

Sparrows In October

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis consists of a novel, entitled: Sparrows In October, of a total length of 275 pages, plus an accompanying essay of 89 pages, with notes and a list of readings. The novel is within the tradition of the initiation novel and it is an exploration of a young student's first experiences of love with the female university teacher with whom he becomes obsessed. Its mode is psychological realism. It is also a novel of sensitivity of the kind we find in the writings of such nineteenth century authors as George Eliot and Henry James. The essay is a treatment of the theme; in particular, it is a treatment of the initiation novel. It presents a discussion of the initiation novel and then it examines some initiation novels by other North American writers. And, finally, it includes a short discussion of the work itself within the initiation motif.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse prend la forme d'un roman, intitulé Les Moineaux En Octobre, d'une longueur de 275 pages, plus un essai de 89 pages avec des notes et une liste des lectures. Elle fait partie des traditions du roman initiatique et le roman est une exploration d'un jeune étudiant à ses premières expériences amoureuses avec une professeure d'universitaire et dont il devient obsédé. C'est un style de psychologie réaliste. Cette roman reflète aussi la sensibilité que l'on retrouvait chez certains auteurs du XIX siècle; tels que George Eliot et Henry James. Cet essai aborde le thème; en particulier du traitement du roman initiatique. Il présente une réflexion sur la nature de ce genre littéraire et analyse des romans initiatiques d'autres auteurs nord américains. Et, finalement, l'essai inclut une courte discussion sur le travail dans le domaine initiatique.

SPARROWS IN OCTOBER

PART ONE — THE FIRST YEAR

WINTER, SPRING, 1981

It was five minutes to three on a Tuesday afternoon in January. The class he was intending to take would soon be over. Best to run upstairs and wait for her, whoever she was. Eileen Fleming. A new name, a new teacher. He knew most of the professors' names and knew most of their faces. The course, however, was new, and had never been offered during all the years that he had been there. American Female Writers. Better than the Philosophy And Literature course which was his only other option. But he had to make certain that he would like the teacher, that she would be tolerant, and that the books would be palatable reading. One-thirty to three o'clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Well, he couldn't make it at one-thirty but he would try for a quarter to two and perhaps, if she was as kind and tolerant as he hoped, she wouldn't mind.

He'd just bought a new shirt at Eaton's downtown store and perhaps there would be time to change into it before he met her. The reason he'd bought the new shirt, a violet-striped sportshirt, was that he'd spilled a whole cup of coffee on the white shirt that he'd been wearing, over at the Students' Union Building—the result of lack of sleep which had been making him shaky. He descended into the basement of the Arts Building and entered the washrooms. He enclosed himself within a stall and began to unwrap the shirt. He placed the soiled white shirt in the package,

looked closely at himself in the mirror outside the stall and was pleased with the new look and color. The shirt had been bought as a matter of practicality, but now he was pleased that he'd bought it. He left the washrooms and took the stairs up to the third floor where the teachers' offices were located. There were offices on the first and second floors as well, but he preferred the third floor offices because of their seclusion and their darkened, quiet atmosphere. He waited outside the narrow corridor, loitering there, trying not to look suspicious as other teachers came by to enter their offices. Two gave him curious looks as he stood there in the dark, staring into faces, wondering if this was the teacher he was looking for. He'd never seen her before and he was expecting a dark-haired woman for some reason. Perhaps it was because the American Feminist Fiction course he'd taken in the summer had been taught by a large dark-haired woman. He'd enjoyed the summer course, mainly because of the few young girls he'd met in the class. It had also been the first time he'd ever been invited to a class party at the university. It had been held at one of the girls' apartment. The sense of intimacy and camaraderie, as well as the subject matter, had appealed to him. There had only been three males in the class in comparison to fifteen females, and that, too, had been a new experience. He'd enjoyed being around that many women, enjoyed the curiosity over why he, a boy, was taking a course geared

primarily to women. He had an aptitude, he felt, for female writers. Generally, he preferred them to males, found them more sensitive, more interesting. He waited for about ten minutes before a stranger walked down the corridor, gave him a brief sidelong glance, opened the door with her keys, and—when he didn't move—looked towards him again and said, "Are you waiting for me?"

He replied, "Are you Professor Fleming?"

"Yes," she answered. She held a book in her hand, pressed close to her bosom.

"I'm interested in taking your English 453B course."

"Okay," she said.

She walked away from him into the office and went to place her book on the desk at the far corner of the room beside the window. She wasn't what he'd expected. She was blonde and curly-haired. Her hairdo made her look like Shirley Temple. Her face also reminded him of one of the girls in his summer course, the most vocal one, the one he hadn't liked. And she had a cold, bitchy appearance, so he believed—what he was later to learn was only her habitual discomfort over meeting anyone new.

"Sit down," she said; but he remained standing. "The course has already started."

Two and a half weeks gone by, he knew. Two and a half weeks wherein he had been trying to make up his mind about what to take. Two and a half weeks to decide whether

to drop the Philosophy And Literature course, only one class of which he had attended.

"I know."

"What would you like to know then?"

He saw now that she had the look of an athlete about her, a tennis-player-look, a well-bred, suburban aura. She was also a swimmer, he was later to learn. She looked, he now discovered, like Billie Jean King, like Billie Jean King with blonde hair. Her eyes especially. She had round-frame glasses like Billie Jean King's and the same sort of haughty, bitchy mouth and chin. He'd never liked Billie Jean King when he was younger. He later learned to love her, as he learned to love this woman. He'd decided he definitely did not like her. She was spoiled, he could see that. She had been born rich and had grown up rich. The look was all about her.

"Would you have a reading list?"

"Yes."

She turned towards the wall of shelves behind her and slipped a blue-ink mimeographed sheet from a small pile onto the desktop. She was silent as he scrutinized the list, the thing he'd really most wanted and what he had really come to see her about. He saw Gertrude Stein's name on the list. And there was Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor. But warning bells went off. He could be getting into something he didn't want to get into. There would be a lot of work

and perhaps it was best just to not take anything, to decrease his course load for the term. He made up his mind immediately that he would not take the course. She wasn't what he'd expected and he didn't like her. Her appearance just confirmed his conviction.

"I should tell you that I've taken an American Feminist Fiction course over the summer with Mary Papp."

She nodded and said, "Uh-hum. She's a friend of mine."

He looked up briefly and said, "Oh, yeah?"

She nodded again.

"There's a girl in the class who also took that course. Karen Envoy. Do you know..."

"Yeah, I know Karen."

He said it almost off-handedly. He wasn't sure he liked Karen. She was pretty but her tastes were somewhat not to his liking. She'd been avid about a number of writers he hadn't liked.

Her tone now was more placating. She'd warmed up somewhat. It was almost as if she was trying to sell him on herself, on the course; and yet she was more likeable as a result. He saw the way she held her arms crossed over her bosom. The short sleeves and bare white arms made her seem vulnerable. He discerned a distinct lack of self-confidence in this woman and somehow that made her more pleasing to him. She was not the cold bitch at all; or she was, but at least she was also vulnerable. He looked at the list.

"I'm way behind."

She did not respond. He looked at the list again with her watching him and he nodded.

"Okay. If I'm interested I'll show up."

He rose to leave. As he did so, she almost broke her cross-armed pose (as if to hold him back, he thought), but then regained it. Her face and her voice nevertheless had a slight trace of appeasement about them. Her eyes contained a deliberate plea.

"We're holding the class on Thursday over at the Women's Union Center on the third floor of the Union Building."

"Alright. Thanks. Bye."

"Bye," she said.

He walked away towards the door. The room had been filled with sunlight. Her hair had been lit by the soft sunlight and her bare arms had emitted the faint scent of baby powder. It was that bare-armed flesh and that baby-powder odour that later convinced him to show up, finally; as much, he now understood, as the newspaper article he read over the weekend bearing her name. The article had been the impetus, an appeal to his intellect, but the underlying motive, as with everything, had been sexual. She was sexually-arousing, though he was not conscious of it then. She would be the first woman to captivate his sexual imagination. She would turn him finally into a man. She would turn him from a self-imagined bisexual creature into a heterosexual being. She would be the first woman he would want to marry. With

her, with the relationship with her, he would make the transition from late adolescence into adulthood. He left the sun-filled office and moved into the darkness of the corridor, walked down the three flights of stairs and waited for Thursday to come by.

On Thursday afternoon he ran out of the city bus that carried him to school and proceeded towards the Student Union Building. It was nearly a quarter to two. He hoped that he would be fifteen minutes late, his usual routine for an hour-and-a-half class. He could not break the habit. He could not sit for an hour and a half; long practice had taught him that an hour and fifteen minutes was the longest he could sit for. He hoped she wouldn't mind. He walked up the steep incline to the Students' Union and from there up ~~three~~ floors to where the Women's Union was located. But on the third level he suddenly wavered. He realized that he lacked the courage to enter that class in such an informal set-up. Everyone would know everyone else by now and he would be a stranger, ill-at-ease. He was very close-mouthed as it was. He hardly ever spoke up in class. He was taciturn—too quiet some said. He preferred to think of himself as thoughtful and artistic. He ventured tentatively towards the door of the Women's Union. He'd never been in there before. In fact, he disliked

the entire Students' Union Building and did his best to steer clear of it. He found himself at another office, asked for instructions as to where the Women's Union was, and, when told, headed off in the opposite direction. He turned instead towards the cafeteria section of the building and went to get himself a coffee.

He sat down at one of the tables by himself. His hands, he noticed, began to shake. They were reading Gertrude Stein this week. He had speed-read half of the assigned work. But here it was almost three weeks into the winter term and he was afraid to go to class. In keeping with his recent shakiness, he spilled the coffee over himself again. His shirt and pants were soaked. He'd have to go home and change. No. He would return to the Arts Building and wipe the shirt clean with water and soap and dab away at the stain on the pants. He was certain he was cracking up. He'd gotten very little sleep again. The worry over suddenly not being able to go to class, the crippling fear and anxiety over entering into a new situation with new people, were getting to him. He did not know what he would do. If he didn't go to class next week where would he be? The fourth week. He'd be three weeks behind. He got up from the table and headed away towards the Arts Building.

He spent the weekend worrying about his inability to break through the crippling fear of attending the class. It was on Saturday that he picked up the local paper and unsuspectingly turned towards the Books section where he found a review bearing the name of Eileen Fleming at the bottom. At first, he couldn't believe it was her, that he'd actually spoken to someone who wrote for a newspaper, whose name got into print. The review was on Iris Murdoch. Iris Murdoch? It was just her style, just her taste. He'd never read any Iris Murdoch but he had an impression of what she was like. Probably dull, effete and soporific. And yet the name on the bottom of the page impressed him. She could write, well enough for it to be printed and for her to get paid for it. He'd had ambitions about being a writer. Fame was appealing to him. Fame and anyone connected with it drew him. It might not have changed his opinion about the person or the subject involved, but it certainly caught his eye.

It was like, he now felt, God was prodding at him, telling him to take this woman's course. Otherwise, why this coincidence? On the very weekend when a pivotal decision had to be made? The forces of unavoidable practicality and God's invisible direction were unquestionably guiding him towards taking that course. He read the article. She wrote reasonably well. Only in later reviews and after he'd gotten to know her better did he understand that her writing, like her, was exceptional in every way. But he was unfamiliar with the material on which she wrote now so he could not

form a judgment. However, there were other, wider aspects to her, he now saw—a secret life of a sort. He would take her course after all.

On Tuesday he rushed towards school his usual fifteen minutes late. He did not want to think beforehand. If allowed to pause and reflect he was certain that the determination would be lost forever. He'd spent the weekend psyching himself up and if he allowed himself to think now before acting it would be disastrous. He had brought along a library copy of Three Lives by Gertrude Stein. He hoped that he would not be asked any questions about it, that she would allow him to sit quietly and listen. He'd speed-read the book and was not certain at all about the story details. Gertrude Stein's language was mysterious, although he understood that something was being said about female-female relationships, about how one young woman, Melanctha, passed through a series of relationships with other women playing the inferior, dependent role and really being the stronger, and how they all tired of her eventually, and then her repeating the same pattern with other women as each, in turn, tired of her character and behaviour.

He approached the classroom door, LI5, hesitatingly. It was not a large room, he knew—perhaps thirty or thirty-five seats. He didn't know how many people were registered

for the class. Now he peeked through the crack in the swinging doors—at the same time listening for her voice. He couldn't hear, and his line of vision could only catch the last two rows which were empty. This he all did in a matter of three or four seconds before he swung the door open so that it was as if he had not broken stride in his set-eyed, determined walk towards this objective—to sit down, finally, inside a classroom without causing any undue notice. He did not look around, only gave the slightest glance towards the head of the room, and then he sat on the third row from the back which was empty except for his seat. Much to his relief, she hadn't said anything. He'd caught her head darting upwards and then she sort of gawked at him all the while as she continued her monologue at the front of the class. She tried not to be conspicuous about her glances, but she was clearly surprised. It did not register with the others, but it registered with him. And in these brief moments a sort of link between them was established. She could and would try to fool others with her facial expressions, but the silent language between them assumed that he, alone, understood her and that they were in complicity against the rest of the world. But there was no joy for her in his attendance as yet. She did not seem glad to see him or unglad, simply slightly surprised. I suppose she's wondering where I was on Thursday, he thought. He had thought all weekend long that she would

wonder about it. She'd probably given up hope that he'd take the class when he hadn't shown up last Thursday, and thus the reason for the slightly surprised expression. But because his presence did not seem to affect her either positively or negatively in the slightest way he felt that he did not belong here, that he was unimportant to her and, finally, that he was making a huge mistake.

He'd sat down without removing his coat. He'd lately taken to not removing his coat in class. He found that for some reason he could concentrate better with it on than with it off. Besides, he felt cold and naked with only his shirt on underneath. It also allowed him to make a quick get-away at the termination of class. He invariably was one of the earliest to leave once the professors had signalled the end of class for the day. He did not want to take a look around him, but his peripheral vision told him that there were about fifteen people in the class, only one of whom, besides himself, was male. None of the faces or the backs of heads was familiar. It was not till the middle of the class period that he recognized Karen Envoy sitting at the front beside an unfamiliar girl. His view of the teacher was partially blocked by a girl's head, but he could still catch her darting a look every so often at him, trying not to let it seem like she was invading his privacy, for she could see, he could tell, that he did not wish to be singled out or noticed. He kept his eyes and nose down towards his book for the most part and tried to listen for

her voice. She was talking about a section of the book that he had not read as yet—towards the end, he thought—or had not read carefully. Anyway, he would pretend. No, he would not pretend. He would try to take notes. Working with a pen, he knew, had the effect of drawing him out of himself and generally made his memory more effective. She was speaking familiarly with a couple of girls in the front and left-front side of the class. It was a familiarity, and yet not a familiarity, he discerned, because, although she seemed to be conversing as if she knew them well, it was also as if she knew that they could never know her. It was as if she were lying, playing a game that she'd become well-practised at. It was a sort of semi-communication without real compassionate feeling. She seemed alone, an island, a professional doing her job without having any illusions about really achieving any communication with her listeners. She had a professional's assurance alright, but she was out of place. She did not seem like a teacher. She did not seem like the head or leader. She did not have or want the desire to control. She was simply a person sitting at the head of the class, not too-relaxed, not self-conscious either, merely leafing through a book she'd read and bringing to the surface whatever she thought was relevant. She was wearing...he couldn't remember now what she was wearing. Only later did the way she dressed become important to him. Only after a few weeks did he begin to notice what she wore.

The book had some vague lesbian overtones and now he began to wonder if the teacher herself was lesbian. He'd been under the impression that the summer instructress, Mary Papp, had been lesbian. She'd invited a female friend to the class party and to the classroom itself. Her friend's appearance had been butch-like and her bold speech—bitchy. The notion or idea was that they seemed to be living together, although he'd remained vague on this point—their living-arrangements—and he hadn't been bold enough to ask. He'd never really been curious about Mary Papp's personal life, so whether or not she had been lesbian made very little difference to him. Why was this teacher interested in lesbian issues? Gertrude Stein herself, he knew, had been lesbian. Billie Jean King had had a lesbian affair. He remembered the keenness of her eyes and the vaguely-distrustful air, the vague hostility he felt in her towards anyone male. Even at that first meeting that sense had come across. The girl in the summer class that she reminded him of had also seemed to him to have been lesbian. Why? He didn't know. Was it because all young girls seemed to be in a lesbian stage in their first university years? Was it the camaraderies between the young girls, and the relative isolation of the males? Or was it the openly anti-male hostility they affected? Or was it only the slightly less prettier ones who needed to compensate by adopting aggressive behaviour?

She talked on steadily. He made notes as she emphasized individual pages and passages but he knew it was like stemming an ocean with a sandbag. He hadn't really absorbed the book. But something she was saying now about Melanctha caught his ear. Something in her tone. In describing the frustrations of Melanctha's relationships she was clearly alluding to her own life. She did not say so, but he understood it anyway. This woman had had a relationship with another woman that was still weighing on her mind or had ended in frustration. The reason he knew this was because he himself had had a similar relationship with a male "friend" and he knew the signs. She'd been in love, masochistically in love, with someone of her own sex—like him—and she'd just lately perceived that the relationship would never work out and was destructive. Only recently had he made the same revelation. The "boy" he'd been in love with, a high school friend, had married over the summer, in July, and it had been the bitterest wound of his life. But now, early in February, seven months after the event, he had seen how deeply he had disliked that person, even while being in love with him, and how thankful and relieved he now was over not being tied to him anymore. The love had died over the autumn. The terrible self-delusion that belongs to the young, especially during their homosexual stage, had been outgrown. He had felt a relief, finally, after so many years, ten, of being in love with an essentially despicable and unloving human being. He'd been vain, selfish, self-centered,

and even physically ugly,—not even half the human being that he'd believed himself to be. There arrives a stage when finally one seeks someone worthy of oneself, whom one respects and likes as well as loves, and whose character and nature is sympathetic and not antithetical to one's own. He had reached that stage. It dawned upon him that this teacher had reached the same stage in her life. This was what she was talking about underneath the words and rhythms of her sentences. She was older than him. He was older than most of the people in the class. He was twenty-five; they were in their early twenties. He'd missed three years of school as a result of what could now only be described as a nervous breakdown, precipitated by the rift (one of many) with the young man denoted. Here, finally, was someone who could relate to the central emotional experience of his life. She was older, and yet, psychologically, they were at the same stage or level. She was looking to get away from a bad scene, a bad relationship. That was what he heard in her tone.

The class proceeded without his gaining any undue attention and he could breathe easily even while finding the subject matter difficult and, at times, uninspiring. She had been brought to life for him. He knew something of who and where she was now. There was a kinship between them, he felt, a brother-and-sisterhood of a sort because he believed they were both oppressed partners in bad relationships, each laden with flighty, unappreciative partners and just now

emerging into true maturity and adulthood, having found some sort of independence recently—for him, over the fall and winter; for her, probably over the last year. Perhaps there could be friendship between them on that level. He could identify with her plight and he could like her because she had suffered, like him, under the same circumstances. If she was lesbian he could like her because he had always been able to identify with lesbian girls and homosexual boys. There was no pressure with the former. And there was a mutual recognition between both groups, even if they, as he, had never been practising homosexuals but only in theory and self-view. Over the winter and after the marriage he'd begun to fancy himself as bisexual. He had never denied his attraction to girls. Only his inability to consummate any serious sexual intentions had made him believe that there was something sexually wrong with him. He'd even taken to painting his nails. Half of them were painted. Two on one hand, three on the other, in alternating fashion to signify his bisexual status. He'd show up in class this way, although he never flaunted them openly but kept them quietly hidden among his books—there for anyone to see if they liked but no showboating. He still believed himself to be bisexual.

The only real sexual experience he'd ever had was with a young woman, a young secretary at the newspaper office where he'd worked one summer during his nervous breakdown

period. She'd been drunk and he'd been drunk and the whole episode had been a fiasco. He couldn't retain an erection and there had been none of the purported enjoyable sexual feeling, just a frustrated frenzy to achieve an orgasm that never occurred. It had been memorable nevertheless, even if it had been a vapid feeling that he'd been left with. She'd treated him afterwards with disconcerting neglect. It had been a one-night stand after all and not the beginning of something that he'd hoped it would be. And he'd never gotten over the hurt, even though, as he now saw, they had been totally wrong for each other. She had wanted to be alone. She had liked her privacy. He understood that now. By hanging around the apartment he had infringed on her privacy. And so he had gone, and his self-image had been bruised for awhile. But he'd stopped caring after awhile. It was the only time he'd been to bed with anyone, including the young man he loved then and since, and he was twenty-five years old—not a virgin in the strictest sense but not very far from it. But it was love that was the missing ingredient in his life, not sex. He knew that if there was any girl he loved he could go to bed with her without feeling any of that awkwardness. Sex for him was a function of love, a natural development or outgrowth. He didn't desire casual affairs any longer as he had when he was younger. He did not desire any affairs at all at this moment. He wanted to live his life in peace and isolation. He'd resigned himself after

the young man's wedding to a life of solitude. He would study to become a teacher. Work, study, books, the intellectual life or the life of the intellectual was what he foresaw for himself; and there was meaning in it for him, a sort of sanctity and religiosity in his devotion to that goal of the ascetic life.

It was heading towards the end of class. His mind had absorbed very little. Yet the class atmosphere had not been bad, had been unpressured. She obviously wouldn't force you to become involved in the discussions unless you wanted to. He would return again. It was a smaller class than the classes he was used to, but he could sit in the back and take notes and no one would bother him. There was no formal ending to the class. Some of the others seemed to relax suddenly. There was a shifting of notebooks and a rustling of bags. He was aware of a certain impropriety, a lack of politeness in choosing to leave without saying anything to her or to anyone, but she and they did not seem to expect it. So he got up to leave before the others, feeling that he should make some gesture, and yet not knowing how. He disappeared into the hallway, leaving her in discussion with some girls. It was three o'clock. He headed out of the building and went for his usual one hour walk after class along the downtown streets.

On the following Thursday Gertrude Stein was again the topic of discussion. The way the class functioned normally was that one writer per week was handled, two ~~one-and-a-half-hour~~ periods per week devoted to an American female writer. He did not learn very much again about Gertrude Stein in the Thursday class. It was not because she was a poor teacher. He could see that she would have her moments when they approached someone he was extremely interested in. She was talented, he could tell that. It was because his mind wasn't on it. She spoke competently on the subject of Gertrude Stein, and yet he had the impression that her mind wasn't on it either. She seemed to lack the passion to render it a transcendent experience. It was again as if it was something she had been trained to do. She seemed to have control over the class this time, however. She seemed more assertive. The majority of the class did not seem to share his literary tastes. There were a couple of girls who, he thought, probably shared his own tastes—and the teacher as well. Yet she seemed to want to cater to that other majority. Why? Did it come from a lifetime of having to serve the other, of living not with like but with the unlike? He knew what that could be like. Yet he had never pandered to the extent that she seemed to be doing. He had never disassociated himself from his own nature, betrayed himself—if that was what she was doing by the

pretense (and was it pretense?) of real and open communication between herself and those who were different from her. Was that what being a teacher really meant? Was that the price one paid for a profession wherein one did not choose one's associates and wherein communication, even with the enemy, was a must? Did other teachers do that? No. Not all. Even the ones he didn't like, the ones whose tastes were completely poisonous to him, did not feel it incumbent on them to rearrange themselves in that way. It was clear she had trouble with revealing her true self, in remaining outwardly true to her inner self and inner emotion. Was it hypocritical of her? Yet you couldn't call it hypocrisy because that implied some evil intent. With her it seemed to be a failing, an obstruction.

She paid him little mind after the first lecture. He could tell that, to her eyes, he did not seem to be an avid student, and this had lowered her opinion of him. He wanted to tell her, shout it out to her, that it was because of his disorientation. Later on, when he got accustomed to sitting there and they were dealing with someone he was thoroughly familiar with—Carson McCullers, for example—he could make an impression on her. She was still paying most of her attention to the girls in the class. It seemed that it was the girls, alone, who existed for her. He was a privileged eavesdropper at the moment, some stranger in the back of the room who'd wandered into the wrong class by mistake. That's how he seemed to the rest of them, too,

he felt. Next week they would be doing Katherine Anne Porter. At least he'd read some Katherine Anne Porter—The Old Order. They'd be doing Pale Horse, Pale Rider, which he'd read, but had not understood, before, and some of the other stories from the Collected Works: "Maria Concepción," Noon Wine.

He'd filled most of five pages of notes on Gertrude Stein, mainly page references with some explanatory notes; but he knew that the more he wrote, the more notes he took, the less he understood. It was a guise, a desperate facade. But, slowly, he was making an impression on her with his note-taking. It seemed that he might be serious after all. The class ended and again he did not try to approach her in order to make a greeting of some kind; but he lingered a little longer in going out. He did not want to let it seem like he was rushing out this time. He wondered when the first conversation between them would occur, how they would break the barrier of strained shyness that so far had kept them apart since that first meeting in her office.

That first conversation, concerning Katherine Anne Porter, was to take place a couple of weeks later. In the interim she had begun noticing him. Her eyes lingered on his more often now. She could look at him for longer periods of time before she dropped her eyes or shifted them onto

another face in the crowd; and there seemed to be true intelligence and comprehension in the eyes that met hers, and so she was encouraged. She had begun liking him.

He'd resisted her influence on his life. He was suspicious of her, suspicious of anyone who threatened to lead him away from the particular state-of-mind he'd constructed for himself. That state-of-mind included a reliance on the love of a single individual—the young man—even with the realization that he wanted a solitary life now, away from the young man who'd betrayed him and his love. He did not wish to be converted into heterosexuality. He wanted to live the life of a betrayed martyr, and he was ready to live by God's love alone. God did not betray and he knew the heart's truth about everything. So he approached all women with a sense of paranoia. He'd tried heterosexuality before and had come to the verge of suicide as a result, so he believed. Bisexuality was better. It made your sexuality seem more glamorous and was more bizarre than homosexuality, and thus more attention-getting. But he did not want attention. He wanted ordinary heterosexuality, which he believed was impossible for him, or pure homosexuality. But he couldn't see himself making love to any man except the young man who was lost forever

now. Pure homosexuality was the choice he'd made because it offered more endurance than heterosexuality; and survival—mental and emotional survival—was what he strove for now. He'd come too close to the brink (shaving his head at one point, sleeping at long and irregular intervals, wandering the streets at night with nothing else to do) during the depressive stage of his life so that survival was valuable to him now.

He could find himself in lapses growing attracted to her; and then he'd shut it off, just as he would shut off any growing attractions to the young girls in the class or around campus—afraid of the consequences of such moral vicissitudes. For he felt that any lapse from a homosexual state-of-mind was a moral failing that would be punished somehow because that was his true identity and one should not wander from one's true identity. Often times, he would remind himself of his "true" nature; and he would openly discourage any flirtations and lingering looks that he got from any girls who knew him slightly from taking a class with him when he met them in the hallways. He wanted to tell them, "I'm homosexual," and settled instead for a sober-faced nobility that he hoped would convey, not too impolitely, the non-interest. He wanted to tell the girls

here, in this class, that he was homosexual and so not to waste their efforts. The most they could expect from him was friendship; and he was surprisingly good at friendships with women. In fact, he talked well with women, had always been able to communicate with them, and generally preferred them to men. He believed most women were better people than men, but the sexual crossbridge had always been a barrier. And so he caught them giving him looks from time to time.

The teacher's eyes, however, were the most intelligent ones. Yes, she was intelligent, highly intelligent. She had an e.s.p. of a sort. The words, the sentences she spoke would connect. The eyes were beginning to see that he was the only one who knew what she meant, what she was talking about. A sort of telepathy between them began to emerge. She could see that he was more than a quiet and serious student, that the art and her words were beginning to have an important effect on his life, that she was becoming important to him. He never spoke in class. He let his eyes do all the talking; and he would concentrate them most of the time on her face. At times, there were other heads in the way, but he did his best to keep a fixed gaze in her direction, to stare directly into her eyes, and when that became too bold and intolerable—onto her dress or body. He would waver at times, have lapses of faith in her. Then he would spend some periods shifting his gaze onto the other young girl who caught his interest in the class, a quiet, dark-haired, extremely beautiful girl who reminded him of Rachel from the summer class who was a drama student.

With Katherine Anne Porter the class began to have even greater meaning for him. Her stories were infinitely readable and interesting. Pale Horse, Pale Rider had finally begun to make sense to him. And he had enjoyed Noon Wine, the story of a killing by a farmer who loses the trust of his wife as a result and then commits suicide—the suspicion between male and female being the central focus of the story. Karen, the girl he'd known from the summer class, had disappeared. Apparently, she'd been auditing the class and had only been interested in Gertrude Stein. She'd devoted the class to a discussion of the male-female relationships in Katherine Anne Porter's novella, Noon Wine, and afterwards, he hovered near her, wanting to discuss the work with her but not knowing how to approach her. She solved the problem for him by walking towards him and sitting on the seat next to where he stood near the front of the class. The gesture made him want to sit, too, and he did so.

"The relationship between male and female in Noon Wine is really interesting. It points to the alienation which exists between male and female. They can never really know one another, or trust the other partner," he said.

