolly Whaler restaurant where Harry Pena and his sons sail by after a fishing expedition. The bank is soon to foreclose on Harry Pena's boat. Bunny Weeks is one of the directors at the bank. He knows that,

> "Real people don't make their livings that way any more. Those three romantics out there make as much sense as Marie Antoinette and her milkmaids. When the bankruptcy proceedings begin- in a week, a month, a year- they'll find out that their only economic value was as animated wallpaper for

> my restaurant here." Bunny, to his credit, was not happy about this. "That's all over, men working with their hands and backs. They are not needed."
>
> (GB, 131)

The above is significant for two reasons. Number one, it illustrates Vonnegut's fond attachment to a man of the Adamic stature of Harry Pena, which helps to explain somewhat his use of the Adamic redemptive theme as an apparatus in four of his better novels. Number two, it is a clear and direct statement of the bankruptcy of the Adamic myth in American life. Therefore, though he cannot but help to admire the self-less efforts of a man like Eliot Rosewater, he cannot at the same time refrain from laughing at them when measured against the selfish realities of an America that takes its cue from the values of men like old Senator Rosewater, or the insipid ladies taking their cocktail on the porch of the Jolly Whaler. "'Men like Harry will always win, won't they?' said Caroline. 'They're losing everywhere,'" says Bunny Weeks rather ironically while pointing to the four insipid ladies. "'And look who's winning. And look who's won'" (GB, 131). In a world for which only Hume could have written the scenario, Vonnegut seems to imply that the only way to survive is to make one's peace with the value system of a figure like Senator Rosewater. And that is a tragedy.

But, as I said, all of this is lost on Eliot, who has driven off his Eve and sublimated his "sexual energies for the creation of a Utopia" (GB, 73). He is now not only a confessor but a healer as well, whose "hot-line" telephone therapy does wonders for the almost totally worthless Diana Moon Glampers[12] and other ruined human beings in the newly re-claimed "heaven on earth" of Rosewater County. In his spare time in his office over the restaurant where he also lives, Eliot works desultorily at his unfinished novel, which he began "on an evening when he understood Sylvia would never come back to him." The novel is a very humanistic document which debunks traditional notions of paradise and life after death and which tries to find valid reasons for being "reborn in this life."

> Heaven is a bore of bores, Eliot's novel went on, so most wraiths queue up to be re-born, and they live and love and fail and die, and they queue up to be re-born again. They take pot luck, as the saying goes.
>
> (GB, 80-1)

The problem with heaven is that it isn't, and Eliot's metaphor for this unfortunate circumstance is frightening: "imagine a billiard table," he says, "as long and broad as the Milky Way," and covered with green felt. At dead center is a gate. "Anyone imagining that much will have comprehended all there is to know about Paradise- and will have sympathized with those becoming ravenous for the distinction between inside and outside" (GB, 81). If this is the case, then the only Paradise that man will ever know, as Stevens suggests in "Sunday Morning," is "our perishing earth," which Eliot sometimes recognizes as a pretty grim staging area in which to be reborn. Apparently, Eliot is trying to tell himself something in his novel that his inner ear refuses to hear. Though the great majority would rather not, Eliot heroically comes to accept the fact (in his novel) that he must be Adamically reborn in order to find out why all those who have been reborn complain so about our "perishing earth." "And I came to realize that, in order to get the proper answer, I am going to have to cease to be dead. I am going to have to let myself be reborn" (GB, 82). That part of Eliot's mind that insists upon continuing the forms of redemption such as benediction or baptism of Mary Moody's twins- "'God damn it, you've got to be kind,'" he intones over them- is monolithic in its humanism and cannot, because he is sick, take warning from that other side of his mind that is inherently phenomenological and hence distrustful of the ideals on which he is crucifying himself. To call Eliot schizophrenic is to play with a tired psychological term, which necessitates Vonnegut's coming up with a new, mock-Adamic jargon term, "Samaritrophia" that visits Eliot suddenly with a "click" in the head. He who had formerly been "my church group," my everything," "my government," "my husband," and even "my friends" (GB, 171), can no longer take unto his bosom the

suffering of the paltry Lonelyheartsian citizens of a redeemed Rosewater County. The overwhelming fact of a fundamentally corrupt human nature finally drives Adam from his illusory Eden, never to return again. On the outskirts of Indianapolis whence he has repaired on the bus, Eliot was "astonished to see the entire city was being consumed by a fire-storm" (GB, 175) about which apocalypse he had read and dreamed many times before in the past. It is what America deserves and one day will probably get, and this terrible foreknowledge blacks out his mind. We next discover him a year later on the tennis court of a mental institution, almost completely cured but not utterly indifferent to the plight of his fellow man. With his new health he is ready to acknowledge every child in Rosewater County reputed to be his as <u>his</u> child, "with full rights of inheritance as my sons and daughters." Without warning, Eliot is back at the game of Adamic redemption.

> "Tell them that their father loves them, no matter what they turn out to be. And tell them-" Eliot fell silent, raised his tennis racket as though it were a magic wand.
>
> "And tell them," he began again, "to be fruitful and multiply."
>
> (GB, 190)

"The full rights of inheritance" must of necessity include the curse of the search for the unfallen place that probably will break the hearts and the minds of Eliot's Adamic children. As the process continues, the laughter arising from it grows more bitter until the word redemption becomes just a word on a page that once meant something most Americans can no longer remember. The "Poo-tee-weet?" that prefaces that last two chapters of the novel from the innocent bird in the sycamore sounds a menacing note for man. Wherever he appears in the work of Vonnegut, his song is always cast in the form of a question. It is as though the bird, a most useful and representative part of the natural world, were questioning the intrusion into nature of this strange phenomenon, this unnatural specimen called man for whom Vonnegut cannot discover, try as he may, a good use. But he keeps trying.

I have mentioned, or at least implied, that Vonnegut's use of science fiction amounts to little more than his speaking about the fictions of this world essentially in terms of the fictions of another- with no intention on Vonnegut's part of the reader's being expected to believe in either fiction. It is this which immediately separates Vonnegut from serious writers of science fiction such as Ray Bradbury and a few others. In Slaughterhouse-Five these two fictive worlds are distinguished by the different time-frames occupied by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and by Billy Pilgrim. Vonnegut in a three dimensional world obtrudes upon the flow of the action of the novel in three separate places;[13] Billy Pilgrim triumphs in a four dimensional world that allows him periodic, though involuntary rebirth, simply through a change in perspective. It would be incorrect, really, to say that both these points of view constitute two novels in one. "It is as though Vonnegut were placing Tristam Shandy and Tom Jones within two covers, telling each story, and resolving them simultaneously."[14] Vonnegut's inability to be reborn in the third dimension, therefore, only enhances Billy Pilgrim's ability to be reborn in the fourth, and to carry out the mission, which Malachi Constant failed: to prescribe "corrective lenses for Earthling souls" (S-F, 25) so that they might see beyond death in the third dimension and into the fourth. Thus redeemed they would not take life too seriously. Using this logic, Billy lectures the crowds before his death that mortality is immortality, time is eternity, the finite is infinite, and man is the only source of his own redemption if he will but re-invent himself as Billy and Eliot and Malachi Constant have done.

> "The most important thing I learned on Tralfamadore was that when a person dies he only appears to die. He is still very much alive in the past, so it is very silly for people to cry at his funeral. All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist. The Tralfamadorians can look at all the different moments just the way we can look at a stretch of the Rocky

> Mountains, for instance, They can see how permanent all the moments are, and they can look at any moment that interests them. It is just an illusion we have here on Earth that one moment follows another like beads on a string, and that once a moment is gone it is gone forever.
>
> (Slaughterhouse-Five, 27)

To achieve this Adamic self-redemption, there are only four things required: one must reject the fictions of history, be fundamentally innocent, be schizophrenic, and be hopelessly American. Also, to be on the front line of at least one of the many traumatic disasters of the twentieth century is a big help. Eliot Rosewater, for example, once murdered a fourteen year old German volunteer fireman. Billy Pilgrim witnessed the greatest massacre in European history. Malachi Constant resorted to a re-invention of himself through sheer boredom with his money and all it bought. "They were trying to re-invent themselves and their universe. Science Fiction was a big help." Indeed, in the veteran's hospital Billy once heard Eliot Rosewater in the next bed tell a psychiatrist, "I think you guys are going to have to come up with a lot of wonderful new lies, or people just aren't going to want to go on living" (S-F, 101). Unfortunately for Eliot, his fiction of Adamic redemption did not hold up completely; Billy's does, the moment he is able to be "unstuck in time." If one is prepared to accept his vectors, Billy even goes beyond Wallace Steven's "supreme fiction" and James Dickey's "I am trying to make it/ make something/ make them make me/ Re-invent the vision of the race" in the poem "The Eye-Beaters." Billy is the Adamic perfection of a series of protagonists in the works of Vonnegut, who, without question, has stumbled upon the "hovering place" of the Peaceable Kingdom in which "roses and mustard gas" are reconciled, "Farewell, hello, farewell, hello," are predicate nominatives, and "the coffin-shaped" horse-drawn, "green wagon" that carries dead bodies around also contains the seeds of rebirth. At the conclusion of the novel, nature talks to Adam: "One bird said to Billy Pilgrim, "'Poo-tee-weet?'" (S-F, 215).