"The male-female relationship is characterized by mistrust and suspicion bred from a fundamental incompatibility which leads to tragedy. There are doubts which plague both Mr. and Mrs. Thompson concerning the suitability of the other as a partner and about the validity of the marriage

itself. For example, Mr. Thompson's failure as a man in his role as breadwinner and in the achievement of worldly success are attributed partially, in his own mind, to the lack of an able spouse whose frequent illnesses, imaginary or real, have deprived him of the supportive capacity which any wife brings to a marriage. He had been seized by Ellie Thompson's charm, but those qualities which would have proven more beneficial to the hard life of the farm are absent. This type of mutual finding-of-faults between Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, which is natural to any marriage, lies beneath the sedate surface and explodes when a crisis occurs, a crisis which is essentially abetted by the fundamental lack of faith that plagues the marriage. The much deeper inner crisis of disbelief is what leads to Mr. Thompson's act of suicide, the only possible solution for resolving the dilemma."

"From the male standpoint, the marriage has been a failure because of what Mr. Thompson regards as the lack of proper female support. The sort of resiliency required of a farm wife has been denied him," he said.

He sought the page which he wanted, found it, and then recited: " 'He saw, after awhile, how short-sighted it had been of him to expect much from Mrs. Thompson; he had fallen in love with her delicate waist and lace-trimmed petticoats and big blue eyes, and, though all those charms had disappeared, she had in the meantime become Ellie to him, not at all the same person as Miss Ellen Bridges, popular

Sunday School teacher in the Mountain City First Baptist Church, but his dear wife, Ellie, who was not strong.

Deprived as he was, however, of the main support in life which a man might expect in marriage, he had almost without knowing it resigned himself to failure. Head erect, a prompt payer of taxes, yearly subscriber to the preacher's salary, land owner, and father of a family, employer, a hearty good fellow among men, Mr. Thompson knew, without putting it into words, that he had been going steadily down hill.' "

She said, "The marriage, however, is not without its tender and loving moments, be they rare. In an almost total departure or respite from the tone of the rest of the story, Porter provides us with one brief glimpse into the affectionate bond that is at best tenuous. It occurs as husband and wife have just finished dinner with Mr. Helton for the first time. Mrs. Thompson berates Mr. Thompson for the goat-story and he rebuts by giving her a good pinch on her thin little rump. She reacts by blushing and tugging his hair playfully. It is the kind of sexual by-play which must underlie their secret life together."

He said, "Despite blaming his wife, Thompson's tragedy rests in his own particular character, specifically in his own doubts about the manliness of his daily activities, the profession of dairy farming, and in his total obsession with how others view him. He is concerned with the appearance of things." He read from the book: " 'In spite of his situation in life, Mr. Thompson had never been able to outgrow his deep conviction that running a dairy and chasing after chickens

was women's work.' It is his conviction that performing such tasks as milking cows and looking after hens unmanned him. He prefers to handle such jobs as killing hogs, and plowing, and buying and selling eggs, butter and fruit at market which are truly masculine activities in his eyes."

She said, "What worries him most about engaging in so-called feminine pursuits, as what worries him about everything in his own life including the circumstances of the murder, is how things look—you're right." She rifled through her own volume and found the passage. She read: "'All his carefully limited fields of activity were related somehow to Mr. Thompson's feeling for the appearance of things, his own appearance in the sight of God and man. 'It don't look right,' was his final reason for not doing anything he did not wish to do. It was his dignity and his reputation that he cared about, and there were only a few kinds of work manly enough for Mr. Thompson to undertake with his own hands.' "

He said, "Later, when the murder of Homer T. Hatch has occurred, and the trial has been won in his favor, Thompson still feels the need to go about explaining the affair in detail to his neighbors because of this obsessive concern with how things look, and because of his deeply-felt doubts about his guilt in the matter which his wife's fearful assertions do nothing to allay."

She said, "Mrs. Thompson's displays of wifely duty on those visits are in-themselves symbolic of the hypocrisy of the marriage. The constant headaches and little ills she has suffered throughout the long years on the farm are direct

indications of the malaise that plagues her view of not only her husband and the marriage, but of all men in general. She feels a malaise in all of her relationships with the male gender, and she has forced herself to become accustomed to their specific crankiness. In other words, the male-female relationship is herein regarded as one wherein the female accommodates herself to the male, sublimates her innate malaise with the male presences in a barely-concealed tolerance of that presence.

Mrs. Thompson's history with men clearly indicates that in the course of her life—from daughter to wife—she has never felt at any time that she was at ease and free to be herself. It is in this prejudicial light that she comes to dread any new contact with the male presence, knowing full well that it will not be a pleasant adjustment." She turned again to her book, then she read with relish: "Mrs. Thompson was perfectly accustomed to all kinds of men full of all kinds of cranky ways. The point was, to find out just how Mr. Helton's crankiness was different from any other man's, and then get used to it, and let him feel at home. Her father had been cranky, her brothers and uncles had all been set in their ways and none of them alike; and every hired hand she'd ever seen had quirks and crotchets of his own. Now here was Mr. Helton, who was a Swede, who wouldn't talk, and who played the harmonica besides." Mr. Helton's hiring, quite simply, has served as one more occasion to bemoan her husband's

lack of good judgment and his history of poor judgment, and points to the fundamental instability of the relationship.

Reflecting upon Mr. Helton's hiring, she expresses the doubts about the marriage which have plagued it from the outset, which are the reasons for her frequent illnesses, and which lead to the suicide." She read: "Mrs. Thompson's heart fluttered and sank. Heavens, he looked lazy and worthless, he did, now. First a lot of no-count fiddling darkies and then a no-count white man. It was just like Mr. Thompson to take on that kind. She did wish he would be more considerate, and take a little trouble with his business. She wanted to believe in her husband, and there were too many times when she couldn't. She wanted to believe that tomorrow, or at least the day after, life, such a battle at best, was going to be better."

He said, "The marriage and hope ~~are revived somewhat~~ by Mr. Helton's hiring. Life, a battle at best to the burdened couple, eases because of Mr. Helton's enormous work capacity; but the introduction of this third member as a salve for the ailing family fortunes does not cure the fundamental incompatibilities between husband and wife, or between father and sons (who, Mr. Thompson imagines, would never dispute his word). When Mr. Helton, in the second year, takes it into his own hands to discipline the two boys who have been playing with his sole-treasured possessions, the harmonicas, the resulting

argument between Mr. and Mrs. Thompson brings out fundamental differences in their opposing philosophies for raising children."

She said, "These profound differences in philosophies for raising children will have their effect later on when the two boys side with the mother and adopt a hostile attitude towards the threatening influence of the father, whom they imagine intended to harm Mrs. Thompson during one of her nightmares. Porter is delving here into Freudian relationships, the now-grown sons reacting instinctively against the male parent whose sexual dominance they attempt to resist. Previously, their attitude had been one of subservient loyalty, but when the crisis in the parents' relationship emerges dramatically, the father is regarded as the culprit."

She continued: "Mrs. Thompson reacts with total fear, a fear which her children sense; and, therefore, since she is the fearful or threatened party, she is naturally regarded as the victim in the relationship and the husband—the oppressor. It is an irony that does not go unnoticed by Porter's omniscient narrator: 'Mr. Thompson was relieved to find that, without knowing how he had done it, he had succeeded in raising a set of boys who were not trifling whittlers. They were such good boys Mr. Thompson began to believe they were born that way, and that he had never spoken a harsh word to them in their lives, much less trashed them.' "

She concluded: "The fear that finally totally destroys the relationship between husband and wife is the inevitable

result of a male-female relationship which is based on misunderstanding, suspicion, and mistrust. All through the trial and on the fruitless visits to convince the neighbors of her husband's innocence, Mrs. Thompson lies about having seen the actual killing, twisting the truth ever-so-slightly to mesh with her husband's story; but it is clear that she does not believe any part of her own or her husband's half-truths. The farce of these visits is played out before a generally placating farmfolk, but it is clear that they do not believe anything of it either. Mrs. Thompson, after her automaton-like performances before this audience, returns to the morgue-like farm where she kneels before the icebox, a symbol of the materialistic sacrifices for which she has traded happiness and the possibility of a truly-compatible relationship with a male." She read: " 'She had never expected to have an icebox, much less did she hope to afford to keep it filled with ice. It seemed like a miracle...' But the miracle cannot help her even as she kneels before it like a native praying to a pagan-god. Her disgust with men and with Mr. Thompson emerges during this mock ritual. Reflecting on Mr. Helton's capture and shooting through the heart, she berates men for their violence: 'Yes, thought Mrs. Thompson again with the same bitterness, of course, they had to be rough. Mr. Thompson can't argue with a man and get him off the place peaceably; no, she thought, standing up and shutting the icebox, he has to kill somebody, he has to be a murderer

and ruin his boys' lives and cause Mr. Helton to be killed like a mad dog.' "

He said, "Mrs. Thompson comes to recognize in Mr. Thompson the worst manifestations of her failure to really understand the male character. He becomes a murderer in her eyes, fulfilling the pattern of mistrust and misunderstanding you mentioned that has characterized the relationship from the outset. The long-term misgivings that she has nursed concerning him and all men in general have finally found their fruition in this nightmare vision. The cold and isolated condition between male and female at the end of the story is the true psychological state of affairs between men and women on the real communication level. Mr. Thompson is left with the sole option of self-destruction in an attempt to bridge that chasm of disbelief existing between himself and the rest of the world. In his final suicide note, it is significant that he blots out two words, 'My wife.' She has become a non-entity to him."

She said, "The male-female relationship, therefore, fails to provide the supportive faith necessary for the elimination of the feeling of human beings as essentially isolated individuals—the feeling on which most of Katherine Anne Porter's fiction rests."

He nodded his head. There didn't seem to be anything more for him to say; so he got up slowly and edged towards the door. "See you next week then," he said tentatively. Then he left the classroom, a sense of freedom having been released in him by the long conversation, and a new sense

of anxiety as well for he had hoped to remain anonymous.

The following week led to Carson McCullers, his favorite writer at the time, and to the literature of the American South which was his favorite and, in his estimation, the best literature of the twentieth century. They were doing The Ballad Of The Sad Café. He'd read most of Carson McCullers' work: The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter, which he'd loved, Reflections In A Golden Eye, The Member Of The Wedding, and a number of short stories. He loved Carson McCullers and he felt that anyone who shared that love was of the finest critical judgment. Curiously, he'd met very few people who'd read her and he could not understand how they could have been alive in the world and not have read Carson McCullers. At times, it seemed to have been like a secret boiling inside of him wanting to be let out. Just to find Carson McCullers' name on a reading list was something short of miraculous. Neglect, terrible neglect, by the university, the academic community, all of the university professors.

In class he listened as she discussed Carson McCullers: "The major theme that pervades the works of Carson McCullers is the one of loneliness. The inability to communicate love or inner feeling isolates her characters

within themselves. She writes: 'Spiritual isolation is the basis of most of my themes. My first book was concerned with this, almost entirely, and all of my books since, in one way or another. Love, and especially love of a person who is incapable of returning or receiving it, is at the heart of my selection of grotesque figures to write about—people whose physical incapacity is a symbol of their spiritual incapacity to love or receive love—their spiritual isolation.'

Essentially, she is an intuitive writer. Her work is controlled by imagination over intellect; the subconscious mind of the writer provides the seed of the idea and it is developed by the active mind. She herself observes this process in her writing: 'The dimensions of a work of art are seldom realized by the author until the work is accomplished. It is like a flowering dream. Ideas grow, budding silently, and there are a thousand illuminations coming day by day as the work progresses...I understand only particles. I understand the characters, but the novel itself is not in focus. The focus comes at random moments which no one can understand, least of all the author. For me, they usually follow great effort. To me, these illuminations are the grace of labor. All of my work has happened this way.'

In her first novel, The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter, the fact that four of the five main characters cannot communicate amongst each other when they are in the same room, Singer's room, is the ultimate tragedy of human

existence for McCullers. The loneliness that enshrouds them can only be broken by Singer, and once an intrusion is made on that coveted, secret relationship (with Singer) the product is rudeness and silence. Love, alone, has the power to shatter the barriers between people, but in The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter love, as in the rest of her works, is often not shared or is misunderstood by the beloved. In the novel, Biff Brannon, the caféowner, for example, feels an attraction for the androgynous Mick Kelly. She, however, mistakes that love or fascination for hatred. We find this pattern repeated throughout McCullers' works, the most obvious example occurring in The Ballad Of The Sad Café wherein the triangular relationship of Miss Amelia, Cousin Lymon and Marvin Macy follows a pattern of rejection of the lover by the beloved.

Hatred, always the underside of love, renders it impossible in McCullers' universe for any relationship to achieve any form of real fulfillment. In the oft-quoted passage from The Ballad Of The Sad Café she states: 'First of all, love is a joint experience between two persons—but the fact that it is a joint experience does not mean that it is a similar experience to the two people involved. There are the lover and the beloved, but these two come from different countries. Often the beloved is only a stimulus for all the stored-up love which has lain quiet within the lover for a long time hitherto. And somehow every lover knows this. He feels in his soul that his love is a solitary

thing. He comes to know a new, strange loneliness and it is this knowledge which makes him suffer...The beloved fears and hates the lover, and with the best of reasons. For the lover is forever trying to strip bare his beloved. The lover craves any possible relation with the beloved, even if this experience can cause him only pain.' "

After class he wanted to discuss The Ballad Of The Sad Café with her. He waited until all the others had left. She was about to pick up her purse and books to leave when she noticed him lingering by her desk. She returned the purse and the books to their places and waited for him to speak.

"Reflections In A Golden Eye, The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter..." he began, "are poetic tragedies. They involve a series of characters in grotesque sexual relationships, but always the grotesqueness is employed not for sensational effect but as a means of achieving insight into the common human denominator."

"The Ballad Of The Sad Café is also a poetic tragedy—you're right—a ballad in both the narrative structure and in the folksy setting and feeling. The introduction to Reflections In A Golden Eye contains the sort of ironic, matter-of-fact understatement which permeates the story: 'There is a fort in the South where a few years ago a murder was committed. The participants in this tragedy were: two officers, a soldier, two women, a Filipino, and a horse.' "

"Someone commented that even the horse wasn't normal,"

he joked.

She laughed. "In essence the introduction to The Ballad Of The Sad Café displays the exact same style and we can view the fable-like beginning as a slight modification of the earlier story." She turned to the first page of the book: " 'There is a café in the South where a few years ago a tragedy occurred. The participants were a man, a woman, and a dwarf.' The setting is a small Southern town with two-room houses surrounding the cotton mill which is the town's single industry. One recognizes herein the sort of small Southern town where there is nothing whatsoever to do on an August afternoon that forms the setting of The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter and Clock Without Hands. McCullers introduces the story with the words: 'However, here in this very town there was once a café.' She then goes on to introduce the main characters in the fable in the very same manner employed in Reflections In A Golden Eye: 'The owner of the place was Amelia Evans. But the person most responsible for the success and gaiety of the place was a hunchback called Cousin Lymon. One other person had a part in the story of this café—he was the former husband of Miss Amelia, a terrible character who returned to the town after a long term in the penitentiary, caused ruin, and then went on his way again.' "

"I noted in the tone of the language the type of tongue-in-cheek viewpoint reminiscent of William Faulkner's The Hamlet. The situation itself is absurd and belongs to the genre of the American tall-tale; and the allegorical

quality of the tale, one would think, would translate well to the stage," he said.

She said, "The failure of Edward Albee's stage version of The Ballad Of The Sad Café suggests less a failure of the adaptability of the story to the stage than the particular failure of the playwright in that instance. It is art of a high calibre, the symbolic level of the story transcending its individual elements. The townspeople, who possess no real individual identity, are employed as a chorus in the Greek classical drama fashion. They act and react as one, forming a backdrop for the events surrounding the three main characters. The three possess the grotesqueness in physical and inner being typical of the characters in a McCullers novel. Physical deformity is evident in the giant Miss Amelia and also in the dwarf, Cousin Lymon. The dwarf is crippled in body but his spirit, sociable and fun-loving, forms the perfect complement to Miss Amelia's reclusive nature. She, understandably, falls in love with him and opens up a café where there had been a store. The dwarf becomes the center of her life and the charismatic central figure in the café whose success is much owed to him."

"The point being made, of course, in the relationship between Cousin Lymon and Miss Amelia is that anyone can become the object of love and that what matters is not whom the love is directed towards but the quality of the love itself." He flipped through his book looking for the passage he had underlined with a yellow marker. He found it on page

nineteen: " 'Now, the beloved can also be of any description. The most outlandish people can be the stimulus for love. A man may be a doddering great-grandfather and still love only a strange girl he saw in the streets of Cheekaw one afternoon two decades past. The preacher may love a fallen woman. The beloved may be treacherous, greasy-headed, and given to evil habits. Yes, and the lover may see this as clearly as anyone else—but that does not affect the evolution of his love one whit...Therefore, the value and quality of any love is determined by the lover himself.' "

She said, "The various loves and their implications are interesting. Marvin Macy, Miss Amelia's former husband, had loved Amelia when he married her and that love had changed him from an embittered, evil man into someone with a semblance of having a heart and soul. Two pages over it says: 'But love had reversed the character of Marvin Macy. For two years he loved Miss Amelia, but he did not declare himself. He would stand near the door of her premises, his cap in his hand, his eyes meek and longing and misty gray. He reformed himself completely. He was good to his brother and foster mother, and he saved his wages and learned thrift. Moreover, he reached out toward God...He learned good manners; he trained himself to rise and give his chair to a lady, and he quit swearing and fighting and using holy names in vain. So for two years he passed through this transformation and improved his character in every way.' "

She added, "Marvin Macy's love turns to hatred when on their

wedding night Amelia, never having experienced any sexual advance, storms out of the bridal chamber to leave the marriage unconsummated. The marriage lasts for ten brief days after which Macy reverts to criminal behaviour and is placed in jail. In the six years between the time Cousin Lymon arrives in the town and the day Marvin Macy returns Miss Amelia is given to the sort of behaviour that had transformed Marvin Macy from embittered and evil man to model citizen. The implication of the effect of these various loves, Marvin Macy's for Miss Amelia and Miss Amelia's for Cousin Lymon, and, later, Cousin Lymon's for Marvin Macy, is that the lover owes a debt to the beloved simply because of the fact that the beloved, as the focus of the lover's attention, allows him to free the stored-up passion which renders him a gentler and more contented person. As Carson McCullers herself states on the very same page as the passage you read: 'It is for this reason that most of us would rather love than be loved. Almost everyone wants to be. And the curt truth is that, in a deep secret way, the state of being loved is intolerable to many.' "

He said. "Certainly Cousin Lymon's fixation on Marvin Macy results in the same sort of passionate rejection that was Marvin Macy's lot in his affair with Miss Amelia. Each character, therefore, follows the same punishing course. Cousin Lymon, remaining indifferent throughout to Miss Amelia's love, suffers the indifference of Marvin

Nacy; Miss Amelia, having rejected Marvin Macy, is, in turn, rejected during the fight on Ground Hog Day by Cousin Lymon; Marvin Macy, having lost Miss Amelia, treats Cousin Lymon with the same thoughtless cruelty that he shows towards everyone in the town."

She said, "The big Ground Hog Day fight, the showdown at the O.K. Corral, as it were, is treated in serio-comic fashion; it is the climax towards which the story has been building. The townsfolk watch on as the travesty proceeds, the drama reaching a crescendo when Miss Amelia, winning the contest, is assaulted from behind by the passion-mad little hunchback. Miss Amelia is beaten and the two conspirators ride off into the sunset, leaving Miss Amelia alone in the town with the dying café, which she eventually has boarded-up after waiting three fruitless years for the dwarf to return. In the ending of the story—the sad fate of Miss Amelia—there is quite a degree of similarity with William Faulkner's short story, 'A Rose For Emily.' Faulkner, of course, had always been a McCullers' favorite and his influence on her art is as great as the influences of the other important writers whom she admired—Dostoyevsky..."

"She called The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter her Russian Realist Novel," he interjected.

"Tolstoy, Joyce, O'Neill, Isak Dinesen. The chain gang song which forms the final episode of the novel completes the circle begun with the opening of the story." She turned to the last page: "These August afternoons—

when your shift is finished there is absolutely nothing to do; you might as well walk down to the Forks Fall Road and listen to the chain gang." she read. Then she added, "In this final passage, once again, the poetic power of her prose reaches a zenith as she describes the song of the chain gang, an allegory for the human condition: 'The music will swell until at last it seems that the sound does not come from the twelve men on the gang, but from the earth itself, or the wide sky. It is music that causes the heart to broaden and the listener to grow cold with ecstasy and fright. Then slowly the music will sink down until at last there remains one lonely voice, then a great hoarse breath, the sun, the sound of the picks in the silence.' "

She said, "It carries an impact reminiscent of Biff's moment of truth and revelation, his insight into the human condition which ends The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter." She picked up her copy of the other volume from her desk and turned to the last page: "The silence in the room was deep as the night itself. Biff stood transfixed, lost in his meditations. Then suddenly he felt a quickening in him. His heart turned and he leaned his back against the counter for support. For in a swift radiance of illumination he saw a glimpse of human struggle and of valor. Of the endless fluid passage of humanity through endless time. And of those who labor and of those who—one word—love. His soul expanded. But for a moment only. For in him he felt a warning, a shaft of terror. Between the two worlds he was suspended. He saw

that he was looking at his own face in the counter glass before him. Sweat glistened on his temples and his face was contorted. One eye was opened wider than the other. The left eye delved narrowly into the past while the right gazed wide and affrighted into a future of blackness, error, and ruin. And he was suspended between radiance and darkness. Between bitter irony and faith. For Biff, in this brief moment before death, life has reared its frightened and frightening face; and like all the characters in the novel, it has entrapped him in its terrible loneliness—a loneliness that despite the moments of radiance remains essentially inescapable. Mick Kelly, Jake the Marxist, Doctor Copeland suffer the same fate for they are thrown again into their own illusion and isolation."

He heard the silence in the room. She waited for any further comments from him and when none came, she turned to pick up her books and left ahead of him. He remained in the classroom awhile pondering what she had said.

It was during the week of classes on Carson McCullers that he felt that their relationship was solidified. He could tell from her reactions that she knew he had a special affinity for Carson McCullers, and he understood that Carson McCullers was her favorite writer on the reading list. And thus he became her favorite in the class, along with the Rachel look-a-like whose name he did not know and would never learn, who also seemed to have an affinity for McCuller's work. It

was the end of the profound sense of alienation that he had felt at the beginning of the course. He mattered to her now, more than any of the others. When they reached Carson McCullers it was mutually understood that they were alike, as alike as any two human beings could be. They were wedded by blood; and there was no more pretense on her part about being someone she was not. She'd found someone who understood, whose genes were linked to her own; and that freed her from the self-contained and well-practised professional air. She became even more casual, more human, warmer. And they as a class began to like her better as a result. She was not speaking competently and remotely to strangers now, but to female friends and to one potential lover—for that was what he'd become for her, he thought, and what she, with some further encouragement and warmth, would become for him.

He had not been there at the beginning of the term and so had missed the instructions about when the mid-term paper would be due. It would be a short paper, six to ten pages; but he was not worried about writing it just yet. He was more concerned with keeping up with the reading. Plus he had other papers to write, other papers which were due. So, on the week when she finally announced

that the paper would be due the next class, the next Tuesday, he felt that because he had entered the course late she would allow him some leeway about time commitments. He felt that he could write it over the weekend and hand it in the following Tuesday. As it happened, this was during the week they were doing Carson McCullers. He'd been too absorbed with her, with the commentaries in class, to devote any time to thinking about what he would write for the paper. The Tuesday class came and went, and then came the Thursday class. The other boy spoke occasionally. He was the typical pseudo-intellectual; and he felt a certain sense of competition with him. But he would not play that game, would not be induced out of his silence by jealousy. He understood that she listened to his statements with courtesy but that she somehow disliked the other boy who tended to be too verbose and smart-alecky. She withstood him without overtly showing her dislike. But when the paper became due on the Thursday a certain crisis of faith and trust developed between them.

The class had gone well. It had been the best class so far in his opinion. His interest had been high and at the end he had felt a certain effusiveness which came to him whenever a class had hit home and been worth every minute. The young girl who reminded him of Rachel had commented a good deal and it had been obvious that she, too, felt a great affinity for Carson McCullers' writing. He enjoyed any class in which she spoke, and he listened

with greater attention to her than to any of the other students. And now, disinclined to leave that class atmosphere of real learning, he leaned back in his seat, watching the teacher and the other students as they gathered around one another. He sat back and watched for a few minutes and then approached her where she was sitting on the right front side of the classroom. She had indicated that anyone who had not handed in their paper and who wished to talk about it should see her after class. The statement, uttered in front of the others, had been directly intended for him. She didn't know how else to approach him and so she hoped that he would take the first step over this practical matter. He stood near her for awhile, watching as she spoke to another girl. Then he sat on the desktop of the chair to her left. She noticed his presence and continued to talk with the girl, her voice now betraying an apprehension over speaking with him. When she was finished he lowered his head down towards hers and said, "I'll have my paper for you next week." She gave a quick nod and said, "Okay. Do you know what you'll write it on?"

"Katherine Arne Porter. I'll need the weekend to write it, and hand it in to you next week."

"Next week? Tuesday?"

She spoke the words in a commanding tone. She was attempting to take charge, to say: "Listen, I'm the teacher and you better have it for me on Tuesday, not anytime next week. I won't allow you to take advantage of me."

He nodded and said, "Tuesday," and then he stood up and walked away towards the door. He could see that the incident had suddenly changed her attitude towards him. She'd reverted to the state of mistrust that had begun their relationship. He did not know if he could finish it by Tuesday. What if Tuesday came along and he didn't have it for her? That could place a permanent rift in their relationship. He'd made her mad somehow and now he'd have to repair the damage. Promptness rather than quality would have to determine its writing. He would put everything else aside and concentrate on that one thing. But somehow he felt that she wasn't really mad at him. She was just mindful and assertive of the fact that her favoritism towards him should not interfere with his academic commitments. She would not allow him to take advantage of her, even though he hadn't been trying to do so. She was hyper-sensitive to being taken advantage of, especially by those whom she liked, and quick to react if she believed her authority was being tested. He decided he must cure her not of the sudden shifts to coldness and her emotional vacillations—these he would find exciting—but of the propensity towards unfounded suspicion. She could misinterpret. She would misinterpret many of his deeds and his behaviour, misread his motives and character, all throughout their relationship. He would love her for it, and would hate her for her blindness.

He spent the weekend writing a paper on that very theme of suspicion and mistrust between male and female in the work of Katherine Anne Porter, specifically in Noon Wine. He'd borrowed some reference works from the library, but he had relied mainly on his own interpretation of the subtle emotional balance between the wife and the husband in the story. He did not know that he would hit home with it, that he would strike her where she lived.

He sat through the Tuesday class. They were now doing Flannery O'Connor, but the class he was waiting for was Thursday's, when they would handle Wise Blood, O'Connor's masterpiece and a favorite work of his. He handed the paper to her after class. Rather, he waited to hand it to her as she pretended to be greatly preoccupied with an outline of some sort that a husky-voiced, dark-haired girl had requested from her. It was evident that she didn't want to talk to him. When she noticed his presence beside her after class she bent her nose forward on the desk to avoid the contact he now seemed to be requesting. He noted her withdrawal with resentment. It was not that he resented her being shy of the contact; it was the fear of him that motivated that shrinking away that he resented. As she

bent over the outline he laid the paper on the chair to her far left without a word. As he was straightening himself up again she looked up at him. Her eyes had followed the movement of his hand, and she said, "Thank you." It was the gentlemanliness of the gesture that impressed her, aside from the fact that he had been true to his word and had gotten the paper in on the appointed time. She saw in that one moment what had impressed her before—that he was not a cad, not a frivolous truant, but that he was well-mannered. He was, in her eyes, a gentleman—a quiet gentleman but a gentleman nevertheless.

As for him, he felt the cold frustration he had always felt before unfounded mistrust, especially with women, and the stubborn unwillingness to upgrade the opinion which others had of him. His face was cold marble and he nodded to her in reply. He left without a word. Even the nod itself had been a gentleman's nod, and she had seen how she had hurt him by not believing in him in the tautness of his body and in the poker-faced expression. When he walked away he could feel her eyes on him.

The resentment and frosty silence did not last long. Two days to be exact. On Thursday the other boy in the class was to deliver a presentation on O'Connor's Wise Blood. It had been arranged early in the term when he had not been

there. Somehow, beforehand, he felt like he should have been the one up there delivering the presentation. The teacher herself did not seem certain that the other young boy was a suitable interpreter of Flannery O'Connor's work. But a good time was had by all. He had seen the John Huston film version of Wise Blood quite recently at one of the second-run cinemas. He spent two of his evenings per week at the cinema during this period of his life. Later, he would give up going to the movies altogether and watch them only on t.v.. Seeing the movie had led to reading the printed work, which he had found just as compelling and twistingly funny. He laughed a good deal during the reading; and he laughed in class when she made references to all the humorous episodes and situations. It was the first indication he had that she could be funny—riotously funny instead of quietly and conventionally funny. She caught him laughing. It seemed to please her. He enjoyed the presentation and discussion so much that he stretched his arm out on the chair beside him and rocked on the legs of the chair in which he was sitting throughout the class period instead of taking notes. That seemed to please her, too—the fact that he was loose and relaxed.

After the class she handed his paper back to him with a smile and then walked back to the front of the class. He opened the folder to the last page and saw "A-" in a circle. He hadn't expected it. He had grown so

accustomed to having bad work rewarded with good marks and excellent work rewarded with low marks that any measure compatible with his own was a surprise. He felt now that he must say something to her, thank her in some way. He walked to where she had been seated. She was arranging her books and her purse, preparing to leave. The other boy, who'd completed his presentation, was waiting for some sign from her, some effusive thanks that did not seem forthcoming. She was in a hurry to get away, but did not know how to leave without offending the boy. He provided the solution to her dilemma by approaching her.

"Thanks for the A minus," he said. She nodded. "I'd like to do my paper on Flannery O'Connor," he blurted out. He was referring to the longer paper due at the end of the term. "On Wise Blood."

She looked attentively at him and said—her words were running altogether like his own and she was breathing quickly—"Any special theme? There's lots of angles you can approach her from."

"Probably the religious dimension in her work." He said it without thinking, not certain if that was what he wanted to do.

She said, "Uh-hum. You'll be dealing with her notion of grace and redemption. Is that what you had in mind, or do you mean..."

He didn't know exactly what he meant. He didn't want to be narrowed down just yet, just wanted to talk to her for the sake of acquaintance and because she had been

kind, funny, and attractive. It was gratitude and the natural attraction to someone who shows confidence in your talent and ability, and the desire to be with her on a one-to-one basis.

"Just the religious dimension in general," he said.

"Alright," she said.

And then he made as if to go, but then he stopped abruptly, turned and said to her, "That was a very good presentation." Then, when he saw that that wasn't what he'd meant—he'd intended it as a compliment to her—he corrected himself, "Discussion."

She seemed to take this in, not wishing to show that she was swayed by the flattery, and replied, "Yeah. I thought it went pretty well." She had picked up her purse and her books and now was moving towards the door. Apparently, he was going to leave with her, walk away with her after class—something he hadn't bargained for. What would he say to her? A sudden terror over the lack of material for conversation enveloped him. He just knew there was going to be a terrible awkward silence between them at some point. He wanted to get away just then. She slid the door open and held it with her hand. She was holding the door open for him, not the other way around. The gentlemanly thing would have been for him to hold the door open for her. They moved out together into the cavernous corridor and he strove for some words to say to her. When nothing came to mind she relieved his anxiety by asking, "What

did you like about Wise Blood?"

"I liked the character of Enoch Emery," he replied.

"I find him fascinating."

She looked at him and nodded.

"He's the only one who has wise blood," he continued.

Then he made an effort to transcend the normal barriers of communication between people. "Do you believe that such people exist?" he asked.

"You mean people with a sort of psychic intuition?"

"Yes." He could see that she knew what he was talking about. She was one of those people, as he believed he was one. She probably possessed a psychic intuitiveness and had never been able to talk about it with anyone before.

"Probably," was her reply. "Statistically there are bound to be such individuals about." The vagueness of her tone was an effort to dissuade him from thinking that perhaps she was placing herself in that category. But he knew that she knew that about herself. It was a link. High intelligence was their link, and an interest and belief in the supernatural. He'd pleased her with that question. She had known the meaning of his gesture—an attempt to break through the student-teacher relationship for a more intimate, personal exchange. And he'd succeeded.

"I think Flannery O'Connor probably had it—wise blood."

"I don't know. She led a very tragic life. She had—"

"Lupus."

"Yes. Disease of the blood. She couldn't move about

freely, couldn't control her hands to write."

"All the great ones seem to die young," he said.

"Or have some terrible incurable disease," she added.

"Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor...So much pain goes into their writing."

They reached the top of the stairs and now they sat on one of the wooden benches along the corridor of the main floor.

"Wise Blood is a journey, isn't it?" he said.

She said, "Wise Blood opens and closes with a reference to home, and the novel fulfills the circular pattern established by Hazel Motes's displacement and arrival. He returns from the army to discover that his mother's house is an empty, dilapidated structure. Eastrod as he knows it no longer exists. His spiritual displacement thereby finds a literal, physical proportion—suggesting O'Connor's theme of the physical reality being an extension of the spiritual world. Hazel decides that he will go to Taulkingham and 'do some things that I've never done before.' He contends that 'you might as well go one place as another,' as he tells Mrs. Wally Bee Hitchcock on the train; but it is clear that he desires some connection with the psychological security that 'going home' entails."

He said, "His statement to Mrs. Hitchcock, as he looks her straight in the eye in a deliberately insulting manner, 'I reckon you think you been redeemed,' is the first clue of the religious quest that consumes him. It is the resistance to grace and redemption, the denial of God, that Hazel has

embraced on his journey. Up until the army called him at eighteen he'd been certain that religious devotion was his calling in life. His grandfather, the backwoods country preacher, had ridden all over the county. But Hazel's entry into the army, a lesson in the ways of corruption, has led to a rebellion against his past. If he is mistaken for a preacher it infuriates him. He swears at the taxi driver who remarks, 'You look like a preacher. That hat looks like a preacher's hat.' His fury at being thought of as any kind of religious man is also indicated by his first words to the fat prostitute, Leora Watts. 'I'm no goddam preacher,' he states at the outset."

She said, "But Asa Hawks, the blind man, knows better. 'Some preacher has left his mark on you,' he tells him. Asa Hawks senses the truth about the man beneath the surface appearance. Hazel's self-proclaimed amorality is merely a symptom of a deep-set religious obsession. Hazel is essentially a lost soul who is attempting to deny his true nature or identity by pursuing a hedonistic lifestyle.

The most notable feature about Hazel, apart from the tangible aura of ludicrousness..."

"I love the glaring blue suit he wears with the price tag stapled on the sleeve," he interjected.

"...is his eyes. They are deeply-set in their sockets and are arresting in their intensity. To Mrs. Hitchcock they are 'like passages leading somewhere.' "

"The name itself, Hazel Notes, suggests the metaphor of lack of clear vision," he said.

"The eyes are the reflection of the soul. Mrs. Flood, his landlady, later peers into his sightless gaze, attempting to reach some connection or communion with the pin point of light which is the light of divine enlightenment," she said. She found the passage and read it aloud to him: " 'She shut her eyes and saw the pin point of light but so far away that she could not hold it steady in her mind. She felt as if she were blocked at the entrance of something. She sat staring with her eyes shut, into his eyes, and felt as if she had finally got to the beginning of something she couldn't begin, and she saw him moving farther and farther away, farther and farther into the darkness until he was the pin point of light.' "

She said, "Hazel has found the entrance to the spiritual world from which he had been fleeing by the end of the novel, but the greater course of the drama has precisely to do with the notes in his vision prior to the self-inflicted blindness which facilitates his deliverance. On a larger scale, the novel deals with the notes which cloud all men's visions in regard to religious acceptance and secular denial."

He said, "This need for an accurate vision, a direct line with the messages which God or some divine force is sending in relation to our moral selves, is reflected in Hazel's divided attention which is an indication of his divided self. He is always staring about him, focusing his eyes on inanimate objects in an effort to divine just what it is"

that God is trying to tell him."

She said, "When the incontrovertible moment of truth finally does occur—the patrolman's destruction of his car by guiding it into the lake—he interprets it as a sign from God to abandon his denial of grace. His salvation demands the performance of an extreme act of penance. He returns, therefore, to the pattern of the past when, as a child, he would place rocks in his shoes and walk for miles in them."

"Then his self-punishment takes on more extreme forms—like wrapping barbed wire around his chest," he said.

"He retreats into monk-like solitude, displaying an indifference to food, money and social intercourse. Physical concerns are no longer relevant to his ascetic commitment," she said.

"I love what Mrs. Flood, who's shocked by Hazel's behaviour, says." He mimicked a woman's voice: " 'He might as well be one of them monks...he might as well be in a monkery.' " They both laughed. "She's in a sense fascinated and attracted by the sadomasochism. It contains a kind of spiritual selflessness which she is incapable of fathoming."

"His dying into life, which suggests the traditional Catholic view that there is, indeed, no redemption until man understands and accepts the need for it," she said, "is beyond her. Her literal view of the world is a take-off on the really blind, spiritually-uninitiated masses amongst us. Her typical reaction to Hazel's explanation for the barbed wire around his chest—'I'm not clean'—is:

"I know it...you got blood on that night shirt and on the bed. You ought to get you a wash-woman." It suggests the inability to see beyond the literal. Hazel wishes to embrace the mystery rather than the superficiality of life, hence his desire for emptiness. He desires the vision of the dead whom he imagines as holding the key to the mystery. 'If there's no bottom in your eyes,' he tells Mrs. Flood, 'they hold more.' We are left to conclude, as he lies prone and lifeless, that the transformation into Christ-like grace has occurred. He has rid himself of the symbolic haze which plagued his vision throughout. O'Connor, in referring to him by the shorter version of his first name—Haze—has caught the essence of the man and his condition."

He said, "On the other hand, in contrast to the figure of Hazel Motes, who is the higher form of man's evolution, is Enoch Emery, the lower form. Whereas Hazel evolves into higher worship of the divine, Enoch regresses into the worship of the pagan idol, Gonga the gorilla. His bestial predilections are a parody of what man stripped of his civilized impulses can become. Religion is as strong in him as in Hazel; and he follows rituals based on superstition, but which carry as much religious fervour as any of the acts committed by Hazel Motes."

"The extremes of both men, the wrapping of barbed wire around his chest by Hazel, the dressing-up in the gorilla suit as a kind of transfiguration into the Christ-

figure by Enoch, are each barbarisms and distortions of the principles of religious propriety. They share a common predicament in that their respective faiths isolate them from the rest of humanity," she stated.

He said, "Enoch instantly recognizes a kinship with Hazel on that level. 'People ain't friendly here,' he tells Hazel. Alone in the city, without any possibility of forming attachments with his fellow man, he possesses the kind of alienation that attracts him to another loner. When Hazel resists his attempts at friendship he utters the truth about Hazel which his intuition..."

"A viable and powerful sense in him," she interjected.

"...has perceived. 'You don't know nobody either. You ain't got no woman nor nothing to do. I knew when I first seen you you didn't have nobody nor nothing but Jesus. I seen you and I knew it.' "

"This psychic intuition of Enoch's," she said, "stems from the belief in his own special inheritance from his father."

"The wise blood of the title," he added.

"Yes. The question thus arises of who truly possesses the wise blood in the novel—Enoch or Hazel? If we were to believe in the sanctity of Hazel's mission and his redemption or deliverance, then, as some critics have suggested, the wise blood would belong to him," she said.

"But Hazel's truth is derived from mental suffering which eventually leads to salvation in death. The concept of wise blood, of intuitive emotional response to invisible stimuli, cannot take in Hazel's mental calculations and

self-questionings. A spiritual battleground of the kind involved in Hazel's spiritual journey is antithetical to the nature of intuitive response. Enoch possesses the wise blood because his responses are uncontrollable. There is no psychic conflict involved and his intuition, therefore, is pure and untainted. The key point lies with the notion of free will. Where there is a possibility of free will, as with Hazel who is confronted by alternatives on his quest between the spiritual and material, wise blood is not a valid definition. Free will does not pertain to Enoch's mode of life. It bears no role in the pattern of his existence and he has no psychodrama confronting him in the novel. Therefore, his assertions about possessing the real wise blood are valid; and Hazel, who struggles in his vision of truth and the proper pattern to pursue, cannot claim otherwise. Enoch reacts against his high-handedness. He says: "You act like you think you got wiser blood than anybody else, but you ain't! I'm the one who has it. Not you. Me." And what he declares is true. Of course, he employs the wise blood he feels running through his veins for a similar purpose—the worship of a false Jesus, the museum mummy that he steals and delivers to Hazel by way of Sabbath Hawks."

She said, "Yet, for all the comedy of the gesture, the Jesus that Enoch chooses is much closer to the figure of the martyred Christ than appearances would indicate. Sabbath Hawks, who's attracted by evil, assumes a maternal attitude towards the wrapped package which Enoch delivers. The mummy

is an object of fascination for her because of its cuteness and its doll-like quality. She imagines that it might be a child of the unholy union between Hazel and herself. Her response is described like this..." She turned to chapter eleven: " 'She might have sat there for ten minutes, without a thought, held by whatever it was that was familiar about him. She had never known anyone who looked like him before, but there was something in him of everyone she had ever known, as if they had all been rolled into one person and killed and shrunk and dried.' It is a distorted maternalism because ultimately Sabbath can only respond to what is decadent in anything; but the mummy stands on its own as a symbol of suffering mankind. It possesses a universality that underlies the familiar quality that Sabbath recognizes. It is, in essence, the figure of Christ crucified."

"Hazel's response to it is violent. Hazel's anger when faced with falsity leads him to the murder of Solace Layfield, the false prophet. Layfield is a dupe for Hoover Shoats," he said.

"The ultimate practitioner of commercialized religion," she said. "Shoats recognizes Hazel's proselytising abilities."

"When he sees him preaching to the crowd from the 'pulpit' of his car," he added.

"Shoats's subsequent concept of the Holy Church Of Christ Without Christ is stolen from Hazel's idea of the Church Without Christ," she said.

"Where the blind don't see and the lame don't walk

and what's dead stays that way!' " he declared.

She said, "Hazel's vision had been nihilistic. He says: 'I'm going to preach 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.' "

"He is obsessed with truth and he disdains all liars. It is his rage at what Hoover Shoats has done with his expression of atheistic ideas that leads him to violence," he said.

"It is the moment of violence of which O'Connor speaks concerning her works, wherein the essence of the character is revealed and which precedes the acceptance of grace," she said.

He said, "As he runs over Solace Layfield with his car..."

"The name, again, is symbolic. Solace Layfield—he dies on a field asking God for solace," she interrupted.

"...he utters a classic line: 'Two things I can't stand—a man that ain't true and one that mocks what is.' "

"O'Connor has turned her comic view to death. As a young girl, Flannery O'Connor," she said, "excelled at the art of cartooning. Robert Fitzgerald, in his introduction to the posthumous collection, Everything That Rises Must Converge, suggests that it was a gift she employed well in the creation of her sharply-drawn characters. When Solace Layfield is droning his confession and Hazel slaps him hard on the back, it is a scene out of a cartoon fantasy. It is both horrifying and funny, real and unreal."

"The final scene of the novel, Hazel lying lifeless on the bed and Mrs. Flood conversing with the deadman..."

" 'Well, Mr. Motes, I see you've come home!' " she said.

"...contains the same peculiar O'Connor humour," he said, "biting and sharp-edged, and layered with a double-meaning."

"Hazel Motes has, indeed, come home," she said, "delivered of the psychic blindness that plagued his life and his vision. Hazel has entered the kingdom of clear and genuine vision. It is the height of irony that his final grasp of the invisible dimension leads to invisibility—death. O'Connor has employed her gift in creating a fine comical ending wherein she displays a true cartoonist's vision."

"Flannery O'Connor," she said, "writes so convincingly about intuitive perception that one is left to imagine that she may well have possessed the gift and the talent of those rare individuals who see deeply beyond surfaces. The parallels between Carson McCullers and her are extraordinary in many respects. The fact that both were crippled by diseases which resulted in rather premature deaths points to the enormous suffering, physical and psychological, that art of the first calibre demands. She contracted lupus as she was typing the first draft of Wise Blood at the Fitzgerald home in Connecticut in the fall of 1950. It was inherited from her father who had died from it. It seems more than a coincidence that she reached her ascendancy with Wise Blood, an undeniable masterpiece, and contracted an illness that would take her life at age

thirty-nine in the same fashion that Carson McCullers wrote her initial and enduring masterpiece, The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter, and then suffered the cerebral hemorrhage that would incapacitate her for the remainder of her life. The gift imparted to these two women carried with it the cost of physiological well-being. But the pain of their personal lives was transformed into a body of writing that, though not prolific in relationship to other authors in American letters, reflects the veracity of the old adage 'quality is not quantity.' The grotesques were images of their own attraction to what is unique in the human condition; and the universality derived from this attention to individuality speaks of the value of human differences and the toleration of them. It is the voice of compassion and wisdom. It is the voice of the fineness of the human soul."

And then the talk dissipated after that. There was the awkward silence between them that he had feared. He'd run out of things to say. She waited for him to speak, gave him a brief sidelong glance when he didn't, cleared her throat lowly, but did not seem annoyed. The silence seemed to be a deeper enamourment of the intimacy between them. She discovered that she could be silent with him without embarrassment. "Tillie Olsen on Tuesday. Right?" he finally declared.

"Yes," she said. And then as they stopped at the head of the stairs he pointed with his finger.

"You're going this way?" He was motioning down the hallway to the east wing where her office was located. She nodded. "I'm going the other way. Well, see you on Tuesday."

"Bye," she replied.

There were a number of writers after that: Tillie Olsen, Zelda Fitzgerald, Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton, Toni Morrison. It was March now. The sun was shining on the campus and she decided to hold a class outdoors in the fresh open air. This he didn't know about until he arrived at the regular classroom and saw a chalk-written inscription on the blackboard which read: "Today's class a plein air." There was a problem, however: he didn't know exactly where they were to be found. He walked back up to the main entrance and began a circuitous tour of the campus, trying to locate them. He felt foolish, lost and a little bit angry. He wandered down the main driveway looking to both sides. He scanned the grass embankments, trying to spot a familiar face, searching for their entourage. He was unsuccessful. He completed a tour of the campus, and then he veered off to his left, coming back up the same way. Near the crossroad he turned towards the Communication Arts building and it was there, high up on a plateau, that he spotted her. She was holding up her hand as a signal. They were high up on a concrete structure, triangular-shaped and flat on top where one could take in the sun. It was located at the very end of the lower campus. He'd been searching for them along the flatness of the earth. He had not thought of looking up into the heavens. She'd spotted him before he'd seen her. Now he was making his way

towards the steps after having returned her wave.

The steps were unusually steep. They were each divided by half-a-body-length. He wondered how she'd been able to climb up there. He was puffing when he got to the top. Up there, there was a presentation under way on Tillie Olsen by the girl who reminded him of Rachel. He stood about for a few moments then approached the outer edge of their circle. They were all sitting on the floor of the structure. He declared, "I've been wandering all over campus looking for you people." The two nearest girls laughed. He'd caused a disruption. He sat down quickly amongst them and began to listen. It was hard to hear above the noise of the traffic on the busy downtown street nearby. He caught only a few of the sentences. He tried lowering his head and listening more closely. The teacher was talking about the social conditions in the Thirties which formed the backdrop of the novel.

"...no money in the Thirties. The farm lands had begun to be wiped out by drought and dust storms. There weren't any crops to obtain money. In the early Thirties the population was one hundred and twenty five million. About twenty million were unemployed. Almost nineteen per cent of all women were unemployed. People started moving in trucks around the country. Workers' projects began. The government attempted to find jobs for the people. The Federal Theatre Project was begun. This is where the New York theatre began. The F.T.P. was wiped out in the late Thirties because it 'smacked of communism' supposedly. Movies replaced literature

as the fantasy activity.

"In the 1900's and 1910 you already see the socialist novels. The muckraker novels exposing corruption were prevalent. Upton Sinclair's The Jungle in 1906. In 1908, Jack London's The Iron Heel; it was a vision of what would become of society.

"The socialist novel dealt with the inhumanity of man to man. Proletarian literature was fiction that focused on the working class. Most of it had a communist leaning. In the proletarian novel one finds the concept of people pooling resources, working together.

"Women in proletarian literature were considered equal as artists. Some of them were: Catherine Brody, Nobody Starves; Fielding Burke, Call Home The Heart, A Stone Came Rolling; Josephine Hearst, who wrote a trilogy on the family including Pity Is Not Enough and The Executioner Waits; Mary Borse, I've Come To Stay, Strike!, Footnote To Folly, The Autobiography Of An Old Woman; Grace Lumpkin, For New Masses, To Make My Bread, A Sign For Cain; Mary De La Soeur, who worked with Indians, collected an oral history, and was blacklisted during the McCarthy era, Women On The Breadlines, The Girl. We also see the rise of black women writers, notably Zora Neale Hurston, I Love Myself When I'm Laughing, Their Eyes Were Watching God."

Then she started on Yonnondio: "It has an omniscient narrator. The power of the narrative technique is what distinguishes the novel. There are indented portions in

the text. There are biting social comments. It tells of disillusionment. Throughout the novel we find the theme of class consciousness."

She went over the indentations: "In the first we get a glimpse of Andy Kavincet's mind. The second is a cameo sequence, a very ironic episode. Aesthetic hearts. Olsen is saying, 'Fuck off! What side are you on?' The third is Caldwell dying. He says, '...but I failed. I brought them not.' The point is made that you have to do something to help the working class. The fourth is Jim's soliloquy. He doesn't have a wife or children. He believes in freedom of opportunity. We also find a preview of the Depression. The fifth is the coda to the book. To tell what might have been. The belief that the workers would revolt is lost."

She continued: "Tracing Jim's consciousness, his attitude to women and education, we find that first he is very much against education; no improvement is possible. In chapter four, a dual personality emerges; he sees that family is what holds a man back. In chapter five, family is the most important thing. In chapter seven, he says education is a good idea because you can see through lies. Tracing Anna's consciousness, we find in chapter one—life is stealing from Mazie. In chapter two, the new life will bring her to a good school. In chapter three, there is new life in the school. It's a pastoral chapter. In chapter four, we find the beginning of Mazie's bitterness. Class

consciousness is developing in her. Reading will make you something. In chapter five, Mazie hates her school in the slums. Mazie fails. Anna tells Bess education is the only hope. She regresses. In chapter six, Anna awakes for the children. In chapter seven, she tells them about a library. Mazie in the long dandelion sequence takes up the shame of poverty. In chapter eight, we find Mazie's shame at becoming a woman."

She concluded: "Some of the depth of the novel comes from the imagery and symbolism. We have the whistle. We have the images of light and dark. Light is the poetic mind. Dark is nature and death. But dark can be half-light and light—half-dark. And we have the metaphors that have to do with sound: sound of listening; sound of fear; the sky is all ears; sorrow is tongueless—can't be expressed."

Then she turned over the class to the young girl whose presentation she had interrupted. Then the young girl was talking about the central story in the collection, Tell Me A Riddle. She told about her reaction when she'd read it—she had cried. Soon afterwards the conversation was overtaken by the other girls, and the young girl sat silently against the iron railing which guarded the far edge. He lit a cigarette and smoked, and then another. He couldn't hear the teacher who sat facing him at the opposite end of the circle. Her hair looked darker today, her face somewhat older. The wind was blowing her curly hair in all directions. She looked plain, not

ethereal and angelic. The wind and the sun removed some of her gloss, but he liked the effect because it made her seem less remote, more approachable. He did not yet know her age, but it seemed less relevant out there in the open. She reminded him of his older sister, four years older than him, and she resembled Jane Fonda bodily and facially. It was a chameleon's quality she possessed in those early weeks. He found echoes in her of everyone—movie stars, athletes, relatives. The truth of it was she was and would become all women to him.

His legs began to ache. He shifted positions a number of times, and even lay supine once when both his back and legs hurt. He was impatient for the class to be over. The discomfort he felt sitting on the concrete was nearly intolerable. It had not been a good idea to have held it there, he thought. Better that it had been held on the grass. The discomfort had spread amongst a number of the other students as well. Finally, the class was over. He hurried to get away. He was too stiff after an hour of sitting and leaning back and he wanted to go for his regular walk in order to loosen his muscles. As he left, descending the concrete steps quickly, he felt a certain sense of guilt at being so obviously quick-to-get-away. He hoped he hadn't hurt or insulted her in any way, but he knew he had. It was a slight which she would absorb characteristically by turning her attention to the others.

He went for his walk, and after an hour, at around four, he returned to the campus gates. As he was waiting for the light in order to cross the street, he spotted her on the opposite sidewalk, apparently heading home, accompanied by a female student. They were headed west. Apparently, she lived in the western section of the city, not too far from the downtown core, he imagined. He noticed her but she did not notice him this time. She looked somewhat lost, somewhat disconsolate about going home with this girl. He had the impression that her vague unhappiness might have been due to his abrupt departure. She'd begun to need him, the continual presence of him, as he'd begun to need her. More important to him was the fact that, provided with this knowledge, he did not wish to hurt her.

- They went on to Zelda Fitzgerald and Save Me The Waltz. She tried to build a link between the two novels, Tillie Olsen's Yonnondio and Zelda Fitzgerald's Save Me The Waltz, in terms of the issue of selfhood and womanhood. She compared and contrasted the growth of consciousness of the main female characters within these two books.

"In Yonnondio we are confronted with a mother who, like the rest of her family, has been beaten down by life. She must raise a family in abject poverty while, at the same time, suffer the cruelties of a husband who blames her in part for the failures in his life. She has all the injustices heaped

on her and misfortune that a woman could want; and yet she still sees hope in life—in the concept of education, in the love for her children. Her consciousness is given over to a sacrificing of herself to her children, and, to a lesser degree, to her husband. She has little time or regard for her own needs. The idea of selfhood is denied her, as is most clearly illustrated in the episodes where, lying prostrate, she struggles to regain some form of health and balance because 'who's to cook and clean and look after the kids if I'm in bed? Who, the servants?...Who's to do it if I'm not up? Answer. Who?' Anna's consciousness as a woman is relegated to the sort of caring-after the family that provides little opportunity for self-involvement. But she does have moments of absolute clarity and freedom. The dandelion-picking scene, for example, shows her at one with her own soul. She can achieve a certain degree of self-contentment. Mazie, the daughter, is a more troubled figure in terms of selfhood and consciousness. She is a child who is becoming a young woman, and like most female children of that age, she has little love for her own body and sexuality. In addition, she has suffered nightmarish incidents—with Sheen McEvoy, for example—which have resulted in the development of trauma. Her fragile female psyche, her consciousness, therefore, is disturbed in a manner which causes her to question her worth and identity. She will grow up with all the effects of poverty and of the psychological trauma brought on by the nightmarish incidents, never able to escape what for her have become the indelible sensory data and sounds of her childhood.

"Alabama Beggs, in Save Me The Waltz, has seen her own selfhood develop in terms of her career in the ballet. She must find something that belongs to her alone, not to her husband or to anyone else. She realizes the burden of womanhood in light of her role as an artist and as the wife of a very successful man. She must forge her own imprint of immortality if she is to have any peace of mind. Her consciousness is a cry against the female complaints of not having control over one's own life, of not being recognized for one's own accomplishments and achievements. Her daughter, Bonnie, represents the ideal of herself as a child. She sees in Bonnie the reflection of the child who placed so much confidence in her parents, who thought of her parents, and especially her father, as idealized figures. Bonnie is a reflection of all she believed, of the past which she continually keeps alluding to—'the link between ourselves and all the values more permanent than us.' Bonnie is the growth of her own vision of womanhood—the link with her father's era and all of her ancestors."

He did not learn very much about her^d private life during the term. She very rarely referred to her personal life during the conversations in class. Only one time, when they were dealing with Zelda Fitzgerald's Save Me The Waltz, did she let it be known that she had worked briefly within

a mental institution of some sort—she never specified which—providing educational instruction to some of the inmates. Her comment was that they seemed as normal as anyone on the outside. This snippet of information about her past life fascinated him, but he never pursued it.

It was not till the second year really that he could get her to talk about her private life; and even then he was left mostly in the dark. He would occasionally read the book reviews she wrote for the weekend edition of the local newspaper which usually appeared at intervals of three to four weeks. There was one on Joyce Carol Oates, one on Dorothy Uhnak, and, over the summer, one on Toni Morrison. She'd been pegged as the women's fiction reviewer and got to review all the new books by women, a role which she did not abjure since she was teaching a course on feminist fiction and was very much a women's liberationist. Hers were the most interesting reviews and feminism was of profound interest to him.

He imagined that she had not been teaching long. In fact, he believed that she had just recently graduated. His ignorance of the financial aspects of the teaching profession was such that he imagined she could get by—and, indeed, flourish and prosper—on just teaching one course at the university. He believed that after her one-and-a-half-hour twice-weekly sessions she went home to sit in her apartment and then did some reading, an abnormal

amount of reading, to prepare for the next lecture. He believed she led a quiet life, living alone in some apartment somewhere, phoning her mother on weekends, and perhaps even going to church on Sunday afternoons. He had the impression that she was religious, devout. He perceived her as nun-like. He believed she was a virgin. She was like a saint to him in those first few weeks.

One time after class he returned to the empty classroom long after everyone had left, and went to where she had been standing by the lectern. There he picked up the empty can of apple juice—she always drank apple juice in those early days—she'd left behind, and held it in his hand like a holy object. She had touched that can, had held it in her own hand, and he felt close to her just by touching it. Such was the sanctity of his regard for her.

She was dealing now with Zelda Fitzgerald, Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. She built her discussion around the position of the woman artist in society and the attitude of society toward her and the related concept of female madness, using as her texts Save Me The Waltz, The Awakening, and The Yellow Wallpaper. Furthermore, she explained why the woman artist can be relegated to a definable position in society and how that related to society's attitude towards women in general.