But Billy's most triumphant Adamic act in the fourth dimension is his redemptive power to reclaim the organic from the inorganic, and thus to restore the American garden to its redemptive place in nature. That this variation on "lying down with the lamb, is accomplished by Billy's viewing the late movie backwards is Vonnegut's way of laughing at, not only the fiction of Adamic redemption, but at the fiction of story telling itself, which requires a man with the mind of a brilliant child to fully appreciate. This helps us to understand why for Vonnegut the unexamined life is the only life worth living, for to look at life too closely is to lose one's mind. Given Vonnegut's brilliant reduction of history to unintelligible messages from Tralfamador to Salo via earth, such an anti-intellectual extreme should not be shocking to anyone. Coming as it does from a self-avowed middle class American, however, it is amusing.[15]

Earlier I mentioned that Slaughterhouse-Five might be construed as two novels in one. I should perhaps qualify that statement and say that it is actually one novel characterized by a semi-fictive autobiography at the beginning and a half dozen or so interpolations from the narrator of that autobiography throughout the novel itself. One asks himself, why a structure of this nature? To begin with the historical participant in the fire-bombing of Dresden, Vonnegut, who appears in the brief autobiography at the beginning, does not wish to have the reader confuse him with the intelligence that tells the story of Billy Pilgrim- another participant in the fire-bombing of Dresden, but who survived in a different time dimension. Billy's occupation when "unstuck in time" in the "chronosynclastic infundibula" affords him a profound acceptance of life at all levels. The intelligencer or the narrator of Billy's pilgrimage (Langland's will?) is not quite so fortunate, enjoying as he does only the third dimension, which forces him often to question Billy's Adamic perspective. It is not uncommon for him to interject statements such as "Billy maintains,"

or "so Billy says." The philosophy which characterises his skeptical acceptance of Billy's adventures is therefore a kind of stoical determinism grounded in the third dimension. Hence the refrain repeated over one hundred times in the novel: "So it goes." Vonnegut, the autobiographer, from the third dimension expects us to believe that he did thus and thus at a certain time and in a certain place (the details of which need not concern us) in an effort to expiate the guilt in his American heart arising from man's inhumanity to his fellow man in the completely irrational fire-bombing of the gossamer and defenseless city of Dresden. The autobiographer's experience happened; all the rest of it happened, "more or less." Finally, the thing that separates the autobiographer from the intelligencer, who tells Billy's "story" of being "spastic in time" (S-F, 23), is that where the latter is a stoic determinist the former is a "Telephoner" who used to be one of "the United World Federalists" (S-F, 11). In other words, as a defenseless and moribund "Telephoner," trying to resurrect the dead from the historical past, the autobiographer cannot contain a meaningless life within the luxury of the refrain, "So it goes." And he doesn't,[16] either. A fourth point of view that could possibly be added to this medley of tormented voices is that of Kilgore Trout, who imagines in his novels everything that Billy Pilgrim has already confirmed in his life. So he says.

Billy's "story" is relatively simple. Captured by the Germans in the second war and sent to Dresden to perform slave labor for his captors, Billy experiences at first hand the horrors of the Dresden fire-bombing, which thereafter he is never able to shake from a mind that from childhood was already weak and schizophrenic. Returning home after the war, Billy marries the wealthy daughter of an Ilium, New York, optometrist, has two children, and at age forty-five is murdered by his old army companion, Paul Lazzaro. Like his death, his life was meaningless. For this reason, he hallucinates at the point of his capture in a forest in 1944 and through invention projects his life into the future as a defense against the

enormities of the moment. These hallucinations do not stop with his repatriation, and he continues them into the future as a defense against the bone-grinding banality of his married existence. The highlight of his hallucinations is his abduction by the Tralfamadorians and his transport to the home planet where Billy and the former hard-core, blue-movie queen, Montana Wildhack, are redeemed as Adam and Eve from the sorry aftermath of life in the American garden. All along, Billy had known that this, an Adamic world in which "everything was beautiful and nothing hurt," was in store for him. "He had supposed for years that he had no secrets from himself. Here was proof" (S-F, 273). Before his abduction to Tralfamador and his mating with Montana Wildhack for the amusement of the "plumber's helper" Tralfamadorians, Billy, when spastically "unstuck in time," was often able to exercise his Adamic powers and to redeem a world in which "nothing hurt." I refer to his practice of watching the late movie backwards.

> American planes, full of holes and wounded men and corpses took off backwards from an airfield in England. Over France, a few German fighter planes flew at them backwards, sucked bullets and shell fragments from some of the planes and crewmen. They did the same for the wrecked American bombers on the ground, and those planes flew up backwards to join the formation.
>
> The formation flew backwards over a German city that was in flames. The bombers opened their bomb bay doors, exerted a miraculous magnetism which shrank the fires, gathered them into cylindrical steel containers, and lifted the containers into the bellies of the planes. The containers were stored neatly in racks. The Germans below had miraculous devices of their own, which were long steel tubes. They used them to suck more fragments from the crewmen and planes. But there were still a few wounded Americans though, and some of the bombers were in bad repair. Over France, though, German fighters came up again, made everything and everyone good as new.
>
> When the bombers got back to their base, the steel cylinders were taken from the racks and shipped back to the United

> States of America, where the factories were operating night and day, dismantling the cylinders, separating the dangerous contents into minerals. Touchingly, it was mainly women who did the work. The minerals were then shipped to specialists in remote areas. It was their business to put them into the ground, to hide them cleverly, so they would never hurt anybody ever again.
>
> The American fliers turned in their uniforms, became high school kids. And Hitler turned into a baby, Billy Pilgrim supposed. That wasn't in the movie. Billy was extrapolating. Everybody turned into a baby, and all humanity, without exception, conspired biologically to produce two perfect people named Adam and Eve, he supposed.
>
> (Slaughterhouse-Five, 73-5)

Almost like Prospero, Billy performs a magic whereby the inorganic flows back to the mineral, organic, thus establishing a new basis for a redemptive life. Moreover, the practice is not isolated. "Throughout Slaughterhouse-Five Vonnegut's language emphasizes this vision of the world by using Newtonian terms for humans (they 'flow' like liquid or 'expel fluid' like machines), and organic terms for the nonhuman (light 'seeks to escape,' and bubbles of air 'seek to climb' out of a glass)."[17] Thus we escape from a world that has surrendered to the inorganic- cf. Nathaniel West's Miss Lonelyhearts- and pass into a world in Slaughterhouse-Five that has reclaimed the organic from the inorganic. We have returned triumphant, in other words, to the redeemed world of James Dickey in poems like "Cherrylog Road" where wrecked autos and rusted machinery revert back to the organic, and Adam and Eve are reborn in their love-making. As with Dickey, Vonnegut's version of the "Peaceable Kingdom" does not stop with the fictively reversible process of the inorganic flowing back to the organic: we are taken all the way back to Adam and Eve as they will ultimately appear reborn on Tralfamador- innocent and in perfect harmony with surroundings furnished, alas, by the Sears, Roebuck Company from Iowa City (Vonnegut apparently could not resist this irony). But this is

just a beginning. The real depth of the passage lies in its inherent attitude toward history and the absurdity of history's successive irrational events. For to have faith in its lessons is to fall into time and commit the same hapless sins over and over again. The progression toward the "Peaceable Kingdom" therefore is backward, and paradoxically its redemption is a conspiracy of love that struggles to produce "two perfect people named Adam and Eve, he supposed." To spurn the process, to call it Science Fiction, is to spurn art itself.

At this stage of my study, I feel relatively safe in assuming that I have passed beyond the realm of the hypothetical; that the reader will grant me the continuing existence of the base for an Adamic redemptive pre-occupation that has many roots and is broad in scope in American fiction. Whether redemption performs as a leit-motif that frustrates the conventional expectations of both reader and Adamic protagonist alike, or whether it performs openly and directly on the surface of a work, it remains a habit of mind and a spiritual dispensation from an old time to a young people who see themselves as nothing less than chosen and redeemed in the midst of a nature, a heaven on earth, set aside by God. It had little basis in fact in the past; it has less basis in fact now. Yet many Americans persist in clutching at the tragic consequences of instant salvation and new beginnings free from the burdens of the historical past. To round off the progress of this study in fiction, therefore, I should like to conclude with the most explicit and quintessential expression of a failed Adamic redemption in the immediate period, 1945 to the present, that I have been able to discover.

A native-born American writing Being There (1971) would have performed a notable feat; for Jerzy Kosinski, "an inner emigre"[18] from Poland to have written Being There is nothing short of astounding. The novel is a cogent summary of where Americans have been and where they cannot fail to go in the future if they persevere in their redemptive illusions. Placing his fingers lightly on the stops, Kosinski has played a bittersweet song on the "ice-cream coronet" of a great people who once

thrust industrialism and technocracy upon the world and then failed in their own maturity and adjustment to it. The drift of the novel is neither strictly satiric nor parodic: rather it is more like an elegy or a Kaddish intoned by a man whose religious instincts have been atrophied by his lack of options. Who or what is being mourned is not Chauncey Gardiner, the ultimate victim, but those who look to him for their redemption outside of history- a point of view with which Kosinski can readily sympathize, having been himself in his early years in Poland and Russia a near tragic victim of history. "The motive of the lone wolf is the motive of all the novels, with the one exception of Chauncey Gardiner who is really unable to even realize that redemption is a possibility. He is externalized beyond collectivity, indeed, beyond the garden"[19] from which he has been driven by the death of the Old Man. The reason for this is clear: Chauncey the gardener, the incontrovertible natural, is incapable of seeing himself as a fallen creature with an identity governed by historical time. Speaking an Adamic language that frustrates even death itself in its Tasadhi-like innocence, Chance can easily accept death as "the mother of beauty" and the residual force of all regeneration. "It was hard to know which was more important: the garden's surface or the graveyard from which it grew and into which it was constantly lapsing" (Being There, 4).[20] For Chance there is no end but the beginning. "He did not even know how to show that he was afraid" (BT, 28). If Chance did not exist, he would be manufactured by whoever runs the United States to satisfy the American Hunger for redemption. But he does exist all around us, implicit in all the various forms of American life that "discredit any sense of history"[21] or discount any rational interpretation of the tragic meaning of man now sunk in a predatory society of his own making. Like Chance, many Americans have not in their hearts passed beyond the agrarian-pastoral development of man for the ingenuous reason that the pastoral world for them seems to inhibit the inherent possibility of tragedy we usually associate with man in a complex society. Americans

simply do not like the tragic. Thus, a substantial part of the national psyche will always lurk in the garden, orphaned by a Jeffersonian heritage that exists (outside the realm of poetry) only in advertising slogans.

As an orphan, Chance had been "sheltered" in the home of the Old Man ever since the "trees were small, and there were practically no hedges" (BT, 14). Not even the Old Man could tell him who his father had been, although he did warn Chance about his mother, who was pretty and whose "mind was damaged as his, ruined forever" (BT, 7). Before the death of the Old Man never once did Chance venture from the Old Man's garden he tended, nor was he ever curious about the world outside its walls. His only form of entertainment beyond a new electric sprinkler system and the passage of the seasons was to watch a color T.V. in his monastic room, where he mistakenly came "to believe that it was he, Chance, and no one else, who made himself be" (BT, 5). The nature of the Old Man and the tyranny he exercises over Chance in many ways suggests the relationship between God's (Yahweh's) inevitable eviction of Adam from the garden of Eden, which exists for Kosinski only as a symbolic representation of the sense of displacement and loss he sees everywhere around him in America. "There is no place beyond words where experience first occurs."[22] If man were not around, God would not exist. If Chance were not around, the Old Man would not exist- at least according to Chance's Berkelian, epistemological way of perceiving reality. "As long as one didn't look at people, they did not exist. They began to exist, as on T.V., when one turned one's eyes on them" (BT, 12). Later, after he has been driven from the Old Man's garden by the lawyers from the estate, Chance gives a television interview where he makes a similar observation. "The viewers existed only as projections of his own thought, as images. He would never know how real they were, since he had never met them and did not know what they thought" (BT, 54). At the Old Man's death, one of his eyes remained open, "like the eye of a dead bird" (BT, 8). The indirect and oblique image of God-the-father

fades from Chance's mind, and the picture slowly, like a television that has just been switched off, recedes into nothingness. When he thinks of the Old Man one other time in the novel, it is not in terms of the Old Man himself but in terms of his unfallen garden. Because "he is his own event,"[23] it has not yet struck Chance that there is a difference here in the Old Man's unfallen and timeless garden, where one never knew "whether he was going forward or backward, unsure whether he was ahead or behind his previous steps. All that mattered was moving in his own time, like the growing plants" (BT, 4). This is not the fallen and temporal garden outside the Old Man's brick wall where "the trees had roots that came to the surface and withered" (BT, 36) and died. In fact, that he has been displaced never asserts itself in Chance's "ruined mind," all of which helps to explain his ability to cut across the realities of an industrial society and to simply ignore time and history. Thus through Chance others may hope for the redemption due them as Americans. Not actually redeemed himself, he is the occasion of potential redemption in others, a pattern we have already seen repeated in characters such as Miss Lonelyhearts, Hazel Motes, "Leo" E. Henderson and others. Unfortunately, the commonality in America who seek redemption from the Adamic Chance, are motived by greed, and they quickly translate his organic metaphors drawn from the close harmony between unfallen man and unfallen nature into a new rubric for the manipulation of a bearish stock market, or a new form of masturbatory self-gratification. I speak here, of course, of the "sick man" at the United Nations party and E.E.

Outside the garden time is measured not by the growth of plants but by the chronometer that ticks off historical progression. Of this Chance is unaware. Before leaving through the locked gate, he takes one last look around. "He felt with his fingers the prickly pine needles and the sprawling twigs of the hedge" that has marked his own progression through the Eternal Now that is the time frame of the Adamic protagonist. "The needles seemed to reach toward him" (BT, 23). Whereas before

the death of the Old Man nature did indeed conspire with his perfection and reach out to Chance with love, now with his departure imminent, nature only "seemed" to touch him, a reality that to Chance goes unnoticed. Outside the gates of Eden which are locked after him, Chance, dressed in a suit "that fitted his body as bark covers a tree"[24] (BT, 40), is as unready for civil society as his Biblical predecessor. The world around him is not as it appeared on T.V. Though his fallen perfection excells that of everyone around him, he is nevertheless an alien, a stranger in a strange land who cannot relate to what the garden has become outside the walls in the 20th century. His first introduction to that world results in pain when E.E.'s limosine crushes his leg against a parked car. Chance had never known pain. Chance had never known a woman. From this moment forward he will be subject to both. Through E.E.'s suggestion of a convalescence in her husband's home, Chance stumbles upon the second father figure of the novel, octagenarian, Benjamin Rand, or God-the-Consultant, a dying right hand of the Old Man who resides over the fallen, economic American garden outside the brick walls. From the right hand of the dying "Consultant," Chance is literally given his Eve, Elizabeth Eve, called by her intimate friends, E.E. Though Chance remains a celibate throughout the action of the novel, E.E. does expose him to one degradation after another that finally works its way into his heart. Before leaving the Old Man's garden at the beginning of the novel, Chance could say with justification, "I am a gardener. No one knows the garden better than I" (BT, 15). At the conclusion of the novel, however, when Chance retreats into the garden at the guest house, he knows nothing, "Not a thought lifted itself from Chance's brain" (BT, 118). Turning the activities of the party off the way one turns off a T.V. set- "The images of all he had seen outside the garden faded" (BT, 117)- Chance hungers to return to the harmonies of the unfallen place he mystically evokes in his speech patterns. But he cannot return to the perfection of a place that no longer exists except as an imperfect reflection

of his mind upon the natural world.

> Chance was bewildered. He reflected and saw the withered image of Chauncey Gardiner: it was cut by the stroke of a stick through a stagnant pool of rain water. His own image was gone as well.
>
> (Being There, 117)

Although his image is "withered," the image of nature independent of man remains intact. "The garden lay calm, still sunk in repose" (BT, 117). Chance has changed; nature remains the same. No longer can Chance extrapolate from nature those metaphors by which formerly he had endowed the relationship between man and nature with a redemptive meaning. A tone of despair seems to creep into the final pages of the novel, leaving us with its final meaning- and this despite the illusory "peace that filled his chest" (BT, 118). Chance is an imminent victim. The corruption of those who surround him will not be denied.

There is little else to say. Whatever redemptive value Chance could dispose to a people blinded by faith in their own restorative fables is spent on the ground like the masturbatory seed of the "sick man" and Eve. Chance cannot participate in their sexual aberrations because he has just not fallen that far; or perhaps his impotency is a correlative for the unnatural parallels drawn between Chance's gift from nature and an ailing stock market. In any case, the fallen world is, tragically, no more real to him than the images on T.V. "I like to watch" (BT, 95), he tells "the sick man," and later E.E., who masturbates before him.

> Chance looked at her but said nothing. "Dearest... You uncoil my wants: desire flows within me, and when you watch me my passion dissolves it. You make me free. I reveal myself and I am drenched and purged.
>
> (Being There, 96)

In "uncoiling" her wants, Chance brings out the serpent in Eve which had not in any way been his intention. By revealing herself to herself she is redeemed and restored to an original place. Some purge! Some redemption! For the moment, Chance

can switch her off like a T.V. by simply looking away. But ultimately she will finish the corruption she has already started of the most innocent of Americans. With her help, the political system will turn Chance into a commodity that has no past, no background "to cripple him" in running for the vice-presidency of the United States.

> Gardiner has no background! And so he's not and cannot be objectionable to anyone. He's personable, well-spoken, and he comes across well on T.V! And, as far as his thinking goes, he appears to be one of us. That's all. It's clear what he isn't. Gardiner is our one chance."
>
> (Being There, 116-7)

If we can forgive the absurdity of the pun in the last line, we can forgive the absurdity of Kosinski's making Chance a candidate for the vice-presidency. "He is one of us" surely in ways that transcends mere political skulduggery. He will be with us for a long time to come. He will always be in code.[25]

Notes to Chapter 4

1 Glenn Meeter, "Vonnegut's Formal and Moral Otherworldliness," The Vonnegut Statement, ed. Jerome Klinkowitz and John Somer (New York, 1973), 209.

2 James M. Mellard, "The Modes of Vonnegut's Fiction: Or, Player Piano Ousts Mechanical Pride and The Sirens of Titan Invade The Gutenberg Galaxy," op. cit., 180.

3 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Slaughterhouse-Five (New York, 1969), 105. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Dell softback edition.

4 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Player Piano (New York, 1952), 1. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Dell softback edition.

5 Dee Brown, Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee: An Indian History of The American West (New York, 1970), 407.

6 Mellard, 191.

7 Jess Ritter, "Teaching Kurt Vonnegut On The Firing Line," The Vonnegut Statement, ed. Jerome Klinkowitz and John Somer (New York, 1973), 37.

8 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., The Sirens of Titan (New York, 1959), 287. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this softback Dell Edition.

9 Charles B. Harris, Contemporary American Novelists of The Absurd (New Haven, 1971), 58.

10 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater (New York, 1965), 36. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this softback Dell edition.

11 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "Playboy Interview: Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.," Playboy (July, 1973), 57-74 and 214-15. This article contains far too much posing and not enough substance in relation to what Vonnegut has written. He does admit here, however, that his universal rejection of history is involuntary. "I can't live without a culture anymore... I realize that I don't have one. What passes for culture in my head is really a bunch of commercials, and this is intolerable." 214.

12 Diana Moon Glampers is the "Handicapper General" in an earlier short story by Vonnegut called, "Harrison Bergeron" (1961). A number of critics have referred to the story as science fiction, which makes little sense when one considers that Vonnegut has borrowed heavily in it from Swift's section on "The Flying Island" in the "Voyage to Laputa" from Gulliver's Travels. Surely no one would term Swift a Science Fiction writer.

13 See pages 121, 125, and 148 in the Dell Edition.

14 John Somer, "Geodesic Vonnegut; or, If Buckminster Fuller Wrote Novels," The Vonnegut Statement, ed, Jerome Klinkowitz and John Somer (New York, 1973), 250.

15 By far the most intelligent discussion of Vonnegut to date is by the English Critic Tony Tanner, "The Uncertain Messenger: A Study of the Novels of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.," Critical Quarterly, 11 (Winter, 1969), 297-315. Reprinted in Tanner's City of Words (New York, 1973), 181-201.

16 The "Telephoner" or autobiographer calls into the action of Billy Pilgrim's "story" with "mustard gas and roses" on his breath several times. It is always a wrong number. There is no way by which he can share Billy's acts of redemption.

17 Glenn Meeter, 217.

18 Jerzy Kosinski, "The Art of Fiction," The Paris Review, 54 (Summer, 1972), 186.

19 Daniel J. Cahill, "The Devil Tree: An Interview With Jerzy Kosinski," The North American Review, Vol. 258 (Spring, 1973), 62.

20 Jerzy Kosinski, Being There (New York, 1971), 4. All subsequent page references in parentheses are to this Bantam paperback edition.

21 Cahill, 62.

22 Cahill, 58.

23 This phrase, "he was his own event" is taken from Kosinski's last novel, The Devil Tree. The character, Jonathan Whalen, to whom it applies is an Adamic figure who is seeking his own redemption in the midst of a corrupting "trust" that has taken away his innocence. He is not the occasion for redemption in others. Far from it.

24 This habit of describing an Adamic character in terms of one or more aspects from the natural world is not surprisingly in the work of other writers who would be a part of this study

if space were not a factor. See, for example, the Adamic figure of John Williams in Stanley Elkin's short story, "A Poetics For Bullies" from the collection Criers and Kibitzers, Kibitzers and Criers (New York, 1965). "He wore a sport coat, brown as wood, thick as heavy bark. The buttons were leather buds," etc. See also the Adamic figure of the nameless youth in "On A Field Rampant" from the same collection whose redemption and final rejection of those he redeems is carefully worked out in terms of his "natural" clothing. An interesting historical analogue though improbable source for this interrelationship between man and nature may be found in George Bancroft's frequent identification of both Jefferson and Jackson as trees. "In bold large letters, across half a page from his Notebook Bancroft wrote, 'from 17? 8 to 1812 they grew as the forest trees grow.'" Quoted from John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol For An Age (New York, 1968), 31.