"The most glaring example of the woman's position

as artist in society is the artistic career of Zelda Fitzgerald, which is reflected in the career of the heroine of her novel, Save Me The Waltz, Alabama Beggs. It is Alabama's need for fulfillment on her own that drives her towards a ballet career, even though she is much too old to achieve any real success. She drives herself relentlessly for something which inevitably is denied her. Her 'madness' in a sense, therefore, is derived from the pursuit of her art and all the neuroses that drive her towards it. Her husband's success creates an identity crisis. Within society she is regarded as little more than his adjunct. The artistic side of her longs to get out, to free herself from the stifling role which her husband and society has placed her in. Her position as a creative artist, of course, involves tremendous spiritual and material sacrifice. She, like the rest of the girls in Madam's class, must live in virtual poverty. Only with her it is different. 'Her husband pays,' says Arienne, but not so that she cannot understand the material constraints of a ballerina's life, and of the artist's life in general. She works and works and she finally achieves an offer to dance for a ballet company. But, again, she is torn by the moral obligations she feels towards her husband, David, and the child, Bonnie. While David is supportive of her to a degree, he is clearly less than what she may need for total success. Like the heroine of Kate Chopin's The Awakening, Edna Pontellier, she has a desire to belong to no one but herself. When the infection of her foot

strikes her it is a blow that forces her to see the ultimate irony of life and of the artist's quest; 'By the time a person has achieved years for choosing a direction, the die is cast and the moment has long since passed which determined the future.' Her quest for balance, a quest for a relief from that inner madness, has become part of the great heap of the past. The dance, which to her had meant 'that, in proving herself, she would achieve that peace which she imagined went only in surety of one's self—that she would be able, through the medium of the dance, to command her emotions, to summon love or pity or happiness at will, having provided a channel through which they might flow,' has been relegated to a lost world. She cannot possess that channel, the channel of the artist, and this will, one imagines, render her life less balanced than it might have been. And if one is to take Zelda's life as an illustration of what happened or will happen once she loses that channel—the madness that results—this is borne out.

"Kate Chopin's heroine is less committed to her art than Zelda's Alabama. Her initial commitment is presented as a sort of dabbling in an unprofessional way: 'She liked the dabbling. She felt in it satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her.' She realizes that her sketches are rather mediocre, but as her commitment to the concept of spiritual love, which her relationship with Robert symbolizes, increases, so does the intensity and truth of her art. But, as her friend Madame Reisz tells her,

she must possess another ingredient besides mere talent: 'To be an artist includes much; one must possess many gifts—absolute gifts—which have not been acquired by one's own effort. And, moreover, to succeed, the artist must possess the courageous soul.' Edna has talent but perhaps not the courageous soul to succeed. Her 'madness,' wrapped around Robert as it is, is not specifically related to her function or role as an artist. It is love which is her madness, her love for Robert, and not the pursuit of her art. To be certain, art is a vehicle for uncovering the hidden passions in her soul, as we see in the episodes where Madame Reisz plays the Chopin piece while she reads Robert's letters, but she employs it less as an active channel than in a listener's role. The art, the music, evoke her passions, in the same way that Alabama was awakened while watching the La Chatte ballet, but she is not driven to perform to the degree that Alabama is. Her sketches remain a rather passionless pursuit compared with Alabama's. It is Madame Reisz's position as an artist which emerges as the most clearly defined in the novel. She recognizes a kinship with Edna and tells her she is the only one worth playing for. Society's attitude towards her—admiration—remains inconsequential in her eyes. But Kate Chopin intervenes in the narration by deploring her attitude: 'But she was mistaken about those others. Her playing had aroused a fever of enthusiasm.' Madame Reisz is rather insensitive in this regard, necessarily perhaps, for, as she implies,

one must, in order to be an artist, remain outside the mainstream, the social order.

"The Yellow Wallpaper presents another example of a woman denied her art, this time for supposedly therapeutic reasons. The men in the story tell her that she must not indulge in artistic activity because of the strain it supposedly places on her nerves. But instead of a strain, it really provides an outlet or channel for the inner tensions. When she is denied that outlet, when she is confined to doing nothing but remaining in her room and staring at the wallpaper, she slowly goes mad. This attitude towards women as artists was prevalent within the male-dominated society. Any form of creative activity, as we have seen in Alabama's case and in the case of Gilman's heroine, was opposed. The woman could engage in her role as artist within the home—which meant, most often, as a writer—but once that activity took her beyond the care of the family (as we see in the Chopin novel when Edna's husband scolds her for neglecting the children) it became a force to be stifled. Society's attitude in general, therefore, was the suppression of creative activity by women, and only when one had the courage to defy the social order, as Madame Reisz has, could there be any real hope for great success."

One thing that troubled him was that he never saw her in the hallways or in the library or anywhere around campus except on those days and times of her scheduled lectures. At other times, she was non-existent. He wondered what she did with her time, where she went, and why she was around so little. Only on one occasion did he run into her in the hallway. It was an hour after class. They'd just finished Zelda Fitzgerald, Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman earlier in the afternoon and he was headed down the hallway towards the main exit. She was coming out of the English office with a large manilla envelope in her hand which she now rolled up and slapped gently against her leg. She saw him and was headed back up the stairs to her office. As he passed she lifted up the rolled envelope in her hand as a sort of salute and said, "Hi." He said, "Hi," shyly, and when no further exchange took place between them he averted his eyes and headed out towards the main doors. She'd probably expected something more than that from him and was frustrated again in her efforts to establish a rapport; she'd expected something beyond a mere "hi." He should've waited and spoken to her, but he hadn't had anything to ask her, no excuse for making conversation. So he had done the logical and practical thing.

They went on to Edith Wharton's The Age Of Innocence. Because the societies and settings of The Age Of Innocence and The Awakening were so striking and relevant to the novels, she decided to devote the discussion to time and place in The Age Of Innocence and The Awakening.

"In The Age Of Innocence we are presented with a social order that in many ways is responsible for the ultimate tragedy of Ellen's and Newland's affair. Without a comprehension of what that age meant, what the concept of innocence inherent in it signifies, there can be no understanding of what Wharton is attempting to demonstrate and declare concerning her story. The innocence of that time and place is responsible for Newland's ultimate refusal to abandon May and the whole social structure in favor of Ellen. What is left to the imagination, what is left unsaid, is where the real drama occurs. The reliance on facades is reflected in the manners of the people of that age. The non-communication that results from such manners is at the root of Newland's relationship with May. It is at the root of all the relationships in the story. New York society provides Wharton with a beautifully placid facade on which to build the underlying drama. It provides her with the opportunity for irony, both verbal and situational. It serves as the backdrop for her social criticisms. At the same time that she criticizes that society, however, she

presents all that is good within human relationships, all that is good within social structures. It is a novel that combines a poignant personal story with a wider human tragedy, the universality in the novel deriving from the very specific detailing of time and place.

"In The Awakening the world of New Orleans, Louisiana, is very much a structured society in the manner of The Age Of Innocence. Edna, like Ellen Olenska in The Age Of Innocence, must fight against convention, and without the backdrop of New Orleans convention and morality there can be no drama. Her role as mother and would-be lover are examined in terms of how the social order, the society, regards these functions. Her husband is a conventional man and chides her for neglecting their children. She suffers a loss of faith in her role as a woman as a result, and the coldness of the man who is so much the symbol of that society drives her towards Robert.

"In Robert we are presented with another product of that restrictive society, another social stereotype—the aristocratic young man, the noble lover. His attitudes about doing the right thing ('Goodbye because I love you') are derived from a moral code that has its origins in New Orleans morality of that period. In addition, Chopin uses that time and place as a means of communicating the real tensions in women and their complaints against the male-dominated society which we also saw in The Age Of Innocence. The content is affected by time and place in the fashion that the characters

and events are inextricably linked to setting; they are products of their milieu, as are their conflicts and personal psychological dramas."

In the next class she decided to extend the discussion of the societies in The Awakening and The Age Of Innocence to other works as well. It would serve as a summary of the novels they'd been doing recently, a sort of semi-conclusion to the course which was nearing completion. She began her summary by saying, "Each novel we have studied is, in part, a critique of a particular society." Then she went on to elaborate: "In The Yellow Wallpaper we are presented with a society that demands the young wife not pursue any form of creativity. She is relegated to virtually total passivity—a negation of life, in effect. In The Age Of Innocence the same form of social censorship of women exists in Ellen's relegation to the role of outcast. Ellen is self-assertive and vibrant. She is May's opposite. May's placid nature is presented as the social ideal. The condemnation of society, however, is not total because Wharton sees the good side of New York society of that period as well. The sense of refinement and the caring for individuals represented by the figures of the old matrons, who were symbols of that social benevolence, are examples of what was good in that society. There was also less of a concern with financial

success, a belief that money could not buy you into such a genteel tradition (which could be good or bad, depending on how one regards it).

"In Save Me The Waltz the Jazz Age society is presented as a destructive as well as a vibrant force. The capacity for human folly is at its peak, but the intensity of life and the passion or lust for adventure and experience are good aspects of that time and place. There is more leeway for the artist, as represented by Alabama's dancing career, greater possibilities for self-expression. And yet the possibilities do not bear out. She is defeated by time. Time still is the enemy. Perhaps a later generation, Bonnie, for example, will achieve the total fruition of women's aspirations (although the link with the mother in terms of the association with illusions is still clearly established).

"In Yonnondio the Depression Era society is totally repressive in economic terms and, because of that, also in feminist terms and aspirations. The woman is clearly the center of what holds the family together in such economic and emotional chaos. She is the regenerative force, the force which represents the possibility or hope for change. The society around her has beaten her down, but it has beaten the men down as well. Because she is a woman she must suffer the effects of the social trauma more severely for she is the center of the family which, if it splits apart, will split the society. The capacity of the woman to suffer

these blows is a statement on her resiliency—on the quality of endurance which men lack to a great degree.

"Each novel, therefore, is a critique of the particular society and period, and yet they share a common link because they display the possibilities of strength and the capacity for human development in those oppressed women. The common denominator of those critiques is a shared vision of the woman as victim. Perhaps it is a necessary vantage point in terms of establishing reader identification, but the novels don't undertake presenting women's positions in regard to society simply for that purpose. They attempt to show that in their suffering there is a universality that extends beyond the female half of the world population to all human beings struggling with the social order and the constraint of convention. Essentially, it is the 'us against the world,' women against male-dominated society, syndrome that establishes the common underlying tension in these examples of 'women's literature,' and we can feel the conflicts and tensions in them which a novel must have if it is to create any form of drama or involvement. They are the same in terms of the way that all novels are the same (if they are good novels) in that they establish a link with the human psyche and the conflicts working upon it. In these cases, it just so happens to be women."

The course was nearing completion now and she invited them all to a party at her house. The address which she gave was in lower Westmount and it was to be held on Wednesday night after 6:00. He knew that he would not go. It was not because of her, but because he hadn't gotten to know any of the other students and so would have felt awkward and embarrassed in a casual interchange with them as in a class party.

The final week of lectures came. They were doing Toni Morrison. He didn't believe that he would like Toni Morrison, but he did. There was poetry and a wonderful sexuality in her writing. But there would be no time to devote to her. Time was running short and so it would have to be a combination class and dinner party. "Toni Morrison For Dinner," she called it. He did not know if he should tell her or just not show up. Maybe on the day of the party he would have enough courage to go. It was the last week of classes and, as usual, he was extremely busy with papers and with exams due. No, he would not go. He hoped it wouldn't affect her marking of him.

But on the day of the event he found himself on Ste. Marguerite Street, walking up the sidewalk opposite her house. He wanted to see what the exterior of her house was like, and maybe to test himself to see if he could go inside. She lived on the third floor of a dilapidated building. Lower Westmount, the section known as St. Henri, was a poor area. It was a poor neighbourhood she inhabited. He had imagined more extravagant surroundings for her. Still, she was a single teacher, fresh out of university. He couldn't expect her to afford lavish surroundings; or maybe she liked to live in a poor neighbourhood

(he lived in one himself; he was no snob)—maybe she was eccentric.

He saw the light in the front window and then noticed a student from his class climbing up the wooden stairs with a large shopping bag in her hand. A shopping bag filled with goodies. Wine and cheese probably. She'd said to bring your own. It was past six now and the sky was turning a violet-purplish color. It was a cool day, more like October than early April. He felt cold. He would go home and eat supper, watch television. As he turned away he felt a sense of release and, at the same time, a profound sense of frustration and loneliness. He could not join in the merriment. If he wanted to talk with her—and that would be the only reason to go to the party—it would have to be alone. He couldn't talk to her with others in the room. For, alone within humanity, he wanted her to himself. He wanted to keep her. And now, time and distance were threatening that relationship. Soon he would not see her at all. And he realized, as he stood on that corner in the wind and under the violet-purplish sky, with the summer approaching and long months of separation between them impending, that he would miss her. It was the first time that he consciously knew that he was in love with her.

He'd completed the final term-paper and the take-home examination. One dealt with Flannery O'Connor's Wise Blood, the other was composed of two questions she had selected which together comprised all of the writers on the course. He'd left both documents in her mailbox in the porter's office the week before. He was headed upstairs to her office now to have the material returned to him. It was a hot spring day and the hallways were empty. Classes had ended the week before. When he got to her office he knocked and she answered, "Come in," in a voice muffled by the door, as if heard from a far distance. When she saw it was him she said, "Oh." Because he hadn't attended the party she probably hadn't expected to ever see him again. It was surprising to her that he would pay her this one last visit.

"Came to pick up my paper," he said. He was feeling up and cheerful.

"Oh, I haven't finished them yet." She had been sitting in left profile to him when he'd entered and now she faced him. "Why don't you come back next week. I'll be finished with yours by then." Then, sensing that she might not have been fulfilling her duty as a teacher completely, she said, "I'll give you my home number. Call me on Monday night and I'll tell you if it's ready. You can pick them up on Tuesday."

He took her number. Then, when the business at hand seemed to be completed, he casually asked, "How was the party?"

She took the question in stride, slightly perturbed

that he would ask about an affair he had not attended but not willing to show it. "Pretty good. We sat around and drank mostly. Talked a little about Toni Morrison. Too bad you couldn't make it." She said it half-sarcastically, half-demanding an excuse from him. He did not provide her with one. It would have been a lie, anyway, so he decided that the best thing was not to say anything at all.

He stood by the doorway awkwardly now, looked down at his feet, raised a hand to his forehead and said, "Well, it was a great course." This seemed to defrost her. "Learned a lot. I've got about ten women writers down now." He smiled and she returned the smile.

She responded to his apparent honesty and enthusiasm over the course and the material. "It wasn't repetitive for you, was it? You didn't do the same books with Mary Papp?"

"Some," he replied. "I'd read The Old Order before and some of the Carson McCullers short stories, but for the most part it was all new." Then he wondered about her future, about her future plans. "So are you going to be here next year?"

"I don't know. I might be teaching at Dawson."

"Oh, yeah? I went to Dawson before I came to this place."

"Which campus?"

"Viger."

"Oh. I'd be at Lafontaine."

"They changed everything around. Now the Arts department and the English department are up at Lafontaine, right?"

"Yes. They changed everything around."

He was still striving for some definite statement about her returning to the university. "Do you teach anything else besides American Lit?"

She couldn't see what he was getting at. "What do you mean?" He was trying to discover if there was some other course at the university she could teach.

"Do you teach anything else?"

"English Literature," she replied. Then she returned to his opinion of the course. "Which writers did you like?"

He listed the writers who had appealed to him most. "Katherine Anne Porter. I liked Pale Horse, Pale Rider and some of the short stories like Noon Wine and "Maria Concepción," and also The Old Order. I think one of the girls in the class said they were too self-conscious? Well, I don't agree with her. Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor. I enjoyed the Southern writers. Zelda Fitzgerald, Kate Chopin. I didn't think I'd like Toni Morrison before I read her, but I did..." And then the phone on her desk began to buzz. She pretended not to notice and he continued talking. When she persisted in not noticing he paused in his sentences, cocked his head to one side and asked bemusedly, "Isn't

that your telephone ringing?"

"It's not for me," she replied. She had her arms crossed over her bosom defensively. It was evident she was suspicious and afraid of telephones. "Party line," was her explanation.

"Oh," he said, and he continued speaking. "I have a theory. Who you like all depends on whether you're matrist-oriented or patrist-oriented. There are two kinds of people—matrist and patrist." He noticed that her attention was wandering. She didn't seem interested. She was looking along her desk and off into the corner of the room. Her face had a distracted look. She obviously thought he was merely intellectualizing. He let it go. "Well, anyway..."

She looked up at him and asked, "Is this your final year?"

He replied, "No. I've got one more year to go. I'm working on my second B.A. in North American Studies. I've already got a B.A. in English from McGill. I've been around for a long time." She nodded and seemed impressed by the fact he already had a B.A. in English, impressed by his scholarliness. "Then after that I'll probably try for an M.A. in English. I'm sort of an institution around here. How about you? Where'd you teach before?"

"I taught at a cegep on the west island, John Abbot. Then they called me up to fill in for the course here when

the professor who was supposed to teach it left to go somewhere else."

"Maybe they'll call you back to teach it again."

"Maybe. I don't know." He'd been talking to her for quite a long while and now he felt that his desire to speak to her had been satisfied and that they were parting amicably.

"So I'll call you on Monday night."

"Okay. I'll be home."

"See ya." He turned to go, shut the door behind him. It would feel funny talking to her on the phone, but it would make up in a way for not having called her or not even having told her about not being able to make it to the party. He felt like it would be the beginning of bigger and better things between them, a more intimate relationship—at least friendship on a more personal basis.

He called her on Monday night from his bedroom, with the television on in the background. He spoke into the receiver. "Hello, is this Eileen Fleming?"

"Yes."

"Hi."

"Oh, yes. Your papers are ready. I'll be in my office tomorrow afternoon. Can you drop by?"

"What time?"

"I'll be in after three."

"Okay. See you tomorrow. Bye."

"Bye." The receiver clicked.

The next day was sunshiny and hot. He got to the university late, at four o'clock. Perhaps she would be gone by now. She'd said three. He rushed up the stairs to her office. He was carrying shoes in a bag which he had purchased recently. Perhaps noticing the bag she would think he had been shopping and had lost all track of time, and thus forgive him for his tardiness. When he got up to the third floor he knocked on her door. "Come in," he heard. When he entered he found her with another girl. This was the price for his lateness. He would not have the chance to speak with her in private.

"Hi," she said. She stood up and turned to the shelves behind her where she removed two black folders containing his papers. She approached him and handed them to him. "Very good," she said. He was about to open both folders to the first page to check the marks but he felt embarrassed to do so in front of them. She returned to her seat by the desk while he pretended to leaf through the papers.

He closed the folders after awhile and said, "I'll look through them later. I'm superstitious." This seemed to amuse her. She smiled. He stood there not knowing what to say. "Well, I guess I'll go. Bye."

"Bye," she replied. But he had paused before the

last statement and she thought there might be something else on his mind. "Did you want to say something else?" she asked when he was about to leave.

"No. Goodbye." As he was out the door and down the stairs he heard the girl who had been in the office with her calling him back.

"Did you want to speak with Professor Fleming in private? I can leave and come back." He hadn't liked this girl who had been in his class and he resented her being there on this last occasion.

"No," he said sourly. "I talked to her last week. Bye." He descended the stairs.

He walked out of the campus and out onto streets full of shoppers. On his way he opened one of the folders and found an A. He opened the other and found another A. He felt wonderful, elated. And then as the momentary elation passed he began to feel a profound sense of desolation and loneliness. He felt he'd been abandoned in some way. He felt that he'd suddenly become a nobody, had lost his entire identity.

On one of the benches on the main shopping street an old man sat trembling with cold. It was a warm day, but the old man was obviously sick. He shivered as passersby gathered. Someone had called for an ambulance. He stood there watching the old man. He felt suddenly as lost, cold, sick and alone. The old man's eyes focused on his own. He

saw the compassion there. When the police came for him the old man was still staring at his face. They had difficulty convincing him to come with them. He watched as he got into the patrol car. The old man would be taken to a hospital. Someone would look after him for a few days until he was well enough to be let out onto the streets again. He felt like this was what the summer had in store for him. The utter and empty loneliness of the derelict, the cold trembling and shivering of someone who'd lost the warmth of love and had it replaced by the cold sunshine of that April afternoon.

He did not meet her again until the next September. He spent the summer taking two one-month-long summer courses, in June and July, in American Literature and Canadian Literature. In June he fought with his father. He lived with his parents and one younger sister. His father was unemployed during the summer months. His salary was substantially decreased. Food became scarce. But they were not really poor. They owned their own two-storey dwelling, rented the upstairs to another family. They had been poor once, but they were better off now. They belonged to the lower middle-class. There was no reason why they should starve. The father had money in the bank.

He grew angry, shoved his father. The police were called. He shut himself in his room after that, and refused any interaction with them.

In June and once again in July he snatched a glimpse of her in the hallways of the university. She was probably there on some errands. His classes were in other buildings but he hung around a lot in the Arts Building. He was too shy to go up to her and say hello. He saw her on both occasions at a distance. She did not see him.

Both courses went well. In August there was a six weeks waiting period before the start of the fall term. He spent it reading on his own—the first real vacation he'd had all summer. He read a book by Toni Morrison. And then, two weeks before September, he picked up the fall course timetable and found her name there—Eileen Fleming—listed under English Novel Of The Nineteenth Century I and II. It was the happiest moment he'd had all summer. His face lit up. He could feel the blood rushing into his cheeks and the corners of his mouth breaking into a smile. "Goddamn," he muttered and repeated to himself as he walked on the downtown streets. He'd given her up for lost. But there was a hesitancy in him nevertheless. He knew nothing about the English novel of the nineteenth century, knew very little about any literature outside of the twentieth century. He couldn't be expected to do so well. She would be disappointed in him and he would lose that

special place in her regard. Perhaps it would be better not to take the courses and just run into her in the hallways and talk like old friends. But by September he'd registered for both courses, and he waited anxiously, expectantly, for the first day of classes when he would see her again. He wanted to see her reaction when he walked in, wanted to see the surprise and delight there. He expected a small class. He did not know that the first section of the course would contain well over a hundred and fifty people.

PART TWO — THE SECOND YEAR

1981-82

It was a hot day in early September when the first class in The English Novel Of The Nineteenth Century I was held. Her lectures this year would be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from three to four-thirty instead of from one-thirty to three. He liked the later hour. They were already all in when he got to the door of the lecture hall. He entered and took a seat in the back, in the very last row. It was a large room, seating over two hundred. The seats were arranged in amphitheatre style. He heard some commotion towards the bottom front and realized that it was her. She was dressed in red, and she looked different. Her hair looked blonder, but it might just have been the contrast with the vivid red. When he took his seat she noticed him immediately. Her voice skipped a beat and her eyes widened and telescoped to make certain it was him, then retreated again. She was addressing the class, talking mainly to the front and center—so used was she to the smaller class. She, too, must have been taken aback by the size of the classroom and the number of registrants. The room was crowded and stuffy. One couldn't hear very well. Someone was asking a question. She was dealing with the preliminaries—course evaluation, reading list. Then she started on Jane Austen—an introduction to her life and something about the work itself. She would leave the textual analysis to the next class when everyone would

have had a chance to at least begin the reading. There were five novelists on the reading list: Jane Austen, William Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell. They would be doing one novel by each: Emma, Vanity Fair, Jane Eyre, Bleak House, North And South. They were long novels, longer than the works he'd been used to. But he wasn't interested in that just yet. He just wanted to see her, to hear her, to regain the peace and tranquility which her presence brought to him.

She let the class run on to four o'clock, much longer than anyone would've taken for an opening lecture; and then, soon after the bell, they were dismissed. He wanted now to go down to her and say hello. But he was afraid. He had held onto the pile of mimeographed sheets which were being passed around containing the reading list and the course outline. He hoped to use the sheets as an excuse for making his way down to her. But as he made his way down the steps of the amphitheatre he saw that there was an impenetrable crowd around her. They were five and ten deep. He would have difficulty getting near her, let alone talking to her with any form of privacy. But he also knew that he could reach her if he wanted to, if he waited. Instead he opted to leave the sheets by the long desk and to walk out of the room. There would be other days, other occasions. Let her become re-accustomed to the presence of him first. Besides, he was not certain that he would stay in the course. He had

no background in the period, and he did not want to rely only on her good will in order to pass. He would sit in for the first few weeks and see how it went. And yet, deep in his mind, he knew there was nothing on earth that would prevent him from taking the course and being with her.

The first few weeks were a blur. He read the Jane Austen novel and had difficulty remembering the plot details, who was related to whom, and did not understand the essence of the story. His inexperience with that style of novel undermined his comprehension. He would later learn to love Jane Austen, but now he was a novice, a confused babe in the woods. She, in contrast, was an expert on Jane Austen. She rattled on about Jane Austen's private life and about the book, while he muddled about in the quagmire of his own difficulty and confusion. Nevertheless, he found something to identify with in the story of Emma and Mr. Knightley. He began to transpose himself in Mr. Knightley's role in the story, and to substitute her for Emma; and it was evident from the remarks she made in class that she had made the same sort of transference. They were playing a strange sort of ritualized game wherein they each became the main characters in the novels which were being read—all of which dealt with a romance of some sort. It would continue throughout their relationship. She

became every heroine, every love interest in every story he read. As for what went on in her own mind, he could only guess; and she would probably lie about it. But he knew that it must have been the same way for her; for they were essentially one person, two halves of a whole, like Heathcliff and Cathy in Wuthering Heights, which was to be done in the second term, the second section of the course. &

He still had not talked with her as yet. She kept expecting his "visit," his observance of social amenities. She even alluded to it in class. But it was painful for him to contemplate and to perform. He hoped it would be settled on an equal level—that they would run into each other somewhere. After all, he did not want to force himself on her, intrude on her privacy. Maybe she didn't want to talk to him. It was he that had signed up for the course. She had no control over that. He did not want to come hat-in-hand to her. He needed to know that she desired contact with him, too. So he hoped that they would meet by coincidence instead of by willed action or pre-arrangement.

They did not meet until Jane Austen was completed. By that time, he'd finalized his decision to take the

course. The change of course period was now over. Not too unusually, their meeting was spurred by her getting mad at him. They'd moved on to Vanity Fair and he hadn't done the reading for the first class. It was such a long book and he had had reservations about its quality, so he had hesitated in purchasing and reading the book. They were now in October. During the first class on Vanity Fair he did not take any notes and was engaged in conversation with a Chinese girl throughout the class. When the class ended he continued the dialogue. Down at the front he could see that she was fuming. It had been obvious to her that he hadn't done the reading; and now her rage and jealousy over his talking to the Chinese girl and not even having had the decency to speak with her as yet had gotten the best of her. She threw an irritated look up to where he sat and then swiftly stormed out of the hall through the lower exit.

He had hurt her doubly—by not having done the reading and by having neglected her. He had been irresponsible in both cases and he was sorry. He spent the weekend nursing his guilt. When he thought of how angry he had made her tears came to his eyes. He had never cried before over a woman. He had certainly cried for other reasons, mainly as a child. But they were tears not for his own pain, but for the pain he had caused her. He would make restitution by working excessively hard. He would catch up on the reading

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he had missed and surpass the assigned reading. He would never hurt her again if he could help it. And he resolved that they would meet soon, if not by accident then by design.

They met after the very next class—on Tuesday. He came in well-prepared, having read almost a third of the book over the weekend; and it was an enjoyable class. She was witty and funny, came in wearing new brown corduroys, obviously enjoying herself. He left through the upper exit after class and made his way down the hallway to the cafeteria where he bought a package of gum from a slot machine. He was returning by the same route when—there in front of him down the hallway—he saw her walking towards him. She noticed him immediately and said, "Hi," long before they were close enough to make it a reasonable response. She was nervous; he was nervous. But she showed it more.

"Are you taking the course? I see you come in and out." He thought it odd that she didn't seem to know he was registered for the course. Of course he was taking the course. What did she think?

"I'm registered for it."

"Your name isn't on the list. I checked through and

I didn't see your name. It's a preliminary list. How are you enjoying it?"

"Well, I'm enjoying this one." He pointed to her red-covered copy of Vanity Fair. "Tell me about Thackeray."

"Well, he worked as a journalist. Isabella, his wife, went insane. Thackeray's mother-in-law was the prototype for the mothers in his novels. He became something of a feminist. Thackeray had no reputation until Vanity Fair in 1844-45. He went to several publishers. It was published in eighteen installments. He continued to turn out long novels. In 1852 he turned out the History Of Henry Esmond. Both Barry Lyndon and Henry Esmond were set in the eighteenth century, which fascinated him. He was labelled the Henry Fielding of the nineteenth century. Fielding was his hero, his favorite writer.

He was bothered all his life by a blockage in his urethra, caused by gonorrhea when he was younger. He worried greatly about his health. He gave public lectures in England, Scotland, and the U.S.. He was very successful financially. He wrote another series of later novels. He died in 1863. The last six years of his life he was very ill. He had a long affair with Jane Brookefield, the wife of a clergyman. She was his ideal woman. She wasn't getting along with her husband. It was not a sexual relationship between Thackeray and Jane Brookefield, but a friendship. Eventually, the husband succeeded in breaking off the relationship.

He had a relationship with Dickens that was stormy.

Thackeray thought Dickens was no gentleman and Dickens thought he was too much of one. They were competitive in a sense, and were always regarded in light of each other. Finally, there was a series of quarrels between them and they split. As for his relationship with Charlotte Bronte, she idealized him, thought he was the greatest writer of his time. She was too serious, too intense for him; and he was too sociable for her. Becky Sharp was thought to have been Thackeray's version of Jane Eyre, his revenge upon Jane Eyre, as it were. It was rumored that Jane Eyre was modelled on his former governess. Thackeray, in turn, it was believed, was the model for Rochester. He also had a mad wife, Isabella, you see?

He was a serial writer and he wrote to deadlines but you can't denigrate his work because of it; you have to judge it on its own. Most novels, in fact, were published serially."

"Dickens especially. Bleak House," he said.

"Yes, and many of the others. That was the way of the nineteenth century English novel."

"What I like about Vanity Fair, aside from the story, is that you feel Thackeray as a presence. It is as if he's speaking to you directly, personally," he declared.