25 Kosinski views the language of a novel as a kind of code. Apparently he did not think he was risking much in using the code of Adamic redemption before an American audience. It was my guess originally that the book would have mystified an English or a European audience. A quick reading of some of the reviews confirms my original speculation. I have not included these reviews in my study because it is my belief that generally speaking they should be taken for what they purport to do: i.e., to introduce the reader to a text. "I think in terms of proposing a certain way of evoking... You must remember that from the very beginning I insist for myself, or to myself, on one major aspect, that a novel is nothing without its reader. In other words, had I to write a novel knowing that it would never be read, I wouldn't have written it. Now this may sound as a sort of highly egocentric statement, as it probably is. It presupposes the act of reading in the act of writing. It assumes that the act of writing has to lead, must lead, to the act of reading. And when I use the word decoding, what I mean is that my encoding is of no use since in itself the work of fiction has no meaning. It acquires meaning only in the process of being decoded by another psyche. Not by the psyche I can approximate but by the psyche I cannot approximate. How do I know anything about you? Is there any way to know about anything? There isn't. There is a solipisitic quality to it- that it has to be decoded. If there's an element of having benefited by my previous works, I do not feel that I am at a different stage than I was when I was writing the first one, since the guiding principle is basically the same: language aimed at the psyche I do not know. I have no way of knowing how it will be decoded. All I can assume is that there isn't much of a difference between my psyche and the collective psyche which surrounds me, and therefore quite likely what I encode, the other will be able to decode within a vaguely similar frame of reference, and the frame of reference is a crucial phrase. Frame of reference meaning the societal components which are rather readily accessible. The

fact that I make such a judgment, "readily accessible," means both that I consider myself egocentric enough to make such a judgment but at the same time totally collective in my outlook, assuming that others will be able to perceive them as common events." Cahill, 58-9. I hope that Kosinski's words and particularly his remark about a "frame of reference" will corroborate my decoding of the novel.

Chapter 5
"Rooted In Stone"

The Mower Against Gardens

Luxurious Man, to bring his Vice in use,
Did after him the World seduce:
And from the fields the Flow'rs and Plants allure
Where Nature was most plain and pure.
He first enclos'd within the Gardens square
A dead and standing pool of Air:
And a more luscious Earth for them did knead,
Which stupifi'd them while it fed.
The Pink grew then as double as his Mind;
The nutriment did change the kind.
With strange perfumes he did the Roses taint.
And Flow'rs themselves were taught to paint.
The Tulip, white, did for complexion seek;
And learn'd to interline its cheek:
Its Onion root they then so high did hold,
That one was for a Meadow sold.
Another World was search'd, through Oceans new,
To find the Marvel of Peru.
And yet these Rarities might be allow'd,
To man, that Sov'raign thing and proud;
Had he not dealt between the Bark and Tree,
Forbidden mixtures there to see.
No Plant now knew the Stock from which it came;
He grafts upon the Wild the Tame:
That the uncertain and adult'rate fruit
Might put the Palate in dispute.
His green Seraglio has its Eunuchs too;
Lest any Tyrant him out-doe.
And in the Cherry he does Nature vex,
To procreate without a Sex.
'Tis all enforc'd; the Fountain and the Grot;
While the sweet Fields do lye forgot:
Where willing Nature does to all dispense
A wild and fragrant Innocence:
And Fauns and Fairies do the Meadows till,
More by their presence then their skill.
Their Statues polish'd by some ancient hand,
May to adorn the Gardens stand:
But howso'ere the Figures do excel,
The Gods themselves with us do dwell.

Andrew Marvell

One parting qualification on the particular nature of the fiction I have tried to examine within the frame of the redemptive theme: with little variation, it falls, not uniquely, into the category of what Robert Scholes calls "myth enmeshed in phenomena,"[1] trapped there and finally put to death like something bright with great wings. Ineluctably driven toward the theme as the basis for an explanation of one form of national self-delusion, many mid-century American writers are dazzled by the theme's startling beauty as they deliver it a death blow. It is rather like the scene in Styron's Confessions of Nat Turner where the slave leader, Nat, kills the very thing he cherishes most by bludgeoning Miss Margaret to death with the fence rail. Yet one thing is clear: no American novelist, with the exception of Melville himself, in Billy Budd, has ever been able to translate the theme into a totally successful redemptive statement. The H.M.S. Bellipotent went down with all hands after Budd's death- whatever one wants to draw from that. It would appear that still others, too, writing in the same Adamic redemptive tradition in the 19th and 20th centuries have approached the theme from the standpoint of something that blocks the light of self-knowledge that these writers insist Americans should seek out in themselves. Indeed, the very hostility of the theme toward the state and toward the complex forms of society the state fosters would seem to bear this out. This helps somewhat to explain the national immaturity- expressed in the slightly jaded child syndrome, which the theme inevitably presupposes. Thus, it remains for a certain few Adamic poets, fathered by Whitman and Thoreau and Stevens, to dream the dream of redemption, and upon waking, easily to slide the dream into what passes for the real world. If one objects that both genres are, of course, fictions, I can only offer in evidence that whereas prose is

the natural language of a civil society- circumscribed by time and history- poetry is the natural language of a pre-civil society (toward which the Adamite is inevitably drawn) circumscribed by nothing more than the mystery of the unknown in cyclic, timeless nature. And herein lies, at least, a partial explanation for the Adamic poet's ability to affirm, beyond fiction, a fourth dimension absolved of the timeful, the apparently actual, and the historical. In a pre-civil society, all men speaking the language of things are children and participate in the unfallen vision of the child. The problem is, however, how can one return to the redemptive comforts of that child-blessed vision in a believable fashion in the midst of the Moloch-ridden twentieth century? A more relevant question might be, what form will best contain attempts at redemption, and what language should that form take? As we have seen, the novel, because of its inherent limitations of syntax, can take us only to a certain point where the realities of historical time and place frustrate redemption. We are reminded that we are reading "a story" that cannot go beyond the prescribed limits of fiction set by the society that reads it. We believe in Huckleberry Finn and Holden Caulfield only up to a point because their kind of logic convinces us that almost anything is possible in a world re-translated by a child. But only up to a point. We don't believe in Billy Pilgrim or Chauncey Gardiner, except perhaps as psychological extensions of a collective need for redemption in American life. But that is not enough for what I might call the ultimate redemption we enjoy in a poem, which, though it uses the same language as prose, is not constricted by the parameters of a given context that presupposes time and some set place in society. In other words, the mind cannot disprove the limitless areas of the imagination found in a poem. It follows therefore that the ideal language of Adamic redemption should be the language of the child, who, more readily than his fallen father, can see the untended garden beneath the tended garden in a corposant light of redeemed nature. "The child paves the way for a

future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore a unifying symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole, restores. Because the symbol of the 'child' fascinates and grips the conscious mind, its redemptive effect passes over into consciousness and brings about that separation from the conflict-situation which the conscious mind by itself was unable to achieve."[2] The ideal formula for the kind of poetry that might deliver a redemptive world might be stated thus: "A minimum of 'ideas,' a maximum of 'intuitions,'"[3] which can be rendered only in a poem that accepts self as place- home is where one starts from, in a tongue of naming that is non-conceptual, instinctive, and that is able to penetrate the unfallen through the medium of things that involve the fallen. In the poems of Stevens, Dickey and Ginsberg we have seen this formula at work with differing degrees of success. Let us now turn to the one who, hopefully, time will one day make the spokesman for all his Adamic peers.

While it is true that Theodore Roethke has proclaimed Wallace Stevens, not brother, but "our father,"[4] it is also true that James Dickey has proclaimed Theodore Roethke, "the greatest poet this country has yet produced."[5] In trying to evaluate both these complimentary statements, I am reminded of Randall Jarrell's injunction: "The best critic who ever lived could not prove that the Iliad is better than Trees."[6] Similarly, it is impossible to prove that one poet is better than another, although one can muster persuasive arguments on either side. What is finally important in all of this is the sense of kinship that emerges from both Roethke's and Dickey's statements by which they recognize one another as the same animal under the skin. Without exception, all four poets abjure any dependence upon an historical or a rationalistic solution to the problems of redemption- Stevens' sticks his neck out as far as to say, "Poetry must be irrational,"[7] and Roethke quick

to second the motion with, among a plethora of such dictums- "Reason? That dreary shed, that hutch for grubby schoolboys!" (CP, 92). Out of a sense of devotion to solipsism, all four cultivate the self as the resource and origin of new beginnings that arise from an unshakable innocence which has its roots in a redemptive heritage potentially present in many Americans. Finally, each sees man as made to fall so that he may rise again through the "supreme fiction" of Adamic redemptive art, which becomes in the hands of certain poets a form of American natural religion, the origins of which can be traced to one form of pastoral agrarianism or another in the ever expanding American new Frontier. I do not mean to imply that each of these poets marches lock-step to the same drummer,[8] but I do mean to leave the impression that there exists among them "a common origin of strength: the belief that in the depths of the self lies a core of power, a source of light, a redemptive memory"[9] that may be conveniently gathered under one banner. The differences which separate them are superficial compared to the similarities that unite them in a continuous, though sometimes wavering line, all the way from Roethke, "Be with me, Whitman, maker of catalogues/ For the world invades me again" (CP, 220), back to Whitman. A few Adamic poets, surviving the counter-influence of Eliot and Pound in the thirties,[10] Ransom and Tate in the forties and early fifties, and Robert Lowell in the sixties,[11] would reclaim nature and restore man to his original position there, and would continue to mirror what appears to be one most important pre-occupation of the American soul: redemption.