"In Vanity Fair you have the technique of narrative intervention, the narrator or author addressing you in his own voice. The author creates a persona. Very often, however, those interventions or remarks have an ironic intent. It's often hard also to decide whether it's Thackeray himself

or the puppetmaster-showman he creates who is expressing those thoughts and attitudes. Thackeray, through his method, calls attention to the artifice of the novel he is writing."

"Becky is the central character. Dobbin is the good guy. Can we believe that Becky is badly-treated because she deserves it, as Thackeray claims?" he asked.

"We're not really supposed to sympathize with Becky but it's often hard not to. The only alternatives she has in life are being a governess and marriage," she replied.

"Amelia's conception of Osborne is an illusion," he said.

"Dobbin's conception of Amelia is also an illusion. She isn't really the ideal he imagines," she said.

"Dobbin is quite selfless, but by pushing Osborne into the marriage he is not really doing him much good."

"Dobbin is hiding his real feeling for Amelia, until Osborne's death," she said.

"Amelia never grows up at all; her judgment never matures. Amelia never sees Osborne's faults. She doesn't want to see his faults. She deliberately blinds herself," he said.

"Thackeray is advocating self-knowledge. Becky is the least self-deceived character, and thus she has a certain dignity," she said.

"I found her the most sympathetic character in the novel as a result," he declared.

"The other characters," she said, "display various levels of corruption. Osborne, on the other hand, is the least sympathetic character in the novel. Osborne represents a

kind of self-made businessman, but also a kind of middle-class sucking-up or pandering to the aristocracy. The aristocracy is represented by the Crawleys. Sir Pitt Crawley is the absolute opposite of a gentleman. He is totally uneducated. He can't spell. He is not generous towards the ladies. He completely mismanages his estate, and he is completely ungenerous to his sons. Sir Pitt, however, is not pretentious; he is not a snob and this makes him an attractive character. He is willing to marry Becky Sharp. He is less of a humbug and fraud than his relatives; but, at the same time, he is totally corrupt. Ewe is the worldly clergyman. He represents the corruption of the Church. Mr. Crawley is the pious one; he is supposedly devout. Miss Crawley represents the hypocrisy of the free-thinker. She likes to pose as a free-thinker but when Becky nearly marries Sir Pitt, who is in her family, she does a turnabout. Her free-thinking on religious and social matters is solid as long as they don't affect her private world. She has no feelings for anyone; she only likes to be amused. Look at the way she treats Miss Riggs, her companion of twenty-nine years—calling her 'toady' behind her back. She buys everyone. She makes the assumption that everyone is out for themselves. Only when she is in a weakened condition, when her health is threatened, is she susceptible to religious feelings. She is full of self-pity then; at all other times, she is hard and cold.

Becky is totally *déclassée*. She is the daughter of

a painter and an opera singer but she claims that she is of nobler birth. She almost marries into the business class; but George Osborne prevents her. Then she almost marries into the aristocracy. She seems to embody every kind of class possibility. She understands other people's illusions and allusions. She retains a certain sense of pride despite having no money, in contrast to Amelia who seems to have no pride at all. Becky enjoys playing the game, enjoys the struggle and the manipulation more than she enjoys the fruits of her manipulation and labor."

"There is a certain similarity between Becky and Miss Crawley—both are very unsentimental," he said.

"There is an immediate attraction to each other because of this recognized kinship," she added.

"One of the ways Thackeray makes Becky unsympathetic is Becky's treatment of her child," he said.

"Thackeray almost has to make certain that Becky does not emerge as totally sympathetic; he has to find ways to denigrate her," she replied.

"I'm not sure what all the various titles mean, how the hierarchy runs..." he stated.

"Don't you know? The English Peerage. Let's see. It goes like this: duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron, baronet, knight. In those categories within the novel you've got Styne who's a marquis, Southdown who's an earl, Pitt Crawley who's a baronet, and Dobbin's father who's a knight.

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The social order is totally based on sham or pretense. It's a hierarchy of birth primarily. The Marquis is totally without feeling and without principle. The servant class is just as much caught up in the pretense as the ruling class. Vanity Fair came in the middle of Thackeray's career, before he had any contact with the upper echelon which he writes about."

"Do you see it as a cynical novel? Is Thackeray a cynic?" he asked.

"Thackeray's cynicism is a moot point. Some critics see him as totally cynical, but others don't. He seems to shift between cynicism and a belief in honesty, love, and all the good qualities," she replied.

"Dobbin is the 'good' character in the novel. His problem is that he places Amelia on a pedestal, in the same way that Amelia places George Osborne on a pedestal; they share the same flaw or problem. As the novel goes on she becomes more and more of a questionable character," he said.

"Thackeray wants to make you aware that moral situations are very complex, and so you can't divide the world into good or bad. Therefore, innocence at one point, Amelia's, becomes corrupted or evil at other points. Up to the point he dies George Osborne is a totally unsympathetic character. His death, however, ennobles him. Osborne's only really good act in the novel, in fact, is dying," she said.

"Amelia is blindly devoted, spoils her son, martyrs herself to her parents. The one man who's nice to her she kicks around until he rebels, and finally she marries

him. She has devoted herself in the earlier marriage to a paragon of virtue, intelligence and love—George Osborne. A paragon he clearly isn't."

"She encourages George's belief that he is being virtuous and self-sacrificing towards her, so in a sense she is greatly at fault," she said.

"Amelia is a little too nice and this is destructive in her role as a mother. She never tempers her devotion with good common sense, either towards the son, little Georgie, or towards the father," he said.

"It is interesting that when Amelia loses that sense of George Osborne as an ideal she doesn't have the nervous breakdown which such a disillusionment might bring. It's a rather sedate reaction," she stated.

"Dobbin, on the other hand, has never lost the sense of her as an ideal, a prize. He regards the winning of her in gambling terms," he said. "She has never been easy for Dobbin, and he thinks of her in terms of a prize to be won."

"Perhaps what's involved is the narrator's contention that in love there is always something selfish, that the lover gains something, that there is something to be gained," she said.

"What we should admire about Dobbin perhaps is that he keeps coming back when she, Amelia, calls him; even though at the very end we can no longer regard her as standing on a pedestal," he said.

"The end of the novel is not cynical or sentimental. There is no reason to believe they live happily ever after.

or that they are incompatible either," she said.

"Perhaps he deliberately wants to avoid the sentimental, the cliché," he said.

"It is not a vision of a passionate, romantic relationship from then on. It is, rather, a vision of the relationship as a continuation. A certain sense of intensity has been lost. Dobbin's seeing through Amelia has perhaps meant the loss of romantic fervor," she said.

"Does the length of the novel devalue it?" he inquired.

"There are repetitions of phrasing, superfluous chapters and episodes, that make it hard for the modern reader. But it's very enjoyable," she replied.

"Yes," he confirmed.

Silence suddenly grew between them in the hallway.

"What did you think of Emma?" she asked finally.

"I thought I liked Emma when I read it, but I'm revising my opinion of it now. I'll let you know later on if we meet." They stood in the hallway side-by-side, glancing at the occasional passerby. "I'll probably enjoy Jane Eyre. And then it'll be Dickens." He stood in the hallway, guffawed and scratched his head. His long hair fell in front of his eyes and he brushed it away. She followed the movements of his inclined head, bending closer. She wanted to know why he was laughing. He'd touched a sensitive spot. Maybe he was laughing at her, making some implicit criticism, criticizing her—and he'd never done that before—or maybe he was just laughing for

laughter's sake. She was interested by this trace of humour in him, interested by this new development in him.

"Why are you laughing?" she asked, aroused and amused.

"Oh, I don't know. I was just thinking I don't know why the hell I'm laughing. Let's see. Who else is on the reading list?"

"Mrs. Gaskell," she said.

"Oh, yeah. I'll probably like that one. I like lady novelists so I'll probably like that one. I've been keeping track of your writing career over the summer in the newspaper." She nodded. "I read your review of Toni Morrison. I thought it was pretty good. The thing of it is what you said about her you can apply to the rest of her work in general."

"What did you do over the summer?" she asked.

"I took a couple of summer courses. One in American Lit, another in Canadian Lit. I read The Bluest Eye. Do you know that one? Have you read it?"

"Uh-hum."

"I liked it a lot. Maybe it's because it's the last one I read, but I think it's her best—better than Sula."

"Well, I don't know. Have you read Song Of Solomon?"

"No," he replied.

"Well, they say that's her best one," she stated.

"I also reread Sula. It's very deep. I still don't understand all of it, all of the story, all of the details, but you can tell it's very deep." She shrugged non-chalantly.

She said, "It's really the story of a young black woman's determination to lead her own life her own way, free from peer pressure and community values. You see, it's about individual freedom, and it's also about friendship—Sula's friendship with Nel. Sula steals Nel's husband and Nel is devastated when she finds them together. She can't understand why Sula even bothered with her husband. For Sula, it was just a means of filling the empty space in her head. Her promiscuity and sexual freedom are derived from having watched her mother as a young girl. Sula finally falls in love with a young black man, Ajax, and his rejection of her leads to her death. You see, she dies of love. Once her freedom to stand alone has been lost, once she becomes attached to a man, and that man, in turn, deserts her, she loses her will to live. And Nel is left mourning her in 'circles and circles of sorrow.' "

She shook her head. Apparently, she didn't want to discuss it any further because it was all water under the bridge for her.

"Yeah. I also bought Tar Baby, though I haven't read it yet. Have you read that?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

"It's set in a different place, isn't it? A Caribbean island?"

"Yes," she answered.

"How about you? What did you do all summer?" She looked perturbed; the question presumed a certain familiarity. It was the sort of question you asked a friend your own age.

"Oh, I stayed in the city. The usual. Read, wrote.

"You know."

"I'm also registered for the second part of the course, after Christmas."

"Uh-hum," she nodded.

"I'll be hitting you for a letter of recommendation later on, if that's alright with you?"

"Sure," she said. Then he stood there and scratched his head again. His hair was very long. He always wore it long during the fall and cut it after Christmas. She noticed the extreme length of his hair and her eyes followed the movement of his finger as he scratched his hair distractedly. He'd run out of words to say to her, and the gesture had been intended to signal that fact.

"Well, I guess I'll see you on Thursday then." She moved away down the hallway in the direction of her office.

He felt happy, relieved that finally they'd broken the ice. Now he could sit back there in class and not feel guilty over not having spoken to her, over not having performed his duty as a friend and as a favorite student. He didn't think she'd expect him to come up to her every time after class and make conversation. He didn't want that type of pressure; and he felt that she wouldn't want him to put that type of pressure on her. One thing he had learned was not to encroach on her privacy and freedom. He imagined that was one of the reasons she liked him. He didn't force himself on her, seemed to respect her privacy, and gave her leeway to be herself.

It was one of only three conversations he would have with her that term. They were closer, closer than before; but the love affair was played out in physical presence and silence mainly that term, silent understanding, not words. When they talked it was only at crucial moments—in crucial conversations between them. It was more than enough that they were with each other for three hours a week. There was not as yet the driving impulse and need for daily and more regular contact, more all-embracing contact—regular conversations after class or continuous accompaniment to and fro.

They did Vanity Fair and then moved on to Jane Eyre. It was, arguably, the best novel on the reading list for that half-year—a masterpiece. He knew it would be so. It was the book he'd been waiting for. She reached her peak. In the second or third lecture on Jane Eyre she delivered what he believed to have been her best performance ever as a teacher. She was Jane Eyre to him. She understood her; she shared Jane's attitudes. He leaned back and watched her. She was excellent. Her voice, her demeanour, her analysis displayed a maturity and grace which fully justified his love for her. This was the best she could be. This was the achievement of the potential he knew she had in her. This

was why God had made her a teacher. And the fact that she had made it, with her integrity intact, and that her intelligence had been recognized and rewarded, made him believe in the educational system, gave him faith in the educational system, which he had lost once before long ago; and it made him believe that he could make it as well.

It was particularly when she selected one passage in the novel that he saw her achieve her full breadth as a human being and as a teacher. She read it aloud in a voice full of conviction and of the undeniable ring of truth. It was Jane Eyre's description of Rochester's character, and her belief that they were linked by their natures: " 'He is not to them what he is to me,' I thought: 'He is not of their kind. I believe he is of mine—I am sure he is—I feel akin to him—I understand the language of his countenance and movements: though rank and wealth sever us widely. I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him. Did I say, a few days since, that I had nothing to do with him but to receive my salary at his hands. Did I forbid myself to think of him in any other light than as a paymaster. Blasphemy against nature. Every good, true, vigorous feeling I have gathers impulsively round him. I know I must conceal my sentiments: I must smother hope; I must remember that he cannot care much for me. For when I say that I am of his kind, I do not mean that I have

his force to influence, and his spell to attract; I mean only that I have certain tastes and feelings in common with him. I must, then, repeat continually that we are for ever sundered—and yet, while I breathe and think, I must love him.' "

He felt she was speaking directly to him. Their natures were the same; they had tastes in common; their blood, their hearts were one and the same. It was a moment of quiet and dignified transcendence. She had transcended the common everyday world, transcended space, broken through to the religious and spiritual, and had linked them both. She had pierced right to his heart, had for once let down her defences and laid herself open and naked, true and honest. It was at these rare points, so scarce, that her human potential was fulfilled in his eyes. This was what she could be if she gave herself half the chance. She could be forthright. She could be naked and honest. But, as the course of their relationship would demonstrate, she would not be. She was unwilling to let down her defences, most of all with him, throughout.

He left that class with a feeling of awe for her. This was an extraordinary human being. The honesty, like a pure white flame, had left him with such peace. White, flaming truth had happened and he had witnessed it. It seemed to lighten the air around him. She would never again achieve that level of honesty and nakedness. He would learn more about her but never have as much respect for her.

Understandably, such a high level of performance could not be sustained. There were peaks and valleys in her performances. She had a valley, a three-week-long valley, when they went on to Charles Dickens. She'd been sick the subsequent class dealing with Jane Eyre. A teaching assistant had been solicited by her to deliver a lecture on Jane Eyre. It was the convention between professors and their teaching assistants, the thing to do. She'd sat in the gallery like one of her students, her voice hoarse with the cold she'd picked up. She was well again the following week.

When she began her series of lectures on Charles Dickens an ennui settled over him, and around her, he perceived, and over the class in general. Bleak House was very long, almost a thousand pages. He wouldn't have minded reading a thousand pages if he'd had the time. But he only read a portion of the book, intending to save the rest for the Christmas vacations when he would have more time. She began with an account of Dickens' personal life, the lecture tours to America, the problems he had with copyrights, the marriage of convenience he shared with his wife, the published denials of the affair with a woman to salvage his reputation.

He noticed that she became listless and tired-looking during the Dickens session. One time she came in looking awful, thin and stooped, her back arched like a hunchback's

She looked old, like a little old lady, like a crotchety character from one of Dickens' novels. He hadn't realized she could look so old. The overwork, the reading and correction of exams simultaneously with the preparation of lectures, had aged her, had momentarily speeded up the aging process. The transformation was like death of a sort, he felt; her body was undergoing deterioration as a result. Some of his faith and confidence in her was lost, but he solaced himself with the possibility that perhaps she'd been forced to work at too hectic a pace. Her control over the schedule had been limited. She had had some flexibility in the choice of texts but teaching five novels in an undergraduate Nineteenth Century English Novel course was de rigueur.

Dickens appealed to the class. Most of the people in the class seemed to be pro-Dickens. He noticed her irritation with a portion of the class, however. A lot of the registrants were students of a different concentration—business, science or mathematics—who used the course as their one English requirement. He could sense that she was feeling that she was wasting her time with them. During this period he felt like she was vanishing, retreating further and further away from him. He felt like they were in a fog together, a fog like the one in the opening scene of Bleak House. He waited impatiently for her mood to change. It seemed interminable.

Before the sessions on Dickens there had been the in-class exam. The single question had been about Jane

Austen's novel. He had faked his familiarity with it somewhat. Perhaps it had not been fakery at all. The nature of the question was such that it could easily seem to the reader that the respondent was well-versed in the novel. Anyway, he felt uneasy about the outcome, even feared that he might have failed. But he knew that if he had not done well he would make up for it on the Christmas exam which was worth seventy-five percent of the final grade, for he had understood the other works to a greater extent. Good rating and understanding, however, were not mutually inclusive, often times exclusive.

His birthday was soon approaching. He would be twenty-six years old. And as a present he bought himself a bound volume of North And South. They went on to Elizabeth Gaskell. "Mrs. Gaskell," she called her. North And South was a refreshingly engaging reading experience. The teacher herself seemed to perk up. She'd regained some of her lost youthfulness. Lady novelists, feminist fiction, were her specialty, and in Mrs. Gaskell she had a mind and a talent to work with which were equal to her own. The story of Margaret Hale and her suitor, Mr. Thornton, mirrored his own imaginary—and was it imaginary?—courtship of her. Mr. Thornton, the ever-faithful, polite and persistent suitor was himself, his rival in novelistic

disguise. He could understand such persistence, such unyielding faith in the face of female obstinance and denial. He felt it was a portent, or would be a portent, of any would-be proposal and courtship of her. And yet one could not dislike Margaret Hale. She was stubborn, not malicious. And she was kind to the poor and ailing. If Margaret Hale disavowed any knowledge or feeling of love for Mr. Thornton it was not because she was despicable and unwarrantably hated him, but because she did not know her own mind—a failing she presumably shared with Emma, and Amelia Sedley in Vanity Fair, and Jane Eyre. The misguided or misapprehending female seemed to be a running theme. Did this cast any aspersions on the professor herself and her "ailment" or fault in character? He saw now that all these men shared the same predicament, a predicament that he would ostensibly share in a relationship with her—how to convince someone of your love for them; and, even if convinced of that fact, how to obtain a lasting commitment of love from them.

He knew, sensed that any declaration of love from him would create that kind of a dynamic. He knew he was the inferior party in their relationship. She did not seem to need him (at least she didn't show it or didn't believe she did); he needed her desperately. There would always be that dynamic between them—he the dependent; she the aloof self-styled independent. Would their relationship end as

neatly as Mr. Thornton's and Margaret Hale's? He did not doubt it then. It was his period of great optimism. Love had done that to him. He believed in happy endings. Never before had he been so certain that his life was on the right track, was leading to ecstatic fulfillment and consummation. This period before Christmas had him convinced that marriage was imminent. They seemed destined to marry. She would teach, support him as he pursued his studies. He would provide her with emotional and spiritual support and assistance. She would be the "male" counterpart in the partnership, the dominant one, the breadwinner; he would be the "female" counterpart, the submissive, supportive one. It was not sexual role reversal, just a recognition of how things would be, how things could only be. Their personalities were such that it made it so. Realistically, he could entertain a notion of equality. Anyone who loved anyone else was equal to them. It did not matter who was the breadwinner. Anyway, he would be working his way towards a career, a profession; and she would be helping him. That's what love meant, wasn't it—reciprocity, working together? The economics did not matter to him. He was in love with her, and the whole world seemed to be opening up.

He met her for the second time that fall in the library. It had been a rainy day. The entire university

was under a pall of gloom. But he liked rainy days, so did she. After class he couldn't go for his usual walk for he would get soaked. He lingered around for a few minutes and then went over to the library. He wasn't looking for anything in particular, just trying to kill some time. On his way he saw Rachel, who'd returned to the university after a year's absence and whose acquaintance he had remade. She was with a taller, dark-haired boy who was apparently her boyfriend. She did not see him. Rachel, who had thrown the class party and whose mind he respected. He followed her out of the building. She was headed towards the library, too. But before they got to the entrance they veered off and descended the stairs. No, they were going somewhere else. She lived nearby; maybe she was going home. He'd run into her again, catch her later, talk. He'd entertained thoughts of love between them at one time, but had given them up after he'd met Eileen Fleming. She was one of the many people he was always running into, but she was special—number two behind Eileen. He entered through the glass doors and turned left towards the card catalogues. He sauntered over to the open area near the reference desk and his eye caught her black form there by one of the long, narrow tables which were used while flipping through a card drawer. She seemed to sense his presence and looked up at him askance. It was as if she'd had eyes behind her back. Her eyes had had that look that had told him that she'd known he was there even before she'd set eyes on him. She was wearing a black

waist-length fur coat with padded shoulders which she carried like a shawl. It made her shoulders seem extremely long, disproportionate with the rest of her body—a distortion or deformity. Her upper body looked like Joan Crawford's. He liked her better in the usual light-blue, ankle-length winter coat she wore. This one made her seem like a dragon-lady. He was being harsh. He didn't care if she wore this or that, though he liked to look. Her wonderfully slim body, her thirty-year-old muted sexiness, was impossible to hide. He came up to her.

"Hi. What are you looking for?"

"Some research reading. Science. How about you?"

"Oh, I'm looking for a book on Margaret Laurence. I just finished an oral presentation on her today." He'd read directly from his notes. He was incapable of off-the-cuff delivery demanded by these types of in-class presentations, knew he would get too nervous, lose his voice, run out of things to say. It was always torture for him to do any public speaking. His nature was unsuited to it.

"How did it go?"

"I thought it went pretty well. I don't count, though."

The experience had sensitized him to her own problems as a teacher, her own experience. He knew how mind-warping and difficult it all was, how unnatural and distorting it could all be. "It's a whole different world up there," he said, trying to let her know he understood what she might have felt when she stood in front of strangers. She was awakened,

knew that he was referring to her and her role as a teacher.

"Yeah. I sat in the audience and listened like one of the students and it felt pretty weird." She was referring to the class taught by the t.a..

"I've revised my opinion of Jane Austen. I know now what was bothering me about that book all along—the couples are all wrong. It should be Jane Fairfax and Mr. Knightley, Emma and what's his name?"

"Weston," she said.

"Yes. Emma and Mr. Knightley are too different—they're opposite characters. That's what was bugging me." He said it like a self-satisfied little child, with pride—a proud little child who'd found out the solution to a difficult math problem.

"So you think that Jane Fairfax and Mr. Knightley..."

"Yeah," he replied.

"A lot of critics have pointed that out," she answered distractedly.

"You get to a point in your life when opposites no longer work," he philosophized, watching her face for her reaction. He was telling her about his own psychological development. "You grow up, mature. You look for people of similar nature. At least that's been my experience. Mr. Knightley and Jane Fairfax are supplementary rather than complementary characters. They have similar natures. Jane Austen got them mixed up."

"In your opinion," she asserted.

"Yeah."

"Well, maybe you're right, but I'm sure Miss Austen would disagree with you." She was trying to be objective, obviously defending Jane Austen's right to her own vision but wishing to remain non-committal about her own view of the issue. It bothered him that she didn't immediately agree with him on this point, didn't uphold his view. Did she think that complementary or opposites characters and natures were well-suited? Was that what she believed; was that what she lived by? Perhaps she had just lived longer, long enough to avoid making such sweeping assertions. Perhaps she knew better. Life, relationships got more complex, he knew, as you grew older. Maybe she had believed like him at one point and then life had shown her different. Maybe she was more aware of the complexity of human relationships and of life.

"In her novels very often what you have is the exploration of various conflicting attitudes towards marriage. One of the primary questions in Jane Austen's work is, 'How does one know another person?'," she said.

"Does Emma misjudge people or does she simply see in them what she wants to see?" he asked.

"Emma's problem is that she imagines she knows what everyone else is feeling. She doesn't, of course. Emma assumes that Mr. Elton has been smitten by an irrational love, an irrational passion. There is no reason to believe that Mr. Elton is in love with her. He manifests emotion,

but whether he feels it or not is another question. The central problem of the novel is who is going to marry whom—the marriage question."

"Mr. Knightley is the voice of reason, or he's simply a little more experienced. He is fallible but he does not willfully misjudge others like Emma does. His attitude towards Mr. Woodhouse is an example of his fallibility; it demonstrates a hint of prejudice," he said.

"Mr. Knightley does misjudge. His misjudgment of Frank Churchill also seems to indicate this. He is not a totally infallible person. He is a paragon of virtue but not a wholly perfect one. Jane Austen preferred characters who were slightly flawed," she said.

"Emma lives vicariously through the other characters. She takes an active hand in arranging Harriet's marriage to Robert Martin, and she exercises her romantic imagination all throughout Harriet's courtship. Why does she choose Harriet instead of a more intelligent companion? Because she couldn't manipulate a more intelligent companion like Miss Fairfax."

"And, again, Harriet does not really undergo a transformation; only in Emma's mind she does," she added.

"Can we forgive Emma for her errors and actions?"

"We don't excuse Emma for what she does, but she does possess a moral conscience that was rare for heroines in fiction. Emma's faults make her human and she tries to understand them. If it weren't for her father Emma might have a little more freedom. The father embodies her inertia."

There is always the feeling of confinement that you also find in Jane Eyre, the feeling that she should be out there seeing the world instead of being involved in all these domestic and social problems. Emma has an excess of energy that she puts into her matchmaking and social life. Her lack of experience of the larger world, her confinement are what make her hold so tenaciously to the limited circle of life around her."

"Yes. It's a parlour-room drama of a sort. Nothing much really happens. You have to like precision of language, psychological insight," he said.

"Charlotte Bronte hated Jane Austen's writing; she thought it was too tame. Henry James saw Austen as an unconscious artist," she stated.

"Knightley is thirty-seven, a little late in Victorian times for a man to be unmarried," he declared.

"Men usually married in their late twenties and early thirties. Austen never makes an attempt to portray men in a social situation without women present in her novel. There was a good deal of sexual segregation in Victorian society. It was left to the lower orders on the spiritual scale, such people as Harriet, to flirt. Flirting was looked down on in Victorian society. The parlour-room provided a means of interaction, albeit strained. Money, family, position were first on the list of marriageability features, next was beauty."

"We get a glimpse of the typical or atypical Victorian domestic pair in the relationship between Knightley's parents."

"Yes. Arrogance, impatience are the faults of Knightley's

father. His virtues are the domestic ones. Isabella's not being critical enough towards John Knightley, her not putting a check on him, on his egotism, makes him even more arrogant, egotistical, demanding. She thinks he's God; he can do no wrong as far as she's concerned. Emma has a moral conscience, a moral sensibility that Isabella doesn't have which makes Emma a more interesting character."

"Knightley and Emma will presumably wind up like them or like Mr. and Mrs. Bennet in Pride And Prejudice, another of her atypical married couples," he said.

"Knightley without Emma is full of social responsibility but not sociability. He is much too serious, all work and no play; he needs a little bit of a push."

"To what degree are we prepared for the 'surprise ending'?" he asked.

"You have to prepare the reader somewhat and, on the other hand, it must seem like a surprise. Jane Austen is working in the tradition of the romance and in that tradition the heroine must get married at the end, usually to someone she has quite recently met or someone with the element of mystery to them. Actually, Emma is a sort of anti-romance. The only romantic character in the novel is Frank Churchill. There is no mystery about Knightley; she has known him her whole life. The fact of love is not a surprise; the kind of love is—between Emma and Knightley."

"Will the marriage endure or will they revert to their former patterns of behaviour?" he inquired.

"The conflicts between Emma and Knightley still characterize the relationship. She retains her own opinion, independence, even if she does respect his," she replied.

"It's a civilized novel, civilized in the finest sense," he stated.

"Austen regards Emma and the whole situation with a sort of gentle mockery. Emma treats real people as if they were characters in a novel. Mrs. Elton is a caricature, relying on her 'inner resources.' Mr. Woodhouse is a kind of comical character, as are Mrs. Bates and Harriet Smith. Jane is the ideal of the accomplished woman; but, on the other hand, she is somewhat too reserved.

There is no real evil in the novel; there is good and less-good, then there is the ridiculous. No set character is evil; there are no extremes. It is all subterfuge, submerged, diversified. There is no real evil. Nothing Emma does really hurts anyone in the end and so, in a sense, Emma is 'protected' by Jane Austen. Emma is involved in a moral struggle over simple, everyday events (not anything big like murdering someone). The kind of psychological examination that Austen in Emma indulges in became more popular towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Emma is one of the best portraits in literature of delusion. Is she going to stop deluding herself at the end of the novel? She learns something about herself. She comes to certain perceptions which were not possible at the

beginning of the novel. She does develop a moral consciousness; she does reform to some extent."

Then he complimented her. "You really reached your peak in the second or third class on Jane Eyre," he said. She looked at him, half-amazed that he left himself so open and, at the same time, flattered, but sober-faced, by his admiration. By now she'd become used to this manner of his, knew that he engaged in compliments, forthright personal statements and judgments of her.

"And it's been downhill ever since, right?" she joked.

"No," he added quickly. She'd been joking but he thought that she might have been offended by any insinuation that in holding up that class as a golden exemplar he might have been belittling her other efforts. "You can't expect to maintain that high level all the time," he explained, echoing the very words she had used in a different context in one of her lectures. Imitation was the best form of flattery. The words had stuck in his subconscious. She recognized the phrase, knew she had made that deep an impression on him, and she was genuinely flattered this time.

"I really loved the early chapters of Jane Eyre, her early life. Lowood School sort of reminds me of the school I went to," he said.

"As a young girl, Jane is presented as a solitary being. She is terrorized by the Reed family. Where she finds refuge is in her own imagination, in the bird book, for

example. She finds emotional refuge in her imagination; she is like Cinderella in a sense. The set-up is very much like a fairy tale. We're meant to sympathize with her in her early life. The only love or affection she gets is from Bessie. Brockelhurst and Lowood School intensify her suffering. Brockelhurst is not only a hypocrite but a thief, embezzling from the school's food allowance and starving the girls. She, by attacking Brockelhurst, also attacks religious hypocrisy. It's only with Miss Temple and Helen Burns that Jane begins to see a surrogate for a mother," she said.

"Is Helen Burns introduced into the novel as a model for what Jane ought to be? Jane is a rebel; she rebels against everything. Helen takes the other position, the Christian position of turning the other cheek. Is she there as a foil for Jane, on the other hand, or is she there to temper Jane's rebellion?" he asked.

"She picks up from Helen a certain moderation but she is nonetheless rebellious. She learns from Helen that nursing those kind of feelings are ultimately self-destructive. Helen is prepared to die; she is ready to accept her own death. She is too much of an extreme. She takes the humility too far. There is an indication that there is more repressed rebellion in Helen than she would like to admit—in her untidiness, for example. The death of Helen from consumption is supposedly representative of Charlotte's feelings about her sister's death," she declared.

"We have to regard Bertha as a symbolic character, as a negative counter-image of Jane herself," he said. "Bertha represents passion, anger, self-indulgence carried to an extreme. She has voracious appetites. She is like an animal. We see Bertha's story totally from Rochester's point-of-view. Wouldn't it be interesting to see the story from Bertha's point-of-view? Rochester has been forced to marry her for her money, induced by his father and his elder brother. Isn't the fact of being married to someone who didn't want to marry you in the first place enough to drive anyone mad?"

"Bertha is presented as something Jane has to confront—unrestrained emotion. If, on the one hand, she has to learn how to express her feelings, she also has to learn to keep them within a certain range of control. Bertha represents a total letting-go. She represents the irrational, almost to the point of the inhuman. She is completely destructive. Rochester feels a certain sense of responsibility to Bertha. He doesn't want to put her in an insane asylum. His treatment of Bertha is one of the better aspects of him."

"The madness in Bertha may be genetic—her brother was institutionalized—but the suggestion is there that she was too sexually passionate, that she was unchaste, and that that might well be the reason for her madness," he said.

"Rochester perhaps couldn't satisfy her appetites," she joked. "Rochester is also somehow repressing Jane's sexuality by referring to her as an angel. She, like all Victorian women, is under a dilemma in regards to sex."

He said, "Jane doesn't accept her class position. Everything that Lowood prepares her for, the social-casting, etc., she keeps rebelling against. She never accepts the world as it is. She has a very strong sense of pride and self-respect."

"It's these feelings of self-respect that prevent her from being totally taken over by Rochester. Rochester is tyrannical, whimsical, and doesn't seem to treat Jane very well. Their very first meeting is crucial for the whole dynamic of their relationship. It's the reversal of the romantic pattern. It's the heroine who helps the hero out of a problem; she rescues him when he falls off his horse," she said.

"Part of his make-up is maintaining control. He doesn't want to accept her help but he has no choice. Later on, as he begins to accept his dependence on her, he still attempts to maintain a sense of self-control," he said.

"Rochester provokes Jane into declaring her love for him. It reverses the normal pattern; Rochester should be the one doing the proposing. There is something masochistic in Jane's love for him as well," she stated.

"The fact that Rochester has had bad experiences with women also enters into it—with Bertha, for example. Presumably, he's trying to test Jane. Does she love him for his money or for himself? Blanche bears a resemblance to Bertha. She follows in a series of women in Rochester's life. She is the diametric opposite of Jane; she is tall and thin.

She would like to marry Rochester and she makes an open play for him. The fact that she goes too far, plus she has no money, may be why she doesn't win him—and the fact that he finds her dull," he declared.

"Yes, this is where Jane is different. He finds Jane exciting. It should be remembered that Charlotte Bronte presents Jane as untutored imagination and this is perhaps why Rochester is attracted to her. In that important speech where she admits her love for Rochester to herself, she affirms a kind of spiritual affinity with Rochester. What she affirms is a kind of reliance on an absolute psychological reality that transcends socio-economic, materialistic reality. It is a totally asocial declaration."

"Why is Jane Eyre such a prig when she finds out Rochester has a mad wife? Jane gets her sense of value in life not from social status, but from her own sense of worth, intelligence, imagination. So why?" he asked.

"The temptation is to become Rochester's mistress. Rochester changes his attitude towards her once he proposes. He buys her jewels, etc., and begins to treat her in a different, arrogant manner. Jane is reluctant to become sexually attracted to him. She is afraid to alter the relationship and to make it a sexual relationship. What attracts him to her also is her independent spirit, her resistance. He tends to regard her as disembodied and thus desexualized. He refers to her as an angel, an imp. She asserts her humanity. She claims that she's not an angel; she doesn't want to be

an angel. She doesn't want to be placed on a pedestal. She has a moral life. Her virginity is important here. Once she gives it up her self-respect is gone. If she accepts becoming his mistress she gives up everything. She cannot be a governess anywhere ever again. She gives up her independence. He gives up nothing. He has had mistresses before. He loses no social status. He threatens her by stating how devastating it would be to him if she left him. Consider how she feels about it. Personal integrity is the reason she will not be his mistress. She conforms to the sexual standards of the time. She's not married and she's a virgin. If she loses that sexual status then in the eyes of the world and in her own eyes she loses all. Her view of herself, therefore, to some degree corresponds to the social norm and viewpoint."

"Is Rochester's proposal completely self-serving?" he asked. "Is it Rochester who's wrong or Jane Eyre? Why is it wrong to run off with Rochester? Here, for the first time in her life, she's been offered the prospect of happiness, and she shies away. Remember that earlier she had said to Helen Burns that she would do anything to be loved, to get love, and here she's having it offered to her."

"She feels that if she doesn't have her own sense of self, then she can't get any love. She is very reluctant to become dependent on Rochester, even in marriage. Remember that sometimes people act irrationally, so you can't always know exactly why she acts as she does," she replied.

He asked, "Can we accept Rochester's demand that he cannot divorce his wife because it is God's will? Can we agree with Jane in her decision not to become his mistress or his wife?"

"The total domination of her character which the label of wife would give her husband is what she resists."

"Of course, she does agree to marry him, she does return to him when he is maimed, when he's been castrated in a sense by the fire—desexualized. Then it's okay," he said.

"Yes, the element or aspect of castration does enter into it. But he also needs her help now, her guidance, in a way he never did before," she responded.

She had paused in her search for the books she wanted in talking to him, and now he felt he had taken up enough of her time. She was probably impatient to go upstairs and retrieve them, check them out at the circulation desk, and go home in this rain.

"So you liked Jane Eyre!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, yeah. It was one of the best. That one and Vanity Fair. That's no surprise. I knew I would like her." And then they mutually parted with kind looks, she to continue her search through the cards, he out into the heavy rainfall. It had been magical rain. It had brought them together under the umbrella of the library.

The end of the term came soon after. The last class was a review of the five novels, and they played a little game of trying to associate the names, places, and objects she put forth with the related novels. Thus she would ask: "Who was Mr. Jarndyce?"—a lawyer in Bleak House. "Whose residence was Thornfield Hall?"—Mr. Rochester's in Jane Eyre. It was to get them ready for the identification question which was to be on the formal examination just before Christmas, and it was a lot of fun.

After the class ended he descended the stairs to where she stood in the front. He wanted to say goodbye to her for the Christmas interval. It was unlikely they would see each other again until after New Year's when the second term began. It was early December—December 5—the earliest date on which classes had ended that he'd ever known. She saw him coming down and seemed to shrink away. He'd never before spoken to her inside the lecture theater. No one in the class knew of their special relationship and their past association. The secretiveness had made it all the more enticing. She perhaps felt that he was betraying a confidence by approaching her in front of all these people. He waited patiently in front, off to her left, as she was approached one after another by her students who had questions to ask

her, mainly about the exam. She looked at him once when, there was a pause in the flow of people, expecting him to take his turn now; but he, too, felt some hesitation. He let someone else go to her. She was speaking now with a young girl, and when their conversation had seemed to reach a natural end she held out, made an effort to prolong the conversation in order to avoid talking to him a bit longer. Yes, she was afraid. Finally, he did come up to her. His mouth was all dry. He mumbled the words.

"Just came down to say goodbye. You mentioned you were going away for the vacations. Where to?" She'd referred to it in reference to the fact that she wouldn't be available for appointments just before Christmas, not until after New Year's. He hoped it wasn't anyplace far away. He'd entertained thoughts of marriage. He thought they would at least use the holiday period to get better acquainted with each other. He'd been waiting for the holiday period impatiently. He'd been looking forward to a time when she'd be free, and he'd be free, and when they wouldn't have to be teacher and student for just a short while. He'd thought their whole relationship had been leading up to this holiday period when, finally, they would openly and mutually declare what they felt for each other.

"I'm going to Florida for ten days."

"Oh," he said. There was a crestfallen expression on his face. This ruined his entire plans. She'd thrown a

monkeywrench into his dreams and hopes.

Then, when she saw the damaging effect this seemed to have on him, she added, "My mother lives down there." Well, if it would be to go visit her mother then he couldn't begrudge her the trip that much. But he still felt like he'd been hit by an anvil. He wanted to hide his pain now. He'd have to get away as unobtrusively and as politely as possible. "You're taking the second part of the course, aren't you?" she started. But she asked it unsurely, little-child-lost-like. She was afraid he wouldn't. Apparently, it made a difference to her whether he took the course or not. His presence mattered to her. He gave her strength, confidence. When he replied that yes, he would, her face lit up and she was reassured.

"Are you going to be around?" he asked.

"I'll be here until right before the exam. How about you?"

"Yeah. I'll be around." Then he looked straight into her eyes. It was meant as an appeal, a come-on, and also as an indication of his hurt and dependency at this moment. He said, "I'm always around." She caught the meaning of his words. "Well, I'll see ya then. Bye."

As he moved away slowly she said, "Bye. Take care." He had his back turned to her, but he nodded.

He saw her again before Christmas, before the exam, again by accident. She'd come up for an appointment with one of her students and he was headed out of the building to the library. She was coming up the stone walk of the library in his direction. He imagined she'd been lonely with nothing to do, and she was out for a walk along the grounds hoping to run into him perhaps. There certainly was something of that in it. She relished their contact and interaction as much as he. But she always needed an excuse to be on the university grounds, and the appointment had conveniently provided her with one. As she approached him he stumbled on the stone path then tried to recover.

"What are you doing here on a Wednesday?" She was at the university normally on Tuesdays and Thursdays, never at any other times.

"I've got an appointment." He thought it might be an appointment with the chairman or with some member of the administration. Then he talked to her about mundane things, telling her he'd just handed in a paper, that he was tired from all the papers he had to write and from studying for her exam. He felt that she was a little reluctant to talk to him. It might have seemed, to other eyes, like he might be asking her for the exam questions.

She was wary of that, sensitive to outward appearances, sensitive to her reputation and proper function as a teacher. So here now, before the exam, it might be better if they did not talk. That was how he interpreted her tentativeness. She had a four o'clock appointment and did not want to be late. "They're waiting for me. I have to go." As she moved away she waved her mittened hand like a little child. It was a curiously awkward and vulnerable gesture. Her face when she had approached him had revealed a loneliness and then a sad relief after having encountered him. But now as she moved away it was almost with a flippancy, a teasing knowledge that he might want her to stay but she had to go. This was what he did for her. He gave her confidence, built her up almost to the point of vanity. But it was better than seeing her low and sad and uncertain of herself.

He prepared hard for the exam, spending two hours every evening in the library for two weeks going over the critical works on the authors under study. It was a lonely time, but at least he had something to occupy him. He liked the notion of devoting himself to just one thing for two solid weeks, preparing, honing for one moment. It was like an athlete preparing for a performance, a sprinter preparing

for the hundred-yard dash at the Olympics, a doctor preparing himself for an operation, an actor psyching himself up for an important scene or role. A whole half-year's work would go into a three-hour exam. What worried him was the period after Christmas, after the exam, when he would have nothing to do. Then he would start climbing walls, then the depression would set in and the loneliness, which was somewhat assuaged by activity, would become unbearable.

He wrote the exam on a snowy, overcast December day, not having slept well the night before as was his usual habit. He could never sleep before an exam. The anxiety, the adrenalin was too high. Every exam he had written of any consequence throughout his university career had been done on four hours sleep or less. He entered the gymnasium where the formal exams were held every winter and spring. He caught sight of her as she stood off to the side of the row directly in front of him as he entered the door. She was looking directly at him, too. This was how she returned the strength he gave her—this and in other ways. The sight of her gave him confidence. He knew he would do well.

He took his seat up near the front of one of the last rows on the far right of the gymnasium. He could not see her now. She would disappear long before the exam was over. He turned towards the page in front of him and began writing. Three hours later it was over—an exhausting.

exhaustive ordeal. He could hardly walk as he left the hall. The lack of sleep, the physical debilitation, and prolonged periods of walking in snow had left him with a twisted ankle or bone in his foot. What would he do over Christmas if he couldn't walk? If he had to stay in the house for twenty-four hours a day he would go crazy.

The period over Christmas was a depressing one. He spent most of it reading Bleak House, which was an experience in itself. He became involved in the mystery of the story. He'd written the exam with only a cursory knowledge of the novel, having relied on the critical texts for most of his information. But he felt it was incumbent on him to complete the book. He did not want to feel within himself that he had not given her full value for the course, done all the work. He felt responsible to her for his academic work. In fact, his entire academic career was dedicated to her. She had inspired him. She had made him work, made him serious about literature in a way that no one else had. But it was a dull Christmas. In retrospect, he realized it was the worst Christmas he'd ever had. He was sick with a cold for a long time, and he had the problem with his strained foot. And it was cold, bitterly cold, throughout the three weeks. He spent his

days mostly shopping for Christmas presents. Afterwards, since the library was closed and the university itself was shut, he would sit around campus on a frozen, snow-packed stone bench, freezing himself despite the heavy green parka he wore. This he could only do for short periods of time—forty-five minutes to an hour. He had nowhere else to go, no friends to visit. He led a mostly solitary life and he disliked visiting other people's houses. Christmas time was always bad because relatives and friends of his parents would come over; and he was a recluse who'd shut himself in his room. He longed to be with her, knew in his very blood and bones that his rightful place was with her during this holiday season.

He sat now on the icy, cold bench with a fever and a numbness caused by the cold. He looked out across the snow-covered, night-enshrouded campus fields. He felt like he was in Siberia, in some desolate wasteland, the outer environment mirroring the desolation he felt in his soul. He looked up at the sky—it hurt him to crane his neck—and saw a plane pass. It reminded him that she was in Florida. He had never been able to understand the psyches of people who travelled afar. He himself had never been outside the city in his life. He hated to travel, hated the thought of taking yourself away from familiar places and faces. He believed it was a sort of sickness or disease in people to travel. He could not understand

how, particularly on an airplane, they could risk their lives by placing them in someone else's hands—a pilot's, for example. It was insanity—insanity to leave those you loved, like she had left him. Why go thousands of miles away? How could you bear being away from the center of your life—your love—that way? He imagined what she might be doing—swimming on some sunny beach, wearing a bikini, living in some beach-front hotel. How could she bear it when she came back—the extremity of the cold made worse by the unnatural exposure to an eighty-degree sun in late December? Wouldn't she get sick? How were people able to adapt that way? He was sick with longing for her, sick from the absence of her. He believed he might die—so vital had she become to him. Her life-force removed made him weak and vulnerable to disease, diminished his immunity to death in life. Without her he stopped trying.

He carried himself home, aware that something between them had died—an assurance of her continual presence and availability in his life. But, at the same time, it brought about a renewed anxiety to re-establish the relationship on a stronger, steadier basis—a more frequent exposure to her and a stronger companionship.

His sprained foot mended. The cold and fever did not pass, and he still had them when she returned and the new term began. It would take her healing presence to relieve the ailment by making him want to live again, by reawakening the life-force which had been dormant, the

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absence of which had severed his immunity to the soul's and body's decline.

The second term's class was much smaller in size. It was held in the old classroom which had served as the locale for the first course they'd had together, LI5, adjacent to the large lecture hall. It was only capable of seating forty or fifty people—extra chairs had been added since that first year. All the registrants who had signed up for the first half of the course as their one English elective had been weeded out. She was dealing now with the *crème-de-la-crème*, a hard core of English students who made her job more satisfying, so it seemed. But there were few gems among them. The crop at the university had steadily gotten worse, like the curriculum; and if the teaching had improved the same could not be said for the material that they worked with—the range of course offerings and the type of individuals seeking instruction. He would learn to dislike a fair number of his fellow students. He was not reluctant to nurse an overt antipathy for most of the individuals he disliked. She, on the other hand, was diplomatic with all of them. If she had any targets of profound dislike she tried to keep them hidden. But he knew that her opinion of them was not high. He kept far apart from them for the most part. She was too refined

herself not to know the type of individuals she was dealing with—the snobbish pseudo-intellectuals, the lie feeders, the lie swallowers, and the vain, tasteless ones which the university bred by the score. They were an elite within an elite—the best and the brightest—and yet you would not trust most of them with any half-prized article. Worse than that, they contributed to the deadening effect which he was beginning to re-experience within academia. If he could not respect his fellow students, if he had no regard or feeling for the people with whom he was in daily contact, then what was the use? Did you do it just for yourself, and for her? Or was there a larger structure, a larger order, an idea or notion that you stayed true to? The people that he observed now within the confines of the old, familiar classroom, which he cherished for it had initially brought her to him, did not have half the fibre of the people that he'd dealt with in the first course with her, none of whom he'd known intimately but whom he'd grown to have some sentiment and respect for. That class atmosphere had been detached but amiable; this one would prove to be petty, vindictive, desultory.

He took his place near the front. There was no room to sit elsewhere. He'd entered the classroom ahead of a young girl, and now as he took his seat some of the attention was drawn away from him. He sat on the edge of the front row. He had not really looked at the teacher just yet. He just

caught a glimpse of her face and form. Her body was sheathed in some light-coloured outfit. He sat at a sharp angle to her and it was difficult to get a good look. It was awkward for him to turn his neck. He could just see her body out of the corner of his eye, her back and her shoulders, the back of her legs. It was a jumpsuit she was wearing, a yellow jumpsuit. She looked like a twelve-year-old who'd just returned from the playground. She was talking with a fast nervousness, gesturing with her hands as she spoke, and then placing her wrists on her hips as she reacted to a question or a comment from the group. His mind wasn't taking in what she said. He just wanted to catch a good glimpse of her, hopefully when her face was averted so that he would not embarrass her or himself with the scrutiny. Finally, as she moved a little ways back, he could see her distinctly. He found, to his shock, that she had a new hairstyle. Gone were the locks and ringlets. In their place was a straightened, page-boy look. He wondered how this effect could be achieved. He knew nothing of the mysteries and inner workings of beauty salons. How could they make naturally curly hair straight—and keep it that way? And why would she have chosen the new look? Didn't she know he liked her curls? Her face seemed more severe. She looked less the flower-girl and more the middle-aged matron with the new hairstyle. But the jumpsuit gave it all away. She seemed to be something out of where she said

she had been on her Florida trip—Disneyland. She looked like Peter Pan.

She was introducing the course to the assembly, capsulating the novels which were to be read, saying something about the authors of each. Then she started in earnest to discuss Emily Bronte's life and Wuthering Heights. There were to be five novels on the course for that term, as in the previous term, and the sequence would be: Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights, George Eliot's Middlemarch, George Gissing's New Grub Street, George Moore's Esther Waters, and Thomas Hardy's Jude The Obscure. She talked about Emily Bronte's penchant for large dogs and her favorite preoccupation of going for long, solitary walks along the moors, walks on which the dogs invariably accompanied her. Then she talked about her early death, at the age of thirty. This led to a discussion of the Brontes in general—the immense artistic talent that seemed to run in the family and the shared doomed, tragic nature of their lives. The talented ones—Branwell, Emily, Anne, Charlotte—all died relatively early. Then she began on some of the poems Emily had written, the Gondal poems. These she read out loud. She was somewhat disoriented by the classroom setting. Even though she had taught there before, it had not been so crowded then; and her nervousness kept showing in the way she flicked her eyes about, not certain if she was in control, hyper-sensitive to any sounds or any possible questions from her audience. He

hoped the class would thin out. She was more comfortable with a less crowded class, as was he. Maybe that would calm her down. Maybe she would be less nervous then. He kept wanting to tell her to relax, but he was nervous, too, at the prospect of talking to her after class.

When the class was over he stood up at his seat, bent and unbent his right knee, and then inched slowly to where she was standing. He lingered behind her, to her left. He wanted to talk to her, but not before the others got their say. So he waited and he politely lifted his hand to the girl in front of him, signalling to her to take her turn ahead of him. It was not really politeness which motivated the gesture. It was a way of getting what he really wanted—a private audience with her, the last say, the last word with her. It was thoroughly selfish, not motivated by any humanitarian considerations of any kind, though it was interpreted that way by the girl and by the teacher who, by their smiles, let him know that he was a true gentleman. The girl was finished and now he turned towards her. She stared blankly at him, waiting for him to say something. He roamed his eyes over her face and crown.

"You cut your hair," he said. It was a rather left-handed remark. He'd wanted to make some sort of personal observation in order to re-establish the link between them; but his tone was childish, imbecilic, preadolescent.

She nodded. She seemed unwilling to be spoken to in this fashion. The month-long absence invited a bit of formality between them. She had to grow accustomed to him again before he spoke to her so personally and familiarly in this manner.

"So how was Florida?" he asked lamely. This seemed to spark her. She'd been expecting the question perhaps. The conventionality of it seemed to spark her enthusiasm and now she began to place herself at ease with him.

"Great. Had a good time. I went down there to see my mother." He knew this. She'd forgotten she'd told him. This troubled him. "How were your vacations?"

"Pretty depressing," he replied. "I was sick all the time. I'm still sick." The hoarseness of his voice told her it was so. There was worry in her face now. She felt guilty about having enjoyed herself while he'd been back here in the snow, sick with a cold and probably with longing and loneliness as well. He'd put a damper on her vacation story and on her determined up-beat mood which he thought might have been a way of convincing herself that she had, indeed, had a good time. He sensed that she had not had a good time, that she'd been sick, like him, as well—psychologically sick, emotionally sick. There was pity in her eyes for his poverty, guilt and shame that he had not been able to afford to go to Florida for sun and a vacation when he, and not she, had needed it. The sickness had given him the appearance of a tubercular. The artist's

disease seemed to be written on his face. "I don't like vacations," he continued. "You've got nothing to do. I like to keep busy."

"I used to be like that," she responded. "But as you get older it changes. Now I like vacations. I'm going up to my office to show some exams. You want to come?"

"I don't know what I'd learn from it." Then he hesitated. He did not want to offend her. "Okay." Then she picked up her books and motioned to him to accompany her as she made her way out of the classroom. She was rambling now, as if she were talking to a girlfriend—quick-paced, snappy, deprecatory.

"They treat you like a kid." She was talking about the general disposition of the people "down South." "I went into this restaurant and the waitress acted like I was a fourteen-year-old."

"Why do you think they do that?" he asked. He thought he knew what her "sickness" had been. She'd been down there visiting her parents, probably staying at their house. It might have seemed to her, too, like she was a fourteen-year-old again. Her parents had probably treated her like a fourteen-year-old. You never outgrew your mother's persistence of her role through proddings and scoldings no matter what age you were. It had probably been the reason she'd moved up here, up North—to get away from them and to be on her own, a mature responsible adult. But he had also intended the question as a gentle jibe,

suggesting that she herself acted like a fourteen-year-old, was still dressed like a fourteen-year-old (the remnants of her three-week sojourn), and so had merited that type of behaviour towards her.

"I don't know. I guess it's some vestige of the Old South. The Southern custom or mentality, whatever you want to call it." She was walking quickly. He was trying to keep pace. They reached her office at the head of the stairs, a group of three or four students trailing behind them, wanting to see their exam-papers for the first part of the course. She had a new office this year. He hadn't been in it before. It was the first one as you turned right on the corridor, separate from the rest of the offices. She opened the door and invited the group behind them in. He lingered outside for awhile and then entered as she handed his exam to him. He hadn't really wanted to see it. But he took it and glanced through it quickly, carelessly. Then he went back to where she was seated behind her desk now, gave her back the exam. He'd gotten an A minus.

"So what did I wind up with for the course?"

She removed a mark list from the second drawer on the left of her desk, looked for his name and said, "A minus."

"How'd I do on the test?"

"You don't know how you did on the test? I thought I'd handed back the tests in class so you could get a look at them." He hadn't been there, had gone out for a

cigarette, had not wanted to know.

"No. I don't know." She looked at the list again.

"B plus. B plus and A minus, comes out to A minus."

"It does?"

"You get credit for a higher mark on the exam if you've shown improvement between the in-class test and the exam. I take that into consideration."

"Well, it's just," he said. "Jane Austen. I didn't like the question on her. That's the one I didn't get. I thought I might have gotten less on the test, B minus or maybe even a C."

"No, you got a B plus on the test and A minus on the exam."

Then he leaned towards her and asked, "How come there's so many fewer people in the class this term?" His voice was hardly above a whisper and had a low calmness that bespoke the special intimacy between them.

"I don't know. Apparently, a lot of the people were from other areas like Commerce and Science." She was bothered by the presence of the other students in her office, and he was trying to be helpful, soothing.

"So?"

"Well, they took it as their one requirement in English."

"Oh, I see." He nodded, and looked at her as she returned his gaze. He felt like they'd re-established

their intimacy, and he was satisfied. "Well, I'll see you on Tuesday then."

"Yes," she said. "See you on Tuesday." Her tone betrayed the peaceful foreknowledge of a long, happy term of interlockment stretching ahead of them, a wonderful recompense for the three weeks of isolation which they had endured and which—it was written in their eyes both—they were determined not to repeat.

After that he waited for her at the end of every class. He'd been in too much pain during those three weeks to allow any opportunity he had to be with her, to talk to her, to be wasted. At first, she was troubled by this practise of his. She did not understand what he was doing, felt he was trespassing on her privacy and territorial rights. But then after the third or fourth time she understood that that was his motivation now—to get as much of her as he could, to never let go of her again. His cold healed. He could breathe again. But it was not long before another cold hit him. When it came he felt like he might be developing pneumonia. He'd never had such a prolonged period of illness, of flu sickness, before; he'd never had two attacks in succession.

In the second class on Wuthering Heights he hovered about her afterwards, looking down at her face as she

stood inches apart from him. He asked her if there were any critical readings she could suggest. She named a few, referred to the articles in the critical text she held in her hand, and said it was probably better if he just reread the novel twice. She was aware that he was trying to make a pass, a suggestion of a physical link between them, and she squirmed uncomfortably, although not totally reluctantly or reproachfully. Later on, she would refer to his "phallic presence," the phallic nature or quality of this hovering about her, in relationship to that same description of a similarly persistent character in Henry James's novel, The Portrait Of A Lady—Caspar Goodwood.

In the third class of the new year they dealt again with Wuthering Heights—the narrative point-of-view and the characterizations of Cathy Linton and Heathcliff. She went over Catherine's motivation for marrying Edgar—to provide Heathcliff with a better education and to gain some security for herself and a position in society. But he was unclear about Catherine Linton's thinking on this point. How could marriage to Edgar better Heathcliff's life, and wasn't he being robbed of the only thing that made life meaningful?

After class he asked her about it. She did not see any faultiness in Cathy's reasoning. Her decision to marry Linton was dictated by the narrow availability of men around her. It seemed to her like it was a perfectly logical decision, and certainly not immoral. He was

troubled by her attitude, her obstinate resistance to the wrongness of the action. Would she do such a thing? If her choices in men were limited would she marry out of convenience? It was at odds with his image of her—the first inkling he had that she might not have believed in true love, may not have been wholly virtuous. But he was not ready to condemn her just yet. He was still too overwhelmed with the repossession of her, too blinded by the yellow freshness and radiance, the light she seemed to emit.

She was still acting immaturely. He noticed this above all else. The Florida experience and Emily Bronte seemed to have that effect upon her. But it was a curious aspect of their relationship that he could love her even more at such times because she needed his guidance more. He loved her mature periods, and during her immature moments he was filled with the affection one possesses for a spoiled child. It did not matter how she was, just that she was, and he would deal with her in whatever way she was. He had adaptibility for her. He could criticize her when she might need it, because she was she; and he, in turn, could take her criticism when she needed to flagellate, to relieve the pressure within herself, regardless of whether it was really him she was mad at or someone else for whom he became the substitute target, because he loved her and so she could do that to him without fear of reprisal and without fear of affecting

that love.

A young girl was waiting to speak to her. He stepped aside when there was a pause in their dialogue, lit a cigarette, and, by the gesture, indicated to her to go on and speak to the girl. The girl whom she spoke to seemed different from the rest—gentler. She was quite short and had blonde, almost platinum-blonde, hair. Her eyes were almond-shaped. He could tell immediately she was intelligent and sensitive. So maybe, after all, there were some people worth knowing in the class. One at least, perhaps others—time would tell. The girl had paused in her speech and now he re-entered the conversation.

"Did you see the movie they made of Wuthering Heights back in 1939? It was directed by William Wyler." She looked doubtful.

"No. Why? Was it any good? Who was in it?"

"Laurence Olivier played Heathcliff and Cathy was played by—"

The young girl completed the casting for him.

"Merle Oberon."

"Who?" she asked.

"That's right," he said, turning his gaze in the direction of the young girl and then back to her, "Merle Oberon."

"They only filmed the first half of the book. It wasn't really like the novel at all," the girl related to her.

"Did the actors play them well?"

"Well, I thought Laurence Olivier did a pretty good job. I'm not sure she was right for the role," he replied. "She wasn't my idea of Catherine Linton."

They lingered about for awhile and then she gathered her stuff to leave. The girl accompanied them as they left the classroom in a group of three. He did not mind her coming along. He would have minded someone else. She was quiet, unaggressive, unobtrusive, considerate.

Before they had left the class she had asked him his opinion of the novel.

"It's a masterpiece," he had answered. "Art of the highest calibre." He had spoken it as if he were serving it to her on a platter, perhaps knowing that was what she'd wanted to hear—was her opinion of the novel, too. But inside himself he was not certain. Something nagged at him—the notion that passion of extreme proportions was doomed to failure in Emily Bronte's conception and that only a more-distilled, watered-down version of passion, as exhibited in the relationship between Hareton Earnshaw and Cathy Linton, could succeed.

Earlier, in the first part of their dialogue, he'd told her that it was clumsy editing or writing which was responsible for the ambiguous statement which had provoked him to speak to her after class: "She returned to him like a mouse returning to a cat." The "she" of the sentence referred to Catherine Earnshaw; the "he" referred to Edgar

Linton. The ambiguity resulted from the fact that given the nature of their personalities one would expect it would be Catherine who resembled the cat, and thus should serve that function in the allegory, and Edgar—the mouse.

"No," she'd said, "I believe it was intentional. I think Emily Bronte intended it to read that way." On later reflection, he had realized that she had been right. But it had not erased his impression that Emily Bronte's writing was somehow decadent and prone to distorting the truth as it would be in real life, manipulating it in a negative way, as opposed to her sister Charlotte's positive manipulation of "reality."

He'd felt when he had told her the novel was a masterpiece that he had vaguely lied to her in some way. And this made him uneasy because he believed that you were genetically incapable of lying to someone you really loved. Did the lie mean that there was a flaw in their relationship? Did lying mean that there was a flaw in their love?

He left her at the top of the stairs, as did the girl who went on her way, a different way, troubled that he could not convey his misgivings about the novel to her, that he had offered her what he'd thought she had wanted to hear instead of what he had really felt. But didn't he feel that way; wasn't the novel a masterpiece? He didn't know.

He'd been very tired lately, going to extra classes, trying to decide whether to keep a Canadian history course or not. The fatigue and pressure caused him to miss the next class. He'd overslept. He usually woke up at twelve-thirty for his two o'clock arrival at his one-thirty class, but he'd gone to bed very late the night before and did not awaken till three-thirty—too late to get to the university on time. He was mad at himself. He never missed any classes, especially not hers. She would be angry at him, feel that perhaps he'd shied away from the closer contact he'd been trying to establish, was perhaps an emotional coward. He hurried to wash and get dressed. There was an additional problem. There was a bus strike on. He'd have to walk, adding twenty minutes to his travel time.

He got to the university at four-thirty, just when class was letting out. In his mind was the notion that missing the class was a punishment for having lied to her about Wuthering Heights. He thought he'd go have a hamburger—he hadn't eaten anything—and then go see if she was up in her office and try to make it up to her in some way. When he returned from the cafeteria in the Student Union Building he checked the empty classroom and then headed down the hallway to the English Building. He found her on the main floor, arranging her woollen hat near the main entrance. She was on her way out apparently. She caught sight of him

and then turned away, perhaps thinking that it would be embarrassing for him if she'd seen him on a day when he'd cut class. He walked straight up to her and grinned, smirked.

"Damn bus strike," he said, letting her know at once his reason, excuse, for having missed class. "I was on my way up to your office to talk to you in private, but I see you're on your way out."

"Yes. I've got a meeting at 5:00." He guessed it was probably a Women's Union meeting; he'd seen the notice in the student newspaper. "Would you like to arrange an appointment?" He knew then that through his efforts to reach her after class he'd been forgiven.

"Yeah."

"How about before class on Tuesday?" He was hesitant. He had a class before hers. Besides, he wanted to talk to her after class. "Or after class. Would that be better?"

"After class," he confirmed, and then he said bye to her in the hallway.

He missed some more classes the next week—not any of hers though—and it was evident that the pressure of school was getting to him. He was filled with fatigue from lack of sleep, worried about his choice of courses,

worried about the material he was reading for those courses—whether it was decadent and morally imprecise, and what that may have been doing to his soul. He decided, quite naturally, to take it out on her. It was not a premeditated decision, although he had been wanting to tell her his real opinions instead of lies. Instead it came as a reaction, an attempt to shift the blame onto someone else. He saw her in her office after class and it was there that it happened.

In the classroom after the afternoon session was over, and on the walk up to her office, he'd told her that he'd changed his mind about Wuthering Heights. It was not a masterpiece, not a great work of art. It was full of lies, the work of a writer who'd spiritually remained a fourteen-year-old girl and who had never really grown up. She was dismayed by this turnabout, but did not say so. Her face nevertheless told it all. He felt a responsibility now not to her but to himself. It was himself he was trying to save by getting at the truth. She was right. He was cowardly, at least at this juncture.

Up in her office they got into a discussion about the book and why he had taken such a negative outlook on it. He told her he no longer believed death in early life was a sign of a great artist, that art came through suffering. He felt now that death was caused by the soul's deterioration, and that's what had led to the early death of Emily Bronte—the soul's deterioration, not a masterpiece of epic

proportions. He reneged on some of his earlier positive opinions about the authors he'd done in her feminist fiction course. He said now that he didn't believe Flannery O'Connor was a great artist. He had learned that various people he disliked were great fans of Flannery O'Connor and that had given him pause to wonder. He was lashing out at her now and she realized what he was doing. His life had gone wrong in some way, she perceived, and he was using her as a whipping-boy. This led to a discussion on wife-beating, a subject which was raised within the context of the novel, Wuthering Heights. He said that Heathcliff was a sympathetic character. You could identify with his pain, his love for Cathy being responsible for all the ill deeds he performed—and they were thus forgivable. She took exception, said that wife-beating—Heathcliff occasionally beat Isabella, his wife—was hardly forgivable. It was evident to any perceptive observer that this was exactly what he was doing—verbally lashing or beating his wife. He tried to appease her, knew she was right.

"Certainly...certainly I don't condone wife-beating." This seemed to satisfy her, to please her. She knew he wouldn't beat her if they were ever to be in a situation of wife and husband. She would be in no danger. "But it's understandable—all the things he does—Heathcliff. It's his pain, his tremendous suffering. When he tries to get them to open the coffin so he can see her again, then you

can't help but sympathize, identify with him." And then she seemed to want to assert a few things about their relationship—his and hers—and she used the book for this purpose.

"There was never any love between them." She saw the effect this had on him, saw his drawn look. "I don't mean you," she said. But he knew that's what she meant. He tried obliquely to make a point about choosing texts more carefully, going for better quality—meaning, of course, works which had a moral framework more in line with his. She responded by implying that there were no absolute measures of good and evil, that morality was relative, that the line between right and wrong was ambiguous. He knew now, on this point, she was wrong. He brought up the example of Hitler's persecution of the Jews.

"There's no ambiguity in that." She tried to counter, saying that the Americans in Vietnam were just as bad and that morality is dictated by whoever holds the power.

"So?" he asked. He didn't quite get her point, didn't see what that had to do with moral absolutes. "There is an absolute right and an absolute wrong." She seemed to be reassured by his arguments and assertions. Maybe she'd been evaluating him and what she'd seen and heard had elevated her opinion of him. He was very moral. He did believe in right and wrong. She saw that his morality

was at the center of him; he would not sell or compromise it for any reason. He wanted to let her know that because they had argued, had cleared the air (the first time there had been any open verbal unpleasantness between them), there should still be no ill feeling between them and that it would make their relationship stronger. That was the meaning behind his very steady look as he said, "I'll see you on Thursday," and she understood. They could be friends again, having fought, and on the basis of truth not lies that had threatened the emotional honesty between them.

Middlemarch was next on the agenda. It was a long book and he hadn't been looking forward to reading George Eliot. He'd known nothing about George Eliot. But George Eliot's personal life, which the teacher described in class, fascinated him. It was apparent she identified herself with George Eliot—Mary Ann Evans. She'd assigned him the alter ego of George Lewes, Eliot's lover and second husband with whom she'd lived during her marriage to John Chapman, and who was responsible for her artistic growth—his career as a critic and writer diminishing as hers grew stronger in relation. She described George Eliot's religious crisis, her arguments with her father which resulted in him throwing her out of the house. Was the teacher's relationship with her own father as stormy? Had

she undergone a religious renunciation, a crisis of faith—was still undergoing it?

The book did not enthrall him, at least in its early stages. He was skeptical of George Eliot; she'd been praised by too many people he'd disliked. But then he began to get the hang of it—saw that it was the story about the growth of understanding in one woman, Dorothea, about her increasing sensitivity to the whole scope of humanity around her. He still had no real affection for George Eliot—he would learn that later in the summer when he read more of her—but her head and heart seemed to be in the right place. It was a happy ending she provided, a belief in the triumph of love, and a sympathetic awareness in and of her characters. George Eliot would for him become the best of the English Victorian novelists, maybe because he later began identifying her with George Eliot—saw her personality and spirit repeated in Eileen Fleming as if in a Hindu reincarnation. It was her best showing that term—when he liked her most, when she was most genteel and receptive. She had regained the maturity he had discovered in her during Jane Eyre. She glowed with benevolence and spiritual health. He, in contrast, had contracted his second bout of flu that winter—one that made him wonder if he was on the slow road to death by pneumonia.

It was after one of these classes that he asked her about her educational background. She'd spent a good portion

of the class clarifying the intellectual pursuits of Mr. Casaubon and explicating the intellectual backgrounds of Mr. Casaubon and Lydgate, and this gave him the idea to ask her about her own intellectual background. He thought it might impress her to conduct their personal conversations in witty relation to the class topic. It did.

"Tell me about your intellectual background," he asked at the top of the stairs and on the way down the hallway towards the Arts Building staircase which led up to her office. That's where he always left her after accompanying her on their walks—at the foot of the staircase leading up to her office. He'd spent an unusual amount of time waiting for her after class. She'd gotten into a lengthy discussion with one of the boys—a portly, ugly fellow who was always bothering her and insinuating himself. He'd waited off to the side by the large glass windows which framed the walkway along the hall for nearly a half hour, just to walk those few steps to the foot of the staircase with her. He'd noticed that her attention and attraction to the males in the class was higher this term. She seemed to be flirting with some of them at times, flirtations that angered him but which he knew was the only way she seemed able to interact with them. She meant no malice by it. It was an unconscious response. She may have flirted with them—she did with nearly all of them—but it did not change her opinion of them. She could dislike you

and still flirt with you. In fact, the chances were greater that she would flirt with you if she disliked you. Nevertheless, he didn't like her talking with them, wanted all of her male attention to fall on his shoulders.

She threw him that same contemplative, surprised look she had whenever he asked her something personal about herself, whenever he expressed his curiosity about her, and then replied, "What do you want to know?"

"You got your B.A. where?"

"Syracuse University."

"In Syracuse, New York," he added.

"Right. That's where I'm from."

"Your Master's?"

"Columbia."

"In?..."

"New York City," she declared, surprised that he didn't know. But now he remembered.

"Columbia. That's where they had all the student riots in the Sixties."

"Right. I came one year after that all happened. Too late."

"And your Ph.D. degree?"

"At McGill."

"What was your Master's thesis about?"

"Céline. Do you know..."

"No."

"And your Ph.D. thesis was about..."

"Doris Lessing." He'd heard of Doris Lessing, had read a short story by her—"To Room Nineteen"—very depressing. He'd heard of Céline, too, but was unfamiliar with French or European Literature, and so could not place him.

"Well, now I'm informed about your intellectual background," he said mock-complacently. He threw her a self-satisfied grin.

She threw him a sardonic grin and quipped, "Yeah. Now you'll use it against me." It was a joke, but he had the notion that she was half-serious. Was she paranoid, too?

In another after-class session she forgot her books in the classroom and only realized it when they were all the way down the hallway. She informed him with an anxious, troubled look, was surprised when he offered to accompany her back and then return the same way again. He didn't mind. It gave them more time to talk.

They finished Middlemarch and went on to George Gissing's New Grub Street. It was an examination of the poverty of writers and of the writing profession in Late Victorian England; and because it dealt with poverty, a condition he was experiencing lately because of his end-of-the-school-year shrinking funds, he found it depressing.

He wanted to read about riches, about the rich. He wanted glamour and the soothing knowledge of happy lives lived in comfortable surroundings, the aura of gentility, the fantasy and wonder that came with luxury. But he admitted that he found the novel interesting. Its naturalistic mode, the relationship of Reardon and Amy, and the characterization of the other minor characters were well-done. He found Gissing's pessimistic world vision hard to swallow, however.

During the first class on New Grub Street she failed to wait for him after class for the first time. It was a gloomy, rainy day and he had felt uncomfortable in class. He'd been overdressed. She may have felt that Gissing was not a worthy writer for them to discuss together, or had transferred some of her initial hostility towards Gissing onto him. Anyway, she walked out of class quickly and left him flabbergasted. In the next class she indirectly semi-apologized by saying she "was ashamed" at one point, indicating that she was sorry she'd walked out on him. The reference had been to Amy's abandonment of Reardon and when she had spoken the words she had looked directly at him. She defended Amy for the most part, however. Obviously, she'd identified herself with Amy (he also saw her as Amy), and seemed to believe that Reardon was an exalted ne'er-do-well who got what he deserved for being too pompous, vain, self-consciously artistic, and stubborn

about not allowing his wife to help him, out of manly pride, when she inherited her riches. He didn't like Reardon either, but he was more cynical about Amy than she was. Her prime motivations seemed to be materialistic. Also, she professed love for Reardon but would not stick with him in poverty. Amy claimed it was the uselessness of the poverty she objected to—they didn't have to be poor; they were only poor because of Reardon's stubbornness. It was an interesting game of finding out about her psyche. He asked himself, "Would she stick with me if I was poor?" The answer seemed to be no, not if the poverty was of your own making and choice, not if it could be avoided. He hoped that she, unlike Amy, would not be swayed by materialistic considerations; but it was different for a woman (or was it?)—she had to look out for the children and her lot was dependent upon his. Could he expect her to stay with him if he were poor? Did he have the right to ask such a thing? Did anyone have the right to ask anyone else to share poverty? Wasn't there a responsibility to support the other individual, and once that responsibility was not met or was forsaken the marriage or partnership was void? But wasn't the concept of love for better or for worse? Didn't it imply a going all the way? Didn't it imply staying together not only when the going was good but when it was rough as well? All these thoughts flickered through his mind as he

read the novel and listened to her in class.

The dilemma was resolved quite unintentionally in one after-class session. He wanted an explication of Amy's reasoning, the conditions under which she would stay with Reardon.

"I want you to clear up something," he said. "She says that she'll stay with Reardon only if he continues to produce the popular novels which he feels are trash and unworthy of him. But he wants to work on the shorter essays which he finds enjoyable."

"She'll stay with him only if he continues the life of a writer. She wants to be known in society as a writer's wife. Once he stops writing that's when she'll leave him, and does leave him."

"Isn't it because of the poverty?"

"No. She'll stay with him and be poor. She just won't stay with him if he's not a writer. And that's what he does—he gives up the writer's life and goes to work as a clerk. And then he dies as a result."

"I had the feeling she wanted to get away from him regardless. She feels he's a failure, and leaves him. When she left him she said it was only going to be for a short while, but you felt like she wasn't coming back and knew she wasn't coming back."

"But when she has money she asks to return to him."

"Yeah, well, Reardon is wrong about being stubborn

and not wanting them to depend on her money; but she's wrong, too, in only wanting to come back when they have money available to them." The message he inferred from all this dialogue was that she would stay with him only if he continued to study. Once the link with education was severed in his life she would not stay with him. As long as he was a student then she would be by him. Once he gave that up and took a job, as a clerk somewhere, say—as he had done once before—it would be goodbye. So he must remain in school if he wanted to keep her. It was the best incentive he could have. He would not lose her for the world.

The mid-term break was approaching and he wanted to get the novels set in his mind for the mid-term exam. After class he approached her in order to discuss the novels, to ask her some questions which were on his mind.

"According to Charlotte Bronte's Preface to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff is completely 'unredeemed' within the novel. Do you agree with her judgment?"

"The question refers to whether Heathcliff's love for Cathy ultimately redeems him as an individual or whether it is a destructive love ultimately. What Heathcliff represents is the denial of social aspirations for her; he also represents the legitimate nature of aspiration. She is split down the middle. On the one hand, she wants to remain in her childhood, running around free with Heathcliff on the moors in a free existence. On the other hand, she is also attracted to the world of Edgar Linton. She wants to marry Linton and possess all the privileges which such a state will bring her. What is meant by unredeemed within the novel? We have the statement about Heathcliff: 'Never once swerving from his road to perdition.' Is he merely a devil, doomed to perdition, an element of social chaos? He betrays one solitary human emotion—not his love, passion for Catherine. The single link to humanity is his love for Hareton Earnshaw (and his regard for Nelly Dean)."

"Can you regard the word 'redeemed' and redemption in the Christian context? Is Charlotte Bronte applying a moral frame of reference that doesn't fit with what Emily Bronte is trying to do?" he asked.

"Yes. Emily Bronte's religion is passion. But even on her own terms the passion fails. Only in the relationship between Cathy Linton and Hareton Earnshaw can there be success. There seems to be a renewal or reincarnation of Heathcliff and Catherine in them, but the passion never seems

to be on the same level. There is never that extreme, passionate identification between Cathy and Hareton as there is between Catherine and Heathcliff. She, Cathy the younger, never says, 'I am Heathcliff.' Heathcliff's and Catherine's love seems to be beyond the everyday. She wanted her middle-class husband and her dream-lover. And you can't have both—that's the lesson she learns. And it kills her."

"Their doomed love relationship, their star-crossed lives, seem to be reminiscent of Edward Rochester's and Jane Eyre's relationship in Charlotte Bronte's novel," he said.

"Reading the opening of Emily Bronte's novel, the early life of Heathcliff and Catherine, tyrannized by their brother, you can't help but sympathize with the downtrodden, oppressed children, but, unlike Jane Eyre, there is a divergence there afterwards. The conflict for Catherine Earnshaw is not resolved in her marriage as in Jane Eyre's marriage to Rochester. Poor Catherine is stuck; the dark passionate man is not socially-acceptable, the socially-acceptable man is the blond-haired one, Edgar Linton. In Jane Eyre the aspiration is not split; it is contained in one man, Edward Rochester, both socially-acceptable and passionate. In Wuthering Heights the aspiration is split. Heathcliff is the passionate figure but he is not socially-acceptable. The socially-acceptable figure is someone else. It would not degrade Catherine

to marry a Heathcliff raised as a gentleman. It would degrade her to marry a Heathcliff raised as a servant. Catherine thinks she has control over the men around her but she doesn't. She can't control Edgar Linton, for example. Catherine does not understand what is expected of her in marriage. She thinks that by marrying Linton she can help Heathcliff, but she's crazy, wrong, as Nelly tells her. Nelly is right. Nelly has common sense; Catherine does not. She has some other sort of sense."

"Does Dorothea's marriage to Ladislav at the end of Middlemarch represent an achievement of self-knowledge for her, or a compromise with her earlier aspirations?" he asked.

"Dorothea's aspirations, like Catherine Linton's, are split. She wants some kind of social and moral-intellectual power for herself. It is clear that what she wants is to have her own great work. With her marriage to Casaubon she begins to lose her rigid judgments—about art, for example. She also begins to realize that the world does not revolve around her, that things ultimately are not going to work out. She begins to develop this knowledge and self-knowledge. With her relationship with Ladislav she begins to divest herself of her property and possessions. He seems to be in that class of ne'er-do-well young men who don't know what they want in life. He tries journalism. At the end of the novel we find out he's become a kind of reformist member of parliament. His refusal of Bulstrode's money is an indication

of his integrity. He is honest; this is probably why she loves him. He is the antithesis of Casaubon. Casaubon is dried-up; he is vital. She herself doesn't know what she wants in terms of a profession. Is there self-development at the end in Dorothea? That is the question being asked. Does her coming to decide to marry Will Ladislaw equal self-knowledge? This is the key."

"Does she keep her illusions? Does she keep her idealism?" he inquired.

"Her ideals lead her to illusions. What we probably want is her to have less illusions without losing her idealism," she said.

"I personally feel that her relationship and marriage to Ladislaw is positive," he stated.

"A lot of the criticism has been just the opposite. He is an unrealized character, individual," she returned.

"He seems to bring her closer in touch with herself."

"This is true, but a lot of people have read the novel as her marrying a second-rate individual," she replied.

"In the last chapter of New Grub Street, Milvain comments on Reardon and Biffen: 'In such an admirable social order as ours, they were bound to go to the dogs.' Does the novel as a whole suggest that it is the social order which is responsible for the two writers' deaths?" he asked.

"Is the emphasis of the novel the characters' own personal maladjustments? Is it because they are excluded from society? What Milvain realizes is that the social

order fits him, and that Reardon and Biffen are the misfits. It doesn't bother him that he does fit in with the social order. He seems to feel pity for Reardon and Biffen in their status as misfits. On the other hand, he may just be feigning a facile friendliness and leading them along a destructive path. Is Gissing trying to portray Reardon and Biffen as true artists or failures? Milvain is not trying to create art with a capital 'a.' Reardon knows what he wants; he just doesn't have the strength of character to get it. The practical men get what they want at the end. Whelpdale, a combination of the shrewd and the impractical, gets what he wants in a wife. The idealists, Reardon and Biffen, the one's with integrity, ideals, are both dead at the end of the novel. Biffen and Reardon conversing resolve not to be so impractical. It's Reardon's own sensibilities, his own emotional integrity that kills him. When Reardon and Biffen are talking Reardon says that because they are passive beings they must suffer quietly. It's not as if Reardon is in love with his notion of himself as a suffering artist. Reardon says one good thing about his experiences is that they have cured him of ambition. To what degree is the social order responsible for the characters' failures, lives? No alternative social order is presented that would render Milvain less successful. To what degree is the individual master of his own destiny (if you're Hardy—none) and to what degree is he the victim of social circumstances? Reardon

is certainly affected psychologically. The differences between Reardon and Jasper Milvain are emotional, sentimental, temperamental differences—and social circumstances. The kind of temperament Jasper has seems to fit in with the kind of society he lives in."

He thanked her for answering her questions and left the classroom with a sense of readiness for the upcoming exam.

The mid-term break soon happened, right after George Gissing. He was not to see her for a week. He'd spend the time studying, and then write a great exam on the mid-term which would take up the first class when they returned from the break. He'd told her in one of their discussions that one of the reasons he liked the course was because there were no papers. He preferred exams. Papers were too exhausting. She had looked perturbed, perhaps thinking him lazy.

He didn't know that she was in and out of her office all of that time, discussing points in the novels with students who had made appointments with her, plying her for knowledge

before the exam. He didn't want to bother her, disturb her. She, on the other hand, must have been disappointed by his failure to contact her during those "free days." Other students were in her hair; where was he? Was it only during class hours that she belonged to his world? Was she only an in-class teacher to him? She must have felt neglected by him. He wasn't aware of her disappointment, not until he returned, not until she started paying more attention to the portly boy and, later, to a tall, curly-haired boy, not until after the exam when she began to occasionally resist their after-class discussions. Perhaps she was busier than usual during that period after the exam, but he didn't take up much of her time. Certainly she could spare a few minutes for him; or did she feel the relationship was moribund and, therefore, why devote any excess time to it?

The break seemed to have increased her suspicion of him, defeated some idea she had of the permanency of their relationship and replaced it with the notion that he might be killing—was detrimental to—her career at the university. It was not apparent at the outset that she felt this way. It only became plainly evident during Thomas Hardy, and truly concrete later in the summer and early fall. It would be cured with time, as his suspicion of her detrimental effect on his career would be cured with time. It would come with the passage of time—the realization that they

were not threats to each other—and it would be achieved in isolation from each other. As the real physical isolation between them grew the spiritual isolation also grew then. With the passage of time the physical isolation would increase.

He returned and wrote the exam in a crowded, confined classroom. She'd apparently erred in not having arranged for another classroom for the mid-term exam. People complained to her afterwards about the conditions under which they were forced to write it. There were too many seats and too many people and not enough space. But he was indifferent to the conditions and the students' moanings. He felt like anything she did was right. He did not even know there was a problem until he overheard a student quietly complaining about the circumstances and the classroom setting to her after class one day. But even now he could not say that she was at fault for anything she did—except for what she did to him. His heart would not allow him to take anyone else's side against her, even if his brain sometimes told him there might have been some doubt. She was instinctively right in everything. He loved her too much—worshipped her for her kindness towards him—to not allow for defending her under any circumstances. And the gist of it was that, except for her most central decision about their relationship—the decision to sever from him—she was never wrong, even reviewing it now; because love, despite outer indications and objective facts, is never wrong. What was a lie if it served to point out some

truth? What was a mistake if it served to lead along some winding path towards the truth? It echoed the comment she'd made to him after a class on Hardy. He'd been flabbergasted by some of the statements she'd made and what they suggested about her own outlook on life, and he'd asked her if she believed all those things she said in class.

She'd considered and had then replied, "let's say I believe them at the time that I say them. Maybe, on reflection later, I might change my mind or sharpen a perception..." And that was exactly what he'd learned from her—that everything she did was right at and for that moment in time. Because that's how they operated, both he and she—purely on instinct. She wasn't cruel to anyone, so her mistakes, if any, were not huge and were mostly ineffectual. They did not seriously hurt anyone, except him, and, by implication, herself.

He thought he had written an excellent exam. The question had been on Wuthering Heights—just as he'd hoped it would be—on whether Heathcliff was justified, in the reader's opinion, for everything that he did, for all the actions he performed. It was a question that there was no right or wrong answer to. It called for interpretation and justification. He answered it by taking a "both/and" approach. She'd suggested that it could be answered in two ways: as "either/or"—he was justified or he wasn't; or as "both/and"—he was justified and he wasn't. He did not write very much, but he felt he had answered the

question in an honest way. You couldn't categorically dismiss Heathcliff any more than you could wholeheartedly praise him. He could be cruel, and he was capable of enormous love and passion. So he was justified because everything he did was for one purpose alone—the attainment and consolidation of Cathy's love; and he was unjustified because cruelty to another human being—Isabella, Hareton, or Cathy Linton the younger—is never justified, and the end does not justify the means. It was the only fair way he thought he could handle the question of Heathcliff's character about which he was ambivalent. Therefore, how could he be marked wrong if that was how he felt? The exam and the question served to illuminate for him the futility of exam evaluations after all. The strength of the argument did not matter. Any sly intellectual could argue either side without any real inner conviction. What mattered was how you felt, and that you caught the essence of those feelings on paper. And he had done that, so he was satisfied.

He'd taken a seat near the door. There'd been no place else to sit. As people marched out they each, in turn, bumped into him and he had to stop and smile. As a result, he was still working on the question long after they'd finished writing their exams. She'd handed the exam questionnaire to him personally when he'd come in, and he'd taken it as a lucky sign. Now it was four-thirty and he was still writing, finishing a sentence after the allotted

time. A few people remained and were also writing. But she felt that he had a responsibility to set an example, and so was slightly annoyed that he was still writing after the allotted time along with the rest. She'd sat on top of the desk-table throughout the one-and-a-half-hour exam, her legs curving down and hanging limply in the air. She'd seemed vulnerable that way—a child hanging from a tee-totter—but she'd also looked sexy and pretty. He'd glanced up at her regularly whenever he had been stuck for a sentence. The sight of her had always given him renewed inspiration. Now, she went out the door briefly, accidentally kicking his chair as she did so. He took it as a sign that she was annoyed with him for still writing. He finished the sentence he'd been writing and capped his pen. When she came back in after a few seconds he handed the exam paper to her. It pleased her that he'd complied with her unspoken criticism so quickly. She beamed at him. Then he waited for all the others to finish so that he could accompany her up to the office. Maybe he could carry the pile of examination booklets for her. They were heavy and he'd always chosen to think of her as frail—though she wasn't, she was physically healthy, robust—or at least fragile. Womanhood and fragility had always been interconnected in his mind, like the old line, "Frailty, thy name is woman." And she shouldn't have to carry those booklets. He stared at her all the time he was waiting. When they'd all finished

two girls accompanied her as she made her way out of the classroom with the booklets.

"Thank God you chose Wuthering Heights," he exclaimed when she was about to pass where he was seated. There had been three possible questions on the preliminary study sheet: one had been the selected question, the other had dealt with Middlemarch, and the last with New Grub Street. He felt he was most familiar with Wuthering Heights, and had liked that question best of all.

They passed through the doors and walked out as a group towards her office. He didn't feel he could ask her now to carry the booklets. She might think he was a chauvinist if he did. Besides, it might have seemed like he was trying to win her favor in order to get a good mark. Later, he felt sorry he hadn't asked her, provided that small courtesy nevertheless. He'd let what other people might've thought sway him, and a petty resistance to being regarded as a chauvinist. The two girls weren't talking to her so he dominated the conversation amongst them on the way to the foot of the staircase. He remarked that he'd liked the first two questions on the proposal sheet, but had thought the third question weak. He was self-consciously trying to instruct her for her future edification as a teacher.

"Yeah, that third question was weak," he said.

"Or you knew you weren't going to ask it so you just threw it in there?" She seemed to agree that that had been her motivation, nodded; but there was a fixed smile on her lips that told him she was perturbed about his "instructing" her in front of these witnesses. Who did he think he was? Who did he think she was—some brainless nitwit who needed to be instructed—by him? Perhaps he had broken an unwritten rule, been uncouth, but he'd genuinely meant it to help her. If he thought of himself as her mentor, it was not without the reciprocal knowledge that she was his mentor, and he considered her as such. Why couldn't she accept his guidance if he accepted hers? "Hardy on Thursday. I'm not looking forward to that." He'd told her before of his disregard for Hardy.