To say that Theodore Roethke rejects history and all that its traditions imply in the complexity of life of 20th-century America surely would draw a smile from anyone who has read a smattering of his poems, for Roethke doesn't simply reject history; he almost totally ignores it. Without having read the Seager biography,[12] for example, one would be hard pressed to determine from the poems themselves from what place they give birth to the unique structure of his vision. There are,

of course, a few references to uniquely "American sounds," and even an entire cycle called "North American Sequence" from The Far Field; but without these and a scattering of obscure place names from the states of Michigan and Washington, the reader is forced to confront the primal qualities of the natural world interpreted for him by a man who belongs essentially to nature, and is an alien in any other society. Further, one gets the impression that this rejection of the past, both personal and historical, is a deliberate choice brought on by the need to heal a consciousness that was troubled, apparently, from the moment Roethke's father died and Roethke was forced out of childhood into his father's chair at the head of the table.[13] "My past is sliding down the drain,/ I soon will be myself again" (CP, 256). This is not an uncommon remark to be found in the total production of the poems, and it pales beside other frequent desires for "mindlessness" (CP, 200), a prerequisite of sorts for a re-entry into the "original" unfallen place outside the greenhouse the speaker in his poems seeks everywhere in the fields or untended American gardens. "The poet's scene constitutes a society of animals and things. To walk through his idealized Nature is to be surrounded by figures variously greeting, beckoning, calling, answering one another, or with little groups here and there in confidential huddles, or strangers by the wayside waiting to pose."[14] Where history does intervene indirectly into the midst of the untended garden outside the greenhouse, it is characterized there by detritus, garbage, bottles and cans- the cast off remains of a throwaway civilization such as one finds earlier in the century in Stevens' poem, "The Man On The Dump." The positions of Stevens and Roethke apropos of the historical past are consistent and quite similar: the American garden means, also, for Roethke very much what it meant for Stevens, i.e., a potential source of redemption for the man who would create out of himself, through the imagination and nature, the unfallen place that he knows from his Adamic instinct to be there, waiting quietly in an "after-light" (CP, 202) of the "inner eye" (CP, 155). "Roethke viewed the self

as continually seeking a harmonious dialogue with all that is. The bulk of his poetry derives its imaginative strength from the author's restless quest for that communion in which self and creation are joined. Though they take the self as theme, we cannot look in these poems for the sort of personal element we associate with the later work of Robert Lowell. Yet they are in their way just as intimate, maybe even more intimate, since some penetrate the protective screen of conscious thought. Lowell focuses often on other personalities, the family, the world of historical time, while Roethke's concentration either is inward, almost untouched by public happenings or by history, or turns outward to the existence of things in nature."[15] "The screen of conscious thought" of which Mills speaks is a general version in Roethke's poems of the aftermath of the fall. As a covering, it obscures the timeless and unfallen fields and meadows, thus hindering the kind of Adamic perception necessary for redemption. Hence Roethke's occasional references to "mindlessness" and his unique cultivation of depth intuition. "Eliot added winds of doctrine. Roethke 'regressed' as thoroughly as he could, even at considerable risk, toward a language of sheer 'intuition.'"[16] The mind for Roethke in many poems, therefore, is a self-limiting, inhibiting area, which helps to explain why he often speaks from the vantage point of a voice trapped on the wrong, or conceptual side, of a door, a window, a sill, a casement, or a continuous wall between his redemptive voice and unfallen nature in the fields or meadows.[17]

Another far-ranging consequence of the fall is the separation from "Papa," or the father-figure variously invoked in the poems, and a subsequent loss of an unfallen (though recapturable) mode of perception enjoyed exclusively by the Adamite or a child. In section 4 of a poem entitled, "Where Knock Is Wide Open" from Praise To The End, Roethke circuitously comes to terms with the illogical betrayal he had experienced as a child after the death of his father, Otto. The poem is divided into four progressive sections, each of which

employs a defense mechanism verging on the incomprehensible oblique, and on a kind of "jibberish" that a gifted child might use to hide an acute pain. (Roethke declares in "Open Letter"[18] the inevitability of the use of this language.) So- in Roethke, the use of the persona of the child works in two ways: first, it is a defense mechanism that in its artless freedom helps to reclaim an "O Lost World" (CP, 224) and restores the "Lost Child" to it; second, it operates on the level of a mask that protects the lost Adamic child from the punishment of history, tradition, society, etc. Without doubt, as Hilton Kramer maintains, Roethke has taken the technique and its multiple uses beyond Wordsworth into the realm of "la condition botanique" where sometimes the positive face of the Adamic child is lost in the primordial slime and mire from which he sprang: "primitivism's final frontier."[19] The first three sections of "Where Knock Is Wide Open" employ the substantive language of childhood in a way that is rather forced- almost "cute," thus detracting from the serious movement in the poem. With sections four and five, however, the substantive "baby-talk" is put to better use, and Roethke's entire world is virtually capsulated in its microcosmic accounting. Papa and son are fishing. Both partake of a harmony with the world of nature that has been lost by the speaker and at questionable times enjoyed by the father: Papa's ultimate loss occurs through his division in an early death, which will forever call into question in the speaker's mind Papa's redemptive powers in the manmade and tended garden of the greenhouse; the Adamic son's loss occurs in the guilt and confusion that stems from his aduithood and his diminishing successes in redeeming nature outside the greenhouse in the far fields. Although nature in this poem tried to talk to him, "Papa threw him back," for Papa could not commune redemptively in this context with forms of life outside the tended garden in a way that his Adamic son will in the future triumph in doing. And this failure becomes the failure of God himself. Papa's metier in the Lost Son poems at least is the artificial, man-created

life in the greenhouse. He is an artist of the hybrid.

> He watered the roses.
> His thumb had a rainbow.
> The stems said, Thank you.
> Dark came early.
>
> ("Where Knock Is Wide Open," iv, QR, 73)

Papa's apparent success with the hybrid in the greenhouse where healthy weeds and naturally selecting blight are controlled is not enough to bring him back after his "early" death. Whatever success he achieved with the pampered and spoiled annuals,

> That was before. I fell! I fell!
> The worm has moved away.
> My tears are tired.
>
> Nowhere is out. I saw the cold.
> Went to visit the wind. Where the birds die.
> How high is have?
> I'll be a bite. You be a wink.
> Sing the snake to sleep.
>
> 5
> Kisses come back,
> I said to Papa;
> He was all whitey bones
> And skin like paper.
>
> God's somewhere else,
> I said to Mamma.
> The evening came
> A long long time.
>
> I'm somebody else now.
> Don't tell my hands.
> Have I come to always? Not yet.
>
> Maybe God has a house.
> But not here.
>
> ("Where Knock Is Wide Open," iv & v, QR, 73-4)

The worm has moved a little farther off, as Beowulf says of Grendel, but the worm will never disappear from the world of the productions of man. When the worm does return to the untended fields, however, he will be sung out of them or sung to sleep by the Orphic songs of the Adamic poet, who, though now apparently "somebody else" behind his mask in adulthood, has not yet "come to always." A lonely task without a dearly-loved father whose former identification with God-the-father

is now explicit. Not only was God never in the greenhouse, he was probably never in heaven, either. If God is not in the greenhouse or in heaven, he has got to be in the self. This Roethke discovers in the poems relating to the meadows and fields. But the Adamite is not all that Roethke's self supports as the remainder of the cycle makes clear; for not only is Roethke his own Adam and his own god, but he is also his own Eve- Jung's anima,[20] pulled out of his fifth rib in this and a number of love poems that follow in The Collected Poems.

At this stage of my discussion I realise that I have yet to prove the ambivalent relationship between the gardener (Otto), with his fallen, seraglio-greenhouse, and the Adamite (his son), with his unfallen, faun-filled meadows and fields. First, the greenhouse itself. Roethke has designated this as his "symbol for the whole of life, a womb, a heaven on earth."[21] On the surface, one can accept this statement until the death of Roethke's father. It does not synchronise, however, with the total statement made by the group of poems dealing directly or indirectly with the greenhouse in Words For The Wind. What I am suggesting is that there is a case for Roethke's having lost (in retrospect) faith in the earthly analogue to God-the-Father and in his own father at the time of Otto Roethke's death. The evidence for this case may be gathered, the Seager biography notwithstanding, from the greenhouse-related poems themselves supported by contrasting evidence from "North American Sequence."

One asks himself, "What grows in a greenhouse, Ion?"

"Flowers, Socrates, for the most part."

"What kind of flowers, Ion?"

"Well, almost any kind one desires, Socrates."

"No! No! That is not what I mean, Ion. What is the exact nature of the flowers that grow in the greenhouse?"

My dear Socrates, I say to myself- they are, with few exceptions, hybrids, and therefore their seeds are sterile. When they drop them on the "sugary loam" or the bees attempt to

pollinate amongst them, they are impotent. They cannot participate in the great cycle of nature outside the greenhouse in the far field that surrounds it. Moreover, sometimes the effete flowers in a greenhouse are so stupified, so unnatural, that they do not know the stock from which they came. They are an adulterate production of the fallen mind of the gardener. Indeed, one of Otto Roethke's greatest sources of pride was his hybrid roses- several of which he invented himself. Finally, if the case is as I have outlined it, the greenhouse (being unnatural) is a kind of "seraglio" (I am stealing from Andrew Marvel here and elsewhere), and its keeper, the gardener, is a kind of eunuch, who is as limited (impotent) as the flowers he tends. Without going into the different uses of cut flowers (the principle occupation of the greenhouse in winter being, of course, to serve churches and undertakers), we are able to determine that the greenhouse has more than one symbolic meaning.[22] Before carrying this any further, it would be well to examine the poems from the Lost Son to which the ambiguous symbol of the greenhouse is intimately related.

The first two poems in the cycle, "Cuttings" and "Cuttings (later),"[23] present the reader with a before and after situation dealing with cut flowers that have been left behind in the cloying loam after their brethren have been cut and sent off to market. They are dying, it must be admitted, heroically, and their last stand against the loss of light and fruitless sustenance from the loam is not without an agonizing appeal. The clarion of one last "tendrilous horn" in the last line of the former poem moves us because we know that not even the gardener with his artificial resources can help them participate in the great cycle of redemptive genesis that flourishes outside the greenhouse. The cut flowers cannot share in redemption. They are doomed to extinction. In the latter poem, "Cuttings (later)" the stems "struggle" and "strain" like "saints" (no natural sexual redemption here) to put down roots in a soil that will not restore them without the limited aid of the gardener and his art. Nevertheless, the process

does awaken in the speaker a correspondence by which the stunted cycle in tended nature triggers in the speaker a similar chemistry, and "sheath-wet," he "leans to beginnings." It is important to note that the speaker does not realize new "beginnings," but rather he "leans" toward them, for "perpetual beginnings" (WW, 209) are possible only outside the greenhouse in the fields. The language is clear in the "Cuttings" poems and is consistent with a similar attitude struck in the greenhouse poems that follow, in which the speaker qualifies the possibilities for redemption that exist within and without the greenhouse. There is even biographical evidence for this. "If the greenhouse was an Eden created and maintained by his father, there was for Ted another Eden untouched or touched very lightly beyond it"[24] in the fields. It was in the untended fields and not in the greenhouse that Roethke spent the better part of his childhood, as the biography makes abundantly clear.