"No, neither am I." She confessed it in front of these other witnesses, and she momentarily feared that she might have been indiscreet.

He disengaged himself from the group at the foot of the staircase and called out. "See ya." It may have been meant as a bonafide friendly farewell, but he saw from her eyes that she felt he was being flippant and familiar, and she was slightly dismayed that it might have seemed to these other witnesses that he was abandoning her. She went up the stairs accompanied by the two girls.

After the exam they started on Thomas Hardy. He came across her in the hallway before the first class—she was wearing dark sunglasses and her black fur coat—said hi, then afterwards trailed her to her office for no other reason than he wanted to spy on her. She somehow was aware of it, and it became one more of the many factors that led her into a cold war of silence with him during the Hardy classes. It was a depressing time, not unlike the Charles Dickens experience in the earlier term. Hardy's determinism placed them under a similarly gloomy mood.

The character of Sue Brideshead seemed to bring to the surface all of her fears about sex. The strongest element in Sue Brideshead's character was the guilt she felt in sexual matters, and how she felt the sexual relationship between Jude and herself had been responsible for the deaths of her two children. In her analysis of Sue Brideshead one saw her visibly taking on the sexual recriminations and neuroses. She became Sue Brideshead before their eyes—a prude, a sexual neurotic. She seemed disgusted by herself, disgusted by the truth of the character and how Sue's thinking corresponded to her own. After one class she simply seemed to shrug, known that she had laid bare her own character after an analysis of Sue's frigidity, and walked out, leaving him alone—without anyone to walk or talk with after class—for the second time that term. In Hardy's deterministic, pessimistic projection of Sue's destiny she saw a potential projection of her own destiny—life with a man whom she

might abhor, like Richard Phillotson, whom Sue could not bear to be touched by but whom she returned to as a self-punishment. It was a denial of what they had been building—a life with someone you felt akin to, someone like yourself instead of someone totally different. He felt the notion was threatening the unity between them. She apparently hated the whole relationship between Sue and Richard Phillotson—felt threatened by it, but could not prevent herself from delving into the subject. So she felt forced into doing something she didn't want to do, had no relish for; and because the relationship was a denial of what the idea of him had represented—freedom, the ability to be yourself and to choose your own path—she felt it would be a just punishment to deny herself to him. She was acting like Sue Brideshead—engaging in self-flagellation and a subtle masochism.

He did not understand why she didn't wait for him after class now—rushed out instead. Was it something he did? Perhaps she thought his concentration was flagging. Maybe that was part of the reason—her anger over his apparent indifference to all the hard work she put into the teaching. But he didn't know that she was also punishing herself. She was unworthy of him, she felt, so she should deny herself to him. She did it a second, a third, a fourth time. He felt publicly humiliated. He knew the members of the class had come to expect his waiting for her after class, and now when she rushed out she was telling everyone that he'd failed her in some way. She'd even suggested in

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class that what she needed was "someone older," just like Sue.

After another class—after she'd rushed out—he'd found her leaning against some of the lockers, speaking with a male student who'd stopped her in the hallway. His locker was close to where they were standing, and when he shut it after placing his books inside he did so with a bang. She noticed his anger apparent in the gesture, but could only look guilty without making the effort to breach the barrier. As for himself, he'd lost some respect for her. In a discussion on modern literature he'd discovered that she'd read a popular novel by an author he disliked. "Trash," he'd called it. Also, she had greeted a professor in the hallway whom he thoroughly despised.

Finally, when they'd completed the last class on Hardy, she did talk to him, but it was he who had to reach for her. She'd given out the mid-term exams and, greatly to his shock, he found he'd gotten a B plus. He'd expected an A or an A minus. He wasn't the only one who was disturbed by the results. A large percentage of the class would convey their dismay about the inexactitude of the evaluation scores. It was only then, during that class, that he discovered that the mid-terms had been marked by the teaching assistant. But what had disturbed him most of all was that when she'd been handing back the exams she'd called out his name like she hadn't known him. He decided that it was time they were on speaking terms again. He waited for her after class. She looked surprised to see him waiting, surprised that he would make this effort after she'd been treating him so rottenly and

indifferently. He began by responding to all the pleasantries.

"How've you been?"

"Fine."

Then she told him how she was feeling "exhausted." Probably due to the extra time correcting papers, he thought. She hadn't marked them but had gone through them nevertheless. She seemed afraid of him for some reason, afraid that he would complain to her about the exam marks like so many others had done before him. She was rushing him, trying to hurry him and herself out. When they were outside in the corridor he decided to let her know that he was dissatisfied with the mark, but he would do it quickly and make sure she was certain that he wasn't blaming her.

"I'm glad it wasn't you who corrected the exams," he said. She looked blankly at him. She'd been afraid he'd make some comment and now he had. Then she realized she'd forgotten her purse in the classroom. He waited outside as she went back in to get it. He leaned on a locker. When she returned she had the purse in her hand and there was relief on her face. The interval had given her time to escape what she thought would be his criticism of her. It had given him time to pause and think also. He would not say anymore about it. If she was so anxious to escape his criticism, he would not hurt her. Then as they were walking up the hallway she asked him his opinion of Hardy again.

"So, what do you think of Hardy?"

"Well, now having read the book and having learned

about his life in class from you, I can safely say that while I don't hate the man I don't love him either. His determinism is just too pessimistic for me. His vision of man as a doomed individual at the mercy of malevolent fate doesn't mesh with my vision of man and life."

She was shamed by his honesty, his integrity; and the look on her face told him she thought he was freer and more honest than she because she'd been forced to compromise, to pretend an avid interest instead of a warm or lukewarm liking—to fool herself as much as anyone in order to get through the teaching.

"You're right," she said, "he does present a pessimistic, mechanistic vision of the universe that may appeal to a different readership, a different type of reader." He wondered if she meant a more mature reader, or an older reader.

"Maybe I'll develop a greater taste for him in a couple of years." He'd survived with his integrity intact, and she'd seen this, had gained regard for him while losing some for herself because she'd believed she had compromised. He was not certain now whether she had. She'd been Sue at one point in her life; perhaps she was still Sue. Wasn't it legitimate, therefore, to teach it if it was done critically like she had done?

Henry James was another matter altogether. He did not survive with his integrity intact. He'd been performing a policing role throughout the term, helping her to maintain class discipline—because he knew she was too gentle and pliable to contain the unruly—by his intimidating presence. The class had come to look on him as her watchdog. They knew he had a special feeling for her, knew he would not hesitate to protect her if anyone ever got out of line with her. He was the *eminence grise*. But with Henry James he relinquished that role somewhat, let go of the never-ending struggle to win her, the daily tug-of-war of love. He sank back into a self-contained, self-interested lethargy. It was the beginning of the end. As long as he kept fighting for her he could keep her. Once he stopped struggling, assumed the struggle was futile, or just became lazy, then he lost her. So if there was any responsibility for the loss of her that term and summer it fell not only on her shoulders but on his also—for those last two weeks when he did not fight for her, content to lay back and watch her go through the fluctuations and gradations in her love for him without any input or feedback from him.

She had noticed something of his growing proclivity to ceasing the struggle for her during Thomas Hardy. In reference to Jude's lethargy after losing his dream of an Oxford education she'd said, "It's like he's given up."

and she'd meant him. She played those games with him because she could always count on a reaction and renewed vigor from him. Now that he was refusing to play the fun had gone out of it. She wanted, needed a playmate. He wanted peace; but he lost that when he refused to play, when he lost her.

It was Henry James whom he would blame for that lethargy in himself. He'd told her of how much he'd been looking forward to reading James, that he "had a good feeling about it." She'd made the change in the reading list, replacing George Moore with James (and switching places with Hardy so that now he would be fourth and James fifth and last), because of the unavailability of the Esther Waters text, and partly because, he realized, of his earlier criticism of her to select better texts. He'd been pleased by the change. He had glanced at James's name in chalk on the board with a gleam in his eye and a half-smile which she, understanding his meaning and pleasure, returned. Then while he was reading James he praised him to her lavishly. He did not understand that the charade that was being played out in the novel between Isabel and Gilbert Osmond would be mirrored in her life. He did not perceive what he would later term the falsifications or flaws in the novel. He did not grasp that James's characters seemed to be all cut from the same cloth—James's imagination and spirit—and that shadings of personality, though thoroughly explored, did not necessarily breathe life into his characters. And

he did not see that Caspar Goodwood, the faithful lover and would-be husband to Isabel, would become himself—jilted, left broken-hearted as his lover travelled across the continent far away. He bit the bait, swallowed it hook, line and sinker, believed that Isabel's final decision to return to Osmond was noble instead of the tragic continuation of a blasphemy against love and life which it truly was. But it was impossible to dislike Isabel. She was pure-mindedness personified, the unwitting dupe of a pair of manipulators—Madame Merle and Osmond himself.

She was Isabel to him. The thirst, the desire for education and travel, the tough-minded ideas about women's independence, about women's liberation, through which Isabel was introduced into the novel, were her own. How then to reproach her? He could not; she was a lady in every sense of the word. Her only failure was that she did not love Caspar Goodwood, who deserved her love. Would that happen in real life? No, not in the same manner exactly. She would return to her brand or version of Gilbert Osmond, but she would do it with the full knowledge of her love for Caspar Goodwood's counterpart.

She missed the first class on Henry James. She'd told him the week before she was exhausted. When he got to the class that day he found it empty except for the platinum-blond-haired girl whom he liked. It was she

who informed him that the teacher was sick. He felt thoroughly floored and numbed, as if he'd been wounded. She'd never missed a class before. It was a blemish, a defeat of a sort. Concern and a pained gentleness descended on him as he lingered by the door. He'd criticized her the week before because of the exam marks. Now, he felt ashamed, aware of how picayune it had been. It did not matter anymore. What mattered was that she got well. Her presence was all that mattered—the hell with the marks, the hell with the whole academic rigmarole. It was a hot spring day. Perhaps the weather had gotten to her. Perhaps she wasn't sick at all, and had only cancelled the class due to heat prostration and an inability to cope with the shifting seasons and the weather change. He knew that she, like himself, hated hot weather, was subject to spurts of insanity and terrible ennui because of it. But in his mind he kept imagining her alone in her apartment, laid out on some cot, feverish, hardly able to move, coughing her lungs out like Camille. It pained him. He could bear most anything but the thought of her suffering—mental or physical. He lingered now towards her apartment. He would go there, finally, go in, take care of her, get her anything she needed. He loved her and that was a role of the lover—to take care of his beloved, "to comfort when they are sick." She had no one else. What did she do when she was sick? Who did her shopping for her? Who made her meals? Or did it

all stop? Did she just go hungry because there was no one there to look after her?

He made his way down the downtown streets and arrived at the path that led down to the underpass which preceded her street. She lived on the wrong side of the tracks. Had she grown up that way? He walked beneath the overhead railroad tracks and turned right. But he could not go in. It would be a violation of all propriety. What would she think—a student coming to see her at her home, uninvited, just because he was concerned about her health? And she was probably just suffering from a minor ailment, anyway. But what if it was more serious? Would she ever forgive him for not coming to her aid and rescue if she'd been seriously ill? He did not know what to do. Reason told him not to interfere; his heart told him: what have you got to lose? He'd wait till the next class, in two days. If she did not come then he would definitely go see her at her home. So he lingered outside her house for about an hour, satisfying himself that he'd been genuinely concerned, and praying that God, or whoever, would bring her back.

She did come back on the Thursday. She looked wasted. Her hair was stringy and wispy; her colour was peaked and pale. She had been ill, he could tell. After the class was over she did not specifically wait for him but she did not rush out either. She had a group of students waiting to have their exam-papers reread, and hopefully have their marks revised, around her. She left accompanied by this group; he followed her and the group closely. He wanted to ask her what had been wrong with her, but in front of the group? He decided to risk it.

He half-ran up to her and grabbed her elbow with his hand—the first time he'd ever touched her—and veered her towards him. She had the fixed, transparent smile of the convalescent. She was weak, he could tell. She bent her ear to him when he spoke.

"Were you really sick or just exhausted?" he half-whispered to her.

"A combination. I had the stomach flu, and I was exhausted. One probably was responsible for the other." He thought the stomach flu might have been a euphemism for a female disorder. He wanted to ask her, but that would have been terribly improper and uncouth.

"I thought maybe you'd cancelled the class because of the change in weather," he said. And then he tried to relieve whatever guilt she might have been feeling over cancelling or missing the class. "A lot of professors do

that, you know, at this time of year."

"Oh, no. I would never do that." Her frailty moved something in him, deepened his feelings towards her. She saw that he'd been concerned—probably the only one in the class who'd been concerned about her as a human being, about her health—and she understood that he, alone, out of the whole ensemble mattered to her. It had mattered to him. She would not make the mistake of placing his concern for her on par with anyone else's again. He felt her affection for him now. But it would kill something in her as well. She'd been defeated in some way. Before, her function as a teacher had been in question and had been a matter for refinement. Now, her health had been affected. She would return to her practice of not waiting for him after class.

She ran the gamut in associating him with the male characters in the novel. First, he was Ralph Touchett, the kindly, benevolent brother figure. And then after he touched her that first time she relinquished that vision of him and he became Caspar Goodwood, the faithful, persistent lover who hovered phallically, at one point, about Isabel. She would refer to that phallic imagery and phrase in connection with him again—three or four times. And then, finally, he became Gilbert Osmond, the fortune-hunter, pestering after her for her money and favor. He did not care what they thought. He knew the truth, cared little for their blindness and their interpretations of his special relationship with

her. She, and the class, could think he was a fortune hunter if they wanted; he did not care. Although, there was an element of fortune-hunting in it. He did believe she would take care of him until he could take care of himself, and of her if necessary. And things ran smoothly when he was around her. He did not want to lose the balance which she provided for him, love's potent effect, love's riches, the sense of material and spiritual well-being which came when one was content and at peace with oneself.

During Henry James his manliness also came under question. It had been implied that James was a homosexual, a fact that emerged in her account of his biography. She associated him with not only the male characters in the novel, but with Henry James as well, who created them. She looked at him now with doubt in her eyes. She suspected, feared that he was unwillingly and unconsciously homosexual. He sat beside another boy in one class and the close proximity between them seemed, to her eyes, to cast aspersions on his manhood. She noted how James's closest relationships were with older women, relationships of a platonic sort—supposedly a sign of homosexual leanings. Was that his underlying problem with her, an older woman, she wondered? He did not appreciate the veiled accusations, which were more like misgivings than accusations. True, he had ceased working for her love with the same vigour; but that he blamed on James and her continual deflection of

his love. Her continual flight from him defeated him. He sank into careless resignation. She was somewhat disappointed that he'd apparently given up.

Only in the last class did he momentarily regain the sense of the willingness to fight, and restored some of the lustre and rapport of their relationship. It was a short class. He'd written an exam in the previous class and come in a few minutes late. He sat back in the middle section of the classroom near the door instead of the front which was his usual seating-place. She dealt with the closing chapters of the novel, and then did a cursory revision of all of the novels. The atmosphere was relaxed. After forty-five minutes it was over. The class, the term was over. He would not see her and this group of people in this place again.

He sat back in his chair, waiting for her. It was the last class and, by rights, he would talk to her; it was only natural and decent. She was talking with a small group at the front of the class, and then with just a pair of students—a boy and a girl. He overheard her telling them that she didn't know if she would be back, most likely wouldn't be back, and that she could make more money teaching full-time at Dawson than she could working part-time here and part-time there—so, financially, she would not be begging. He thought it was reckless and uncharacteristic of her to take just the financial considerations into

account.

And then he heard her say, "Well, my ambition was always to be a university teacher." The child-like manner in which she stated it, the pure-mindedness that went into those words, and the fineness of the ambition, got to him. She would be a university teacher, if he had to drag himself and her through the battlefields and ashes of the academic wasteland. He'd be behind her. He would take her to that summit by the very force of his ambition and love for her. He waited till they stopped talking and smoked five cigarettes in the interim. Finally, after forty-five more minutes, they finished. He had her to himself now.

"What's all the doom and gloom about not returning next year?" he asked.

"Well, Professor Wylder hasn't said anything..."

"I don't see it," he said, meaning that he would be back and that she wouldn't, that they would be separated for any period of time.

"What'll you be doing next year?" she asked in turn.

"I'll probably be taking 500-level courses in the master's program—that's if they accept me. I can't live without this place. It gets in your blood."

"It gets in your blood," she repeated, struck by the aptness and accuracy of the phrase.

"It would be nice if you were ~~back~~ teaching here again." As he said it her eyes took in the implied compliment and her mouth fell slightly agape. "What choices have I got?"

Ellis and Coryell. I haven't taken an American Literature course in a long time cause what they were offering was so terrible. That's why I'd like you to be back. Do they hire people like you to teach 500-level courses? I mean, are you competent for that sort of thing?"

"I feel I am," she replied.

"No, I don't see it," he repeated again, meaning their separation. On their walk together she told him that she was going away for the vacations, to Prince Edward Island. He felt again as if he had been shot. He would have to act quickly now to keep her. As they reached the foot of the staircase which led up to her office he did not speak but just allowed his eyes to stare at her. There was a message there for her—a message of love. She returned his bold stare with a cool, bold look of her own. He didn't know now if he should tell her that he loved her.

"Well," he said, breaking the pregnant silence. "I'll probably bump into you again," meaning that he'd decided not to tell her yet—what she herself had been expecting and which she already knew—and that there might be a later opportunity. "Before the exam or afterwards." He did not want to say a final goodbye, did not want to convey the impression that they might not see each other again. "See you then," he said gently, turning to go and then half-watching her as she ascended the stairs.

He did not see her before the exam, did not see her until he began hanging around her house regularly, and then not for three months after that. He spent two weeks studying for her exam, haunting the library at night and staying until closing time. Afterwards, he went for long walks in the early hours of the morning, usually in the direction of her place, her apartment. He would pass by and glance up at the third-storey window, hoping to catch sight of her, of something. At times, there would be a light. Usually, it was too late, and there would only be darkness. He knew that somewhere in it—she was in there, asleep. Previously, he had hung around her house occasionally, when the mood had hit him—on weekends, or on various days of the week. He had walked by her house regularly on Sunday evenings. It was a way of conjuring her up for the week—for the Tuesday class—he felt, a way of conjuring up her re-entry and re-emergence in his life for the week. But now he began to hang around her house incessantly, daily and nightly. He was having trouble writing his last paper, could not get himself started, only felt the dread of it and the misery of the isolation of writing that took him away from her. He walked those streets around her house for two solid weeks after that—even after he'd promised her that he would stop.

The day of the exam finally came. He had not slept again. He waited in line outside the gymnasium building, and then, after a few minutes, filed in with the rest. As he entered the examination hall, which was a basketball court, he went down one of the far rows to the right. As he did so he bumped against the chair in which the platinum-blond-haired girl was sitting. It had been accidental but he was glad that there'd been some reason for contact between them. "Sorry," he said, and continued on down the line. That had been a good omen.

An even better omen was the sight of the teacher during the length of the exam. She paced up and down, back and forth, in front of him, sometimes with her hands thrust into the pockets of her beige jacket, other times with her arms crossed in front of her. It was the next-to-the-next-to-the-last time he saw her before the separation of the long summer. Just as quickly, before the five o'clock finishing time, she was gone. After completing the four questions on the exam he was depleted. He re-emerged into the sunlight of the late afternoon and headed for the English building with his books, carried in a yellow plastic shoe-bag, in tow. Perhaps she was in her office, tidying up or to receive delivery of the exam papers. He went up

there but there was no one. Her door, like the others, was closed. It was after five o'clock, after business and office hours. He felt free, a sense of relief that now, finally, the year was over. He could do what he wanted with his time for the next four months. But all he could think about was her.

He spent the next few weeks roaming the streets at day and at night. He hoped that by walking so much the chances were good that he would run into her on one of the downtown streets. But he had no such luck. Besides, there had been no precedent for it; he had never run into her on the street anywhere, only near the university. But it did happen, not on a downtown street but near her house.

It was on a cool, windy day, a Tuesday. He'd taken his regular walk along Ste. Catherine and now it was nearly eight o'clock. He'd phoned the ambulance to help an old man who'd fallen and bloodied his head on the concrete. The old man had been standing outside a tavern and it was likely that he had been a boozier, but he'd spared the quarter anyway because the old man had been bleeding. The images of the blood were still in his memory as he turned and walked past her house. He then returned along the same route and was headed up the steep incline which led back

to the downtown core. As he was coming up he saw her, her body tilted back as she walked down the hill, dressed in a new bright-green windbreaker, and slinging her large purple-coloured purse back and forth. She caught sight of him, slowed her pace momentarily, and then continued on down the hill. At the lip of the overhead tunnel they stopped and greeted each other.

"Hi," she said warily.

"Hi," he replied. He was smoking a cigarette.

"Haven't seen you around McGill," he continued.

"No. I don't get up there much."

"What you been doin'?"

"Well, I've been teaching at Dawson. Term doesn't end till the end of the month. I've just got back from swimming," she said.

"I passed by McGill today. To see if the marks were up. There was only a partial list."

"No. I've only done some of them. The people who are graduating." And then she became aware of the oddness of the situation. "Do you live around here?" she asked, half-suspiciously, half-wanting to know where he really lived.

"No," he answered quickly, knowing he was trapped but refusing to lie, "I come walking down here sometimes." From the look in his eye she knew he'd come walking down

there because of her, had probably passed her house on the way up.

"Oh," she said. Then he asked her about what had been troubling him all this time. She'd informed him earlier that she would be going to Prince Edward Island for the summer, to a cottage that she owned, for a period of four months.

"Are you still going to P.E.I. for the summer?" he asked, small-voiced, hoping she had changed her mind, her plans.

"Yes."

"For two months?"

"No. For the four. Well, I've got to get home." She then started on her way and paused. "Have you finished everything?"

"Yep. Long time ago. Papers, exams. Yours was the last one." She nodded, said bye, and then turned and went on her way. He called out, "Bye," and continued climbing up the hill, embarrassed that she had seen him, relieved that he had seen her, afraid that she might think he was molesting her, and wondering if and when he would see her again.

He'd hoped that she would invite him up to her apartment for coffee. But she hadn't. Why not? He'd had the sense that someone might have been waiting for her, that she wasn't staying alone, that perhaps someone was visiting her. That would explain her reluctance to have him up to her place,

aside from the natural suspicion that he might be a molester. He wondered who it could be. A sister, a brother?

His parents left for Europe soon after. He was left alone in the house. It had not been a surprise. They'd informed him weeks before but he had refused to believe that when the day actually came they would, indeed, pack their bags and go. They'd never travelled for any substantial period or for any enormous distance before, and had been talking about the trip to Europe for years. But on the day that they did leave, Mother's Day (they were sent off by the whole clan of relatives; he stayed in his room, feigning sleep and then just listening), he suddenly felt a panic. It would be great to have the house to himself. His younger sister would be staying at the house of his older sister, although he did not know it at the time. He was not on speaking terms with his younger sister, hardly communicated with his parents at all. The panic was mainly financial, and also partly emotional. He did not have any money to support himself, would have to find a job, he thought. Would the little money he did have, five hundred dollars, sustain him for food and other items before they got back in ten weeks? He very much doubted it, and now began to fear hunger.

He ran through the house in a panic. He was half-hysterical. He kept expecting his younger sister to show up from the airport. She never did. Then he called up his older sister. It was after eleven o'clock. She answered and spoke in a hushed tone. He asked her where his younger sister was. She replied that she was staying with her.

"Oh," he said. "Okay."

"Is everything alright?" his sister asked.

"Yeah. Okay. Bye."

"Bye." Then he waited around some more. He'd hidden his panic from his older sister, and now he felt that she had let him down because he hadn't been able to be honest with her.

He heated up some food. His stomach was full of butterflies. And then he called up Eileen Fleming. He would not spend the night alone; he would spend the night with her. Here was the opportunity he had been looking for. No one would be in their way now. He let the phone ring and then, after five or six rings, she answered. She sounded sleepy. He did not want to talk to her over the phone. He was afraid to. Now that he knew she was home he'd go see her. He hung up the phone lightly. He finished his midnight meal and then went out of the house.

He walked all the way. When he got to her district, her apartment, he saw a bicycle tire hanging from the street sign on a post near her staircase. He took it as

an omen of their imminent lovemaking that night. He walked up the stairs to her apartment door in a flurry and rang the bell. Once and then once again. He was waiting anxiously to see her face, imagining the scene when she would see who it was and what she would ask and what he would say to her. Then the light on the staircase inside went on. The door jarred open as the rope was pulled. He pushed the door inwards and peered up the stairs. He saw a dark-haired man crouching, naked above the waist. Evidently, he'd been in bed or sleeping when he'd—they'd—been disturbed. He had not expected this in the slightest, knew immediately what it meant. He gazed at the bearded man and then said, "Sorry," and pulled the door closed.

He descended the stairs, walked away up the sidewalk, and heard himself shouting, "Oh, no!" He crossed his arms against his heart and chest and walked up and down the sidewalk as if he'd been wounded in the chest or stomach, crying. He crossed to the other side of the street and from there looked up at the apartment window. Then he began to walk up and down that side—that sidewalk—also. She had a man spending the night, perhaps one of her students or a teaching assistant. He'd looked young in the darkness. She slept around, did it casually. He had not meant anything to her. This was what he thought. He was half-sobbing, half-speaking to himself. And then, after

thirty minutes of hanging around this way, he started on his way home. Tomorrow he would get a job. He felt like he was going insane. And then, out of unbearable torture, he began to rationalize, to find possible excuses for what he'd seen. And then it—a soothing solution—hit him. Perhaps it was her brother. He was staying with her, had come up from New York or wherever. He was a hippie, had looked like one. Perhaps he'd been on the road, travelling cross-country, and had come to stay at her place for a few days. It was logical. But what if it was the other? He returned home at a quick pace.

He slept that night, a Sunday, in a state of nervous shock, his body trembling and his mind running feverishly. In the morning he rose relatively early and washed, and then walked over all the way to her house again. He spent the whole day hanging about, hoping to catch some glimpse of them together, and, from their attitude, determine the nature of their relationship. He walked up and down some sidestreets, sat on some of the stairs, but by five o'clock nothing had happened. He saw some children playing on the sidewalk. They apparently lived downstairs from her. He would ask them about the living-arrangements. He spoke to the tallest older boy. They were French. He spoke to him in his broken French.

"Do you know the lady who lives upstairs there?" he asked. "She has blonde hair and wears glasses."

"Yes. The English woman."

"She's American."

"Oh, I don't know. All I know is that she speaks English."

"Does she live alone?"

"No, her and her husband. They drive the volkswagen."

"Her husband? Are you sure it's her husband?"

"I don't know."

"Have they been living here a long time?"

"Pretty long."

"How much time?"

"About five years." The information he'd received had not pleased him; he felt the boy was wrong, terribly wrong, about what he'd said. He thanked the boy and walked away. Then he returned again.

"Another question. You're sure you know who I mean? She has blonde hair and glasses and she's a teacher."

"Oh, I don't know if she's a teacher. But she has blonde hair and wears glasses."

He went away, returned home, bought some milk at the corner store near his place, and then called his sister up on the phone. He told her he was short of money, had expected his parents to leave him some money for food and other expenses, thought he might have to get a job—but then he would have no time to do his own shopping and cooking—and that he might, if worse came to worse, have to leave suddenly, go away somewhere if his money ran out. His sister seemed to be impervious to his financial

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worries. "We'll see," she kept repeating. And then, because his sister had rebuked his need for emotional solace and freedom from worry, had made him feel hateful of himself, he called up Eileen Fleming's house. He'd been wanting to apologize to her anyway. When the phone was answered he heard a male voice at the other end of the line.

"Eileen Fleming, please."

"She isn't here. Can I take a message?"

"No." His voice faltered and faded away. "I wanted to speak with Eileen Fleming."

"She'll be back around nine o'clock."

"Okay," he said, "I'll call again. Bye."

He waited for an hour and then called her place again. This time she answered.

"Hello, Eileen Fleming? This is Louis Warren."

"Um. Yes."

"I wanted to apologize for having disturbed you last night."

"I wasn't aware that you'd disturbed me..." she said matter-of-factly.

"For bothering you." He still didn't want to directly state what he had done.

"Oh. Someone rang the bell last night. Was that you?"

"Yes," relieved at last that she knew what he meant without having come out and said it right off.

"Hmm. I didn't go the door so I couldn't have known it was you."

"I know."

"And then someone called up beforehand. Was that you, too?"

"Yes."

"I answered and then someone hung up. When it kept ringing I thought this person must really have some bad news. I thought maybe my mother had died or something."

"Well, I just wanted to apologize for it and tell you it won't happen again. And all the rest of it."

"Like what?"

"Hanging around your house."

"Alright. Did you want to talk to me?"

"Could I get a letter of recommendation from you?"

"Sure. I'll write it up and send it to Mrs. Hemp."

"Thanks," he said.

"I have to be at McGill this week anyway. I'm going to be in my office on Wednesday in the afternoon," she let him know in case he wanted to see her.

"Okay. Bye."

"Bye."

He went to see her on Wednesday. When he got up to her office she was in conference with a young girl. He gently pushed open the door, let her see that he was there.

She saw him, smiled, and said, "Can you come back

later?"

He said, "