The next two poems, "Root Cellar" and "Forcing House" once again play upon the idea of plants, bulbs, and flowers as victims of an unnatural imprisonment in the waiting station of the "seraglio," the cellar or the forcing house. In "Root Cellar," "a congress of stinks" wafts over the vegetal life that seeks release and escape from its confinement by art.

> Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark,
> Shoots dangled and drooped,
> Lolling obscenely from mildewed crates,
> Hung down long yellow evil necks, like tropical snakes.
>
> ("Root Cellar," WW, 14)

These are not flowers that in any way resemble their counterparts in the field who are attended by fauns and nymphs: they dangle, droop, loll obscenely, have evil necks, and resemble tropical snakes. They are more like spoiled, kept women with more than a touch of the serpent in them; they are rank and gross in nature. In "Forcing House," the title itself is a give-away insofar as the plants there are completely dependent upon steam from the "knocking pipes" in the same way that a sick man with defective lungs is dependent upon an iron lung

for his life's breath, and to draw upon the seraglio metaphor again, these plants age "fifty summers in motion at once" like overworked harlots frightfully busy at their trade. The next poem, "Weed Puller" finds the young Adamite "tugging all day at the perverse life" of weeds in the father's greenhouse. The world of unfallen nature outside the greenhouse has invaded the seraglio from underground, and its healthy fibers are, unlike the plants in "Forcing House," "tough,/ Coiled green and thick" and are not subject to the art of Prospero, the gardener. Their redemptive cycle runs year around; and though pulling the weeds up from under the benches involves "indignity," this is, more to the point, a tampering with the natural process which the Adamite later comes to regret. (Consider, for example, that the "weeds wear crowns" (WW, 91) like royalty outside the greenhouse; compare also Roethke's later reflections on weeds in "Weeds, weeds how I love you" from Praise To The End (WW, 93). "Orchids" and "Moss-Gathering" are companion pieces because the sphaghum moss from the latter poem is gathered in the fields and swamps to "feed" (water) the orchids of the former. And what are the orchids like? They are active. They "lean over the path," are "adder-mouthed,/ Swaying close to the face." Also, like their resplendent brethren in the "Forcing House," they are "soft and deceptive,/ Limp and damp," and, further, they are predatory, "devouring infants" that require moss gathered from the unfallen, distant fields to sustain them. Thus far, then, the connotations of evil associated with life in the greenhouse are unmistakable, and the nature of the guilt felt by the young Adamite, who has prostituted himself and the untended garden in gathering the moss for the orchids, is quite clear.[25] (see note)

> And afterwards I always felt mean, jogging back over the logging road,
> As if I had broken the natural order of things in that swampland;
> Disturbed some rhythm, old and of vast importance,
> By pulling off flesh from the living plant;
> As if I had committed, against the whole scheme of life, a desecration.
>
> ("Moss-Gathering," (WW, 21)

The next poem, "Big Wind," utilizes the conceit of the greenhouse as a ship that survives with its cargo of roses all that the world of nature outside the greenhouse can hurl at it. It is Roethke's ambivalent tribute to his father's art as a gardener. What the rose means symbolically cannot in full be lifted from this poem, except to say that roses are a precious cargo for any ship to carry.[26] One must look elsewhere, therefore, to determine its proper meaning, which I will do after finishing the poems related to the greenhouse. In passing I might add that conceivably the "Big Wind" is in the wrong sequence and would make more sense in the cycle following the poem, "Otto" from The Far Field.

The next two poems in the cycle further illustrate the dependence of the vegetal life in the greenhouse upon the gardener and his surrogates. In "Old Florist," the deformity of the gardener- "That hump of a man"- is the first impression to settle with us in the poem. The price he pays for fanning "life into the wilted sweet-peas with his hat" and the price he pays for other ministrations that protect the seraglio from the "crowned" weeds of the far field is "blue feet." In "Frau Bauman, Frau Schmidt, and Frau Schwartze," the three graces who attend to the pampered wants of the seraglio- "Keeping creation at ease"- suffer from "thorn-bitten wrists" as the foot-soldiers of unfallen nature outside the greenhouse fight back at the unnatural processes within. The speaker of the poem recalls these three ladies with profound affection out of his "first sleep." "Transplanting" continues the idea of the lanquid struggles of the plants within the seraglio to come to life- and this a direct consequence of their fallen nature. The most striking line of the poem that follows "Child On Top Of A Greenhouse" is "half-grown chrysanthemums staring up like accusers." Why, one wonders, do the flowers inside the greenhouse witness the Adamic child on the roof as an "accuser," and what is the child doing on the roof other than fulfilling a young boy's whim to climb something he shouldn't. Seeing the "unnatural" flowers through the perspective of the glass roof, the Adamic child is able to intuit for the first time

that ultimately his obligations lie with the fields and meadows outside the greenhouse. Hence, the flowers accuse him of a betrayal as though they were women who had seen the boy's attentions wander. The rest of nature surrounding the greenhouse appears in a wild spirit of approbation with "clouds rushing," and "elms plunging and tossing." Everything in nature seems to applaud the child's presence outside the greenhouse except the surrogates of the gardener below, who point and shout. This tension between the approbation of unfallen nature and the disapprobation of fallen nature (the gardeners) is consummate craft on Roethke's part. The Adamic child learns later from the "Flower Dump" of the sterility and death-throes of the hybrids (not a part of the far field's natural cycle)- "Turned-over roots/ With bleached veins/... Everything limp." Here is a final reckoning with no hope for redemption. One condemned tulip "swaggers" over the "newly dead" with a show of irony that, as a doomed and sterile hybrid, it is incapable of appreciating.

The poems that make up section 2 of the poems directly related to the greenhouse deal indirectly with the theme I have been developing, and it would be relevant to mention a few of them. The most famous is "My Papa's Waltz" in which Roethke's ambivalent attitude toward his father, Otto, emerges in a dramatic way. The child in the poem truly loves and is dazzled by the mere presence of his Papa; but at the same time Papa's fallen role as administrator and executor of the greenhouse ("Ordung! Ordung!") works its way into the consciousness of the grown-up Adamite who is looking back on the scene and writing the poem with mixed feelings. Three things are at work within the poem: the waltz or the dance that translates man through the processes of life; the indirect pain- "My right ear scraped his buckle," associated with the authority or father-figure; and time, which the fallen "executor" of the seraglio beats out "on my head/ With a palm caked hard by dirt," an obvious analogue for mortality. The ending of the poem moves toward sleep or death with the cessation of the waltz.

The poem "The Return," indirectly dealing with Papa and the greenhouse (although the building in question could as easily be a mental institution on another level), is difficult to analyze without enlisting the aid of someone like Jung; but it is possible to read it, I think, in the terms I have outlined without calling on Jung.

The Return

I circled on leather paws
In the darkening corridor,
Crouched close to the floor,
Then bristled like a dog.

As I turned for a backward look,
The muscles in one thigh
Sagged like a frightened lip.

A cold key let me in
That self-infected lair;
And I lay down with my life,
With the rags and rotting clothes,
With a stump of a scraggy fang
Bared for the hunter's boot.

(WW, 32)

A terrifying sense of guilt overwhelms the poem. The speaker, through the persona of a hound, is returning from the world of the fields in which he is as yet not at home to the greenhouse of his dead father. We are, obviously, on a psychological and not a literal level of understanding. The "backward look" that makes the muscles of the thigh sag, presumably, is cast toward the world of nature, occasioning the kind of guilt we witnessed in "Moss-Gathering." Moving down the "corridor" of the interconnected greenhouse (Otto's were six hundred feet in length according to Seager), the Adamite reaches the heart of an experience that will culminate in a kick in the face from the gardener's, the "hunter's boot," who resides, even after death, at the inmost psychological depth of Roethke's soul. The gardener-hunter image further clarifies the aggressiveness that the gardener brings to the untended fields. Because he has as yet imperfectly realized his Adamic redemptive role in the fields and meadows, the speaker's mind or reason, ("a cold key" in the "self-infected lair" of the personality) which he

has tried to cast from him in the fields has driven him back to the greenhouse, temple of the failed-father, for a reconciliation the Adamite knows in his blood will not be forthcoming. Hence the anger in the line "bristled like a dog" in the first stanza. Surely this poem goes a long way toward counteracting the fairy tale, idealized version of "Papa" in the later poem, "Otto."

Hints of redemption missing from the other greenhouse poems make up the last three poems of the cycle, which look toward a triumph of redemption characterized by a "spirit of blessing" and real "beginnings" in "North American Sequence." In "The Minimal," from the conclusion of the greenhouse-related cycle in Words For The Wind, a regression toward the lowest level of organic life reveals to the Adamite, "Cleaning and caressing,/ Creeping and healing" in which nature in the fields takes care of itself and thus forms the basis for redemption impossible in the greenhouse. Unlike the "adder-mouthed" orchids with their connotation of an evil and infected world, the "elvers in ponds" in this poem "kiss the warm sutures" of the fundamental structure in things in an untended world that redeems itself with aesthetic assistance from the Adamite. Health and vitality prevail everywhere in this emerging vision. "The Cycle" is an interesting and clear example. The last poem "The Waking," however, indicates the new direction, free of the totemistic image of the Papa-figure that Roethke's poems will now take.[27] Not just the plants, but the animals as well will talk to the Adamic child and demonstrate for him,

> This way! This way!
> The wren's throat shimmered,
> Either to other,
> The blossoms sang.
>
> The stones sang,
> The little ones did,
> And flowers jumped
> Like small goats.

(WW, 49)

"The redeemer comes a dark way" (CP, 49), but not without reward for his intense suffering. At times he will fall back where he started unable to read the iambs of the minimal, and his way back out through beginnings will be painful.

I came where the river
Ran over the stones:
My ears knew
An early joy.

And all the waters
Of all the streams
Sang in my veins
That summer day.

(WW, 51)

Absolved at last of the image of the Papa-figure, the lost son will come into his natural inheritance in "The Peaceable Kingdom" where reconciliation on all levels, the organic and the inorganic, the human in the divine, the temporal in the eternal, is possible. "Sometimes one gets the feeling that not even the animals have been there before; but the field, the marsh, the Void, is always there, immediate and terrifying. It is a splendid place for schooling the spirit. It is America."[28]

Of the poems that occupy the distance between what Roethke has obviously set up as greenhouse-oriented poems in The Lost Son, sections 1 and 2 from Words For The Wind and the redemptive poems from The Far Field a few words are in order. Like some of the greenhouse poems, these middle poems from Praise To The End deal literally with infancy, childhood and adolescence. Further, as states or positions on the life process, they represent different stages of an Adamic probe into a historyless past of mind and the senses in their sometimes independent search for an organically redeemed world. The search is both painful and heroic for "the redeemer who comes a dark way" (WW, 97) out of the recesses of nothing less than the origins of life. "I've crawled from the mire, alert as a dog or a saint/ I know the back-stream's joy, and the stone's eternal pulseless longing" (WW, 100). The stone is "pulseless" because at this point it remains inorganic and unredeemed; no

roses grow from its surface as in the triumph of "The Rose" from The Far Field. Here, even though the process is evolving toward redemption and light, "This salt can't warm a stone" (WW, 98); for "the stones are sharp" (WW, 99), and the speaker's identity is "lost to a pebble" (WW, 100)- i.e., lost in hardness to the very thing he would reclaim. In the poem that immediately follows, "Unfold, Unfold," the speaker attempts to work his way out of the psychological mire that obscures the fundamental meaning of the symbols of life he would restore to their "first" position. He would have all the symbols that contain a creaturely life, sing, and in singing, burst open the crust that misdirects a newly found unfallen sense perception. But he needs help. A low voice comes to him out of the leaves, and the speaker is reminded of the ambivalent presence of "the cold father" in nature from his past, who, like his spiritual analogue, seems to desert him in times of need. "Is it you, cold father? Father,/ For whom the minnows sang?" (WW, 103). It would appear that the adjective "cold" in this context seems to cancel out the success of the questioned activity of making minnows sing. (cf. Roethke's larger-than-life version of Papa in the poem "Otto" which has something of the mythological wild west hero in it. The unarmed "forester" and his child and the two armed, sullen hunters whom Papa slaps has more than a passing affinity with Roethke's Purple Gang stories.) Thus, when the Adamite "speaks to the stones, the stars answer" (WW, 103) with an indifference that brings together all the frustrations that beset the redeemer in his efforts toward transforming the inorganic into the organic. Yet the poem does conclude on a positive note that promises a successful redemption without enlisting the aid of the father. "What the grave says,/ The nest denies" (WW, 103). The dead "help" by throwing into relief the living, by dissolving the center of the I and thus making it an integral part of all creation- including the loathsome snail as Roethke suggests in his comments from "On 'Identity.'"

Certainly the best illustration of the possibilities of Adamic redemption in the untended fields beyond the greenhouse

may be found in "North American Sequence" from The Far Field. I say this because it strikes me that these poems complete a statement made by the greenhouse poems in The Lost Son from Words For The Wind, and from the point of view of thematic structure ought logically to follow them. All six poems, beginning with "The Longing," constitute an incremental progression from various points in the unfallen world of fields toward a complete participation in the perfection of the untended "Rose," growing in a stone that, as a part of the realization of the total redemption of all existence in the untended garden, is no longer inorganic. Unlike Eliot in the Four Quartets, who would "put off sense" to achieve a timeless "stillpoint" at the mystical marriage of self and selflessness, Roethke, like his Adamic brethren Stevens and Ginsberg and Dickey, would heighten his senses so that, as "The Longing" tells us, he can "be there to hear" (recall Kosinski) the world of nature as it breaks over all his senses, and at the same time, "be beyond; I'd be beyond the moon,/ Bare as a Bud, and naked as a worm." To project oneself into the "heart of form," the timeless and the untended, therefore, one must cultivate what the senses will bear and not abandon them by a hedgerow, as does Eliot.

> To this extent I'm a stalk.
> -How free; how all alone.
> Out of all these nothings
> -All beginnings come.
>
> (CP, 188)

In order to redeem the whole of nature in the American garden, to transmute the inorganic back to the organic as in "The Rose," one must start at the minimal. "I would be... a leaf/ I would love the leaves,/ delighting in the redolent disorder of/ this mortal life." The next stage of this projection into "disorder of mortal life" involves an identification with an Indian, i.e., a human who is most primitive and therefore intimately associated with the natural world- the king of the American Adams, as it were. Echoing Eliot again in "East Coker," v. (perhaps sparing with is the right word), Roethke

opts to be, not just an "explorer" as with Eliot, who inevitably touches as little as he can being a mystic, but an "Iroquois," who belongs ferociously and endemically in the natural world.

In "Meditation At Oyster River," Roethke strengthens the desire "to put on," not the knowledge of the mystic, but the knowledge of the Iroquois, and with the "shy beasts" of the field, the doe, the young snake and the hummingbird- "With these I would be," travel to the end of the natural cycle in nature and know it as a beginning "in this hour,/ In this first heaven of knowing." This constitutes a restoration in which the vehicle of art is almost forgotten: "In the cradle of all that is" toward which the senses and a mindless knowledge crave. But on the "Journey To The Interior," there are interruptions brought on by "the raw places" of historical time wherein the back wheels of the metaphor in which one travels hang dangerously, "almost over the edge." Then suddenly "time folds" and the vehicle of metaphor in which we were moving is motionless as the "Peaceable Kingdom" in American nature and all its inhabitants "flow past. I am not moving but they are" (cf. Dickey's "Springer Mountain"). At this timeless moment of unmoving motion, the Adamite can hear "the lichen speak,/ And the ivy advance"; the nature of that time and place is

> Neither forward nor backward,
> Unperplexed, in a place leading nowhere.

As a curtain lifts, (recall the barriers of windows, casements, sills, etc.) so does the dross covering the unfallen world lift.

> As a blind man, lifting a curtain, knows its morning,
> I know this change:
> On one side of silence there is no smile;
> But when I breathe with the birds,
> The spirit of wrath becomes the spirit of blessing,
> And the dead begin from their dark to sing in my sleep.

This redemption and its joyous triumph now look toward the symbol of the Adamic child and the symbol of the "Rose," which interpenetrates the redeemed child and defines his projection into the American garden. It is with the Adamic child that

section V of "The Long Waters" is concerned, and the child's appearance in the middle ground between "advancing and retreating waters" heralds yet another, more intense level of beginnings on the journey that Roethke has set for himself in the land between before and after of the "Peaceable Kingdom."

> I see in the advancing and retreating waters
> The shape that came from my sleep, weeping:
> The eternal one, the child, the swaying vine branch,
> The numinous ring around the opening flower,
> The friend that runs before me on the windy headlands,
> I, who came back from the depths laughing too
> loudly,
> Become another thing;
> My eyes extend beyond the farthest bloom of waves;
> I lose and find myself in the long waters;
> I am gathered together once more;
> I embrace the world.
>
> ("The Long Waters," V)

The use of the passive voice in the second to the last line in a way that would surely please Andrew Marvel is a good indication of the successful manner in which nature reaches out and redeems man, for the agent in that line is nature, not only "gathering" but binding as well Adamic man to his origins in a manner that will allow him to embrace an unfallen world. "The numinous ring around the opening of the flower" is now also around the heart of the child and the man, too. But the journey is not done; the level of the perfection of the rose has not been realized, and in the next poem, "The Far Field," it continues, "repeatedly." Section I reveals the speaker lost in the dead of winter out on a headland to which his auto, a symbol of motion in time, has brought him. The car stalls, "Churning in a snowdrift/ Until the headlights darken." With the battery dead and no way out but the end or the bottom of the terrorizing experience, the way up, to invoke the real presence of Eliot in the poem, is the way down, at the very floor of things where beginnings start. The next section, II, therefore, opens "at the field's end," significantly, in the corner missed by the mower," at a further place, "Not too far away from the ever-changing flower-dump." The meadows (redeemed flesh that is grass) grow untended and untouched

by the finality of time. Near them, of course, is the flower-dump, in dramatic juxtaposition to the untended garden in nature. From the flower-dump one can "learn of the eternal," but only as a tragic commentary on the productions of the seraglio-greenhouse. It is an object lesson. The speaker suffers also "for birds, for young rabbits caught in the mower," but his "grief is not excessive." At the bottom is the top, at the end is the beginning in the untended cyclic world outside the greenhouse.

> For to come upon warblers in early May
> Was to forget time and death.

In a world of such restoration, the lost son has been found; the ultimate level of redemption for which he has longed on his journey back, now only steps away in the perfection of the rose, calls out to him like an unheard music.

> -Or to lie naked in sand[29]
> In the silted shallows of a slow river,
> Fingering a shell,
> Thinking:
> Once, I was something like this,
> mindless,
> Or perhaps with another mind, less
> peculiar;
> Or to sink down to the hips
> in a mossy quagmire;
> Or, with skinny knees, to sit astride
> a wet log,
> Believing:
> I'll return again,
> As a snake or a raucous bird,
> Or, with luck, as a lion.
>
> ("The Far Field," II)

At a still point, "but not a deep center," there is mindless peace that surpasses understanding. "I am renewed by death, thoughts of my death," because the speaker has now become an inherent part of the cycles of the natural world. Thus he becomes (like Henderson?) "An old man with his feet before the fire,/ In robes of green, in garments of adieu." Is this the "Hello, Farewell" of Billy Pilgrim? It is. It certainly is.

The opening of the last poem in the sequence, "The Rose," reminds us again that self is the center of place, the only origin from which we start. "This place," however, "where

sea and fresh water meet" is Adamically unique, for it is attained only by means of the senses to affirm anything beyond or outside the festival of the natural cycle. To sway outside oneself requires the utmost in simplicity- a belief in the senses as the foundation for a "mindless" redemption in which,

> I wore a crown of birds for a moment
> While on a far point of rocks
> The light heightened
> And below, in a mist of nowhere,
> The first rain gathered.

This place "Is important" also because through the self and its sense perceptions, "All finite things reveal infinitude" ("The Far Field," IV). Section II opens with an emblematic distinction between the futile efforts of the historical productions of man in nature- the ship, "rolling slightly sideways/ The stern dipping like a child's boat in a pond," thrown up against the inexorable currents of the great water, and the rose and its effortless rejuvenescence in nature at land's end. The ship, an alien, something that doesn't really belong on the waters, moves; the rose, that obviously does belong, stays, "Stays in its true place," flowering (as section IV demonstrates) out of a stone that has been redeemed and restored to its organic beginnings. Suddenly the perfection of this wild rose everything around which comes to "embrace" brings forth from Roethke's memory the six hundred foot greenhouse and Papa, whom Roethke rejects, and thus makes his separate peace with nature. Unlike the wild rose which stays, the productions of man (the ship, etc.) move, including Papa's hybrids that "seemed to flow toward me, to beckon me, only a child, out of myself":

> What need for heaven, then,
> With that man, and those roses?

But surely that is a rhetorical question. Papa and his hybrid productions from the greenhouse are eternally dead, as well as God the father with them, except insofar as he lives in man and man's projections into the great cycles of the natural world. The world of Papa was a seeming. And it is gone.

Adamic man must redeem himself. Section III quietly reminds us that we are well away from the greenhouse and Papa, listening to "American sounds in this silence," waiting for the "light /that/ enters the sleeping soul" from "the ripening meadow, in early summer" near the rose at the sea's edge. In hosannas of silence, "Near this rose," (section V) Roethke is finally able to come "upon the true ease of myself,/ As if another man appeared out of the depths of my being,/ And I stood outside myself,/ Beyond becoming and perishing,/ A something wholly other." The world of nature and the redeemed Man-child in it flow in motionless motion, hang, as it were, expecting nothing and sharing in everything of the reclaimed and restored American silence.

> And in this rose, this rose in the sea-wind
> Rooted in stone, keeping the whole of light,
> Gathering to itself sound and silence—
> Mine and the sea wind's.

A corposant light, a "numinous ring around the opening of the flower," now has become, with all other life that survives the cycle, that flower "rooted in stone" in the soundful silence of "The Peaceable Kingdom." All things in nature have conspired to exchange the qualities of their own perfection-including the Adamic Man-child. Life everywhere participates in timeless extensions of itself. For the first time since Whitman, the American garden is fully redeemed in the Eternal Now.

Afterword

I wish I could say there is nothing more to say about the redemptive phenomena I have been exploring in this study. But that, of course, would be wishful thinking, for I have touched upon what I consider to be only the most outstanding representatives who set in relief and reflect the emerging picture that I have been able to reproduce with a stubby pencil. Hating all traditions and lacking (though fearing) a God, Americans through their artists have redeemed a God of their own from nature, and they have placed him in the temple of the self promised to them by Jefferson, his associates, and the romantic transcendentalists of the early 19th century. Americans have never recovered from an intrinsic belief in this myth; they probably never will as long as there is a place called America.

But howso'ere the Figures do excel,
The Gods themselves with us do dwell.

Notes To Chapter 5

1 Robert Scholes, "Metafiction," The Iowa Review, I (Winter, 1970), 114.

2 Carl Jung, Psyche and Symbol (New York, 1965), 125.

3 Kenneth Burke, "The Vegetal Radicalism of Theodore Roethke," The Sewanee Review, 58 (Winter, 1950), 76.

4 Theodore Roethke, "A Rouse For Stevens," from The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke (Garden City, New York, 1966), 266. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Roethke's poems are from this Doubleday edition. The exception to this is the greenhouse-related poems from The Lost Son and Praise To The End that appear in Words For The Wind, 1958, in which Roethke's intentions are more clear than in The Collected Poems brought together for the most part by Stanley Kunitz and Roethke's wife.

5 James Dickey, "The Greatest American Poet," The Atlantic Monthly, No. 222 (November, 1968), 54.

6 Randall Jarrell, Poetry And The Age (New York, 1955), 80.

7 Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous (New York, 1959), 162.

8 Stevens' abstract use of concrete language would seem on first appearance to separate him from his Adamic peers who wheel and deal almost exclusively with the world of things. But Stevens' concrete abstractions are troublesome only to those who refuse to accept Stevens' own advice in the poems: "One poem proves another and the whole." Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York, 1954), 441. For an interesting discussion of Stevens' use of language, see Edward Kessler, Controlling Images: North And South (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1972).

9 Louis Martz, "A Greenhouse Eden," from Theodore Roethke: Essays on the Poetry, ed. Arnold Stein (Seattle and London, 1965), 16.

10 For an understanding of Roethke's apparent hostility toward the counter-Adamic tradition, and in particular, T.E. Eliot, see Theodore Roethke, Selected Letters of Theodore Roethke, ed. Ralph J. Mills, Jr. (Seattle and London, 1968), 251. Roethke's hostility toward Eliot seems to have culminated in Eliot's refusing to publish, I Am Says The Lamb in 1962.

11 The counter-Adamic influence that may be inferred from the body of my text is deeply grounded in the historical tradition which the Adamic poet shuns where he can. When its adherents use the word I in a poem, it is the collective I of an entire tradition that looms behind them. Eliot is largely responsible for its use in the 20th century. In invoking the I he seems to be giving weight to words that are otherwise frivolous, I guess. Thus, the I becomes the filter of the best that has been thought and said in the Western Tradition, and it is delivered from a height of moral judgment that is directed toward all the rest of us who are misguided or ill-bred. In the mouth of two of his most distinguished disciples in America, Tate and Ransom, the I comes to mean the Agrarian South, which apparently enjoys a moral and cultural superiority over the remainder of the vulgar United States. In the mouth of a disciple like Robert Lowell, the I becomes the voice of New England and the moral leadership it has exerted over the U.S. from the days of Lowell's Puritan ancestors to its demise in the fifties. For Example: Even poems as intensely personal and autobiographical as those in Life Studies support this argument. The opening lines of "Waking In The Blue" serve my point well. Here the I of the poem fixes in acid "the night attendant+ a B.U. sophomore" at the home for the mentally ill. While admitting that "There are no Mayflower/ screwballs in the Catholic Church," the I of the poem who happens to be one of the "screwballs" locked up, sees himself and other real New Englanders as "thoroughbred mental cases" in relation to the cold-blooded "Roman Catholic attendants." The I or voice of the poem has rendered a snobbish value judgment that is impossible to ignore no matter how sympathetic one might be disposed toward him (it); and this value judgment, which weighs Roman Catholics as coarse and not given to the breakdowns of "thoroughbreds," coming from a recent convert, a man who earlier in his life had been converted, along with Allen Tate, to Roman Catholicism. What they were looking for in the grab-bag of Romanism was the same thing that Eliot found in the High Church of England. What I am trying to say is that the I in the counter-Adamic tradition in American poetry somehow usually speaks from a moral height and is often used as a subtle moral weapon.

In the Adamic redemptive tradition the I renders no moral judgments. It speaks for one isolated individual, absolved of all historical ties, who is trying to reclaim his original, "first" home in nature. There is no better example of this than Roethke himself in whose poems the I is an event in itself, existing beyond the limits even of time and space.

12 It is no accident, I think, that the biography begins with a long quotation of a description of the Saginaw Valley, where Roethke was born, from Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey To America, 1831. "The wilderness was before us," writes de Tocqueville, "just as six thousand years ago it showed itself to the father of mankind." I think the area impressed itself upon Roethke's sensibility in the same way it impressed itself

upon de Tocqueville's. i.e., as a potential source for redemption; an untended, unfallen garden.

13 It is interesting to note and relevant to my later discussion that the father-figure, who has figured prominently in this study, in Roethke's poems is almost always a failure. Seager goes so far as to suggest that had Roethke's father lived, Roethke might not ever have written any poetry. "Quite illogically Ted felt that his father, by dying, had betrayed him, left him far too soon without his love and guidance, and intermittently in those moments when he remembered his father as flawless, Ted was tormented by guilt for even having entertained the notion that a great man like his father could have done anything so base as to betray his son." Allan Seager, The Glass House (New York, 1968), 62. I do not wish to enter too deeply the playground of amateur psychology here, but the failure of the father-figure does appear often in the poems, and Seager's notion may well be an explanation for it. I have gone him one better in suggesting that Roethke's confusion in retrospect of the earthly father and the heavenly father led to a rejection of both. I suppose such speculations are idle, but they can be helpful.

14 Burke, 14.

15 Ralph J. Mills, Theodore Roethke (Minneapolis, 1963), 8.

16 Burke, 102.

17 For representative examples, see pages 79, 154, 163, 247, etc. from The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke.

18 Theodore Roethke, "Open Letter," from On The Poet And His Craft: Selected Prose of Theodore Roethke, ed. Ralph J. Mills, Jr. (Seattle, 1965), 38.

19 Hilton Kramer, "The Poetry of Theodore Roethke," The Western Review, Vol. 18 (Winter, 1954), 144.

20 Mills, 36.

21 "Open Letter," 39.

22 Kenneth Burke, among others, sees the greenhouse and its vegetal life in an entirely positive light. "But of flowers as standing for the final term of human life, we recall no mention." Burke, 87. I am forced to go to an opposite pole in this matter, and my reading of the greenhouse poems will, I think, bear me out.

23 Theodore Roethke, Words For The Wind (Garden City, New York, 1958), 37. I have chosen to follow this text for my reading of the greenhouse poems.

24 Seager, 22.

25 For a Freudian reading of the greenhouse poems totally in disagreement with everything I have to say about them, see the latest full length study of Roethke, Karl Malkoff, Theodore Roethke: An Introduction To The Poetry (New York and London, 1966). In particular, see pages 44-62 of which the following is a sample. "The gathering takes place in a landscape with clearly sexual overtones; it is followed by a feeling of guilt at the onanistic action. While this sense of guilt at an "unnatural" action is hardly limited to masturbatory activities, the phrase "pulling off flesh" provides a less ambiguous context for the uneasy emotion." Malkoff, 53.

I think Malkoff's mind is not right in this section of the study. Both he and (strangely) Burke are guilty of ignoring the fact that Roethke was intensely aware of the pastoral tradition in English poetry. He was devoted to Traherne and Andrew Marvel. As for Freud, he confessed to have little more than a superficial knowledge of him, which he picked up from his learned colleagues at different universities where he taught. See Seager's biography for a confirmation of these facts- in particular, Chapter 3.

26 For what appears to be Roethke's final statement on the meaning of this symbol, see "The Rose," from The Far Field (Garden City, New York, 1964), 29. I will finish my study with this poem.

27 The poem "The Waking" does not appear in the greenhouse cycle from Words For The Wind. It does, however, appear with the greenhouse cycle in The Collected Poems from which I quote it. Roethke was only partly responsible for the arrangement of the poems before his death.

28 "Open Letter," 40.

29 As with Whitman, Ginsberg and Dickey, Roethke was fond of walking around in the buff so as to allow the natural world to flow freely through him. I have never seen any evidence that Wallace Stevens indulged this pastime- a droll thought, but who knows what he did on his yacht? See Seager apropos of Adamic nakedness, 144. For Roethke's use of masks, see also Seager, 55 and 78.

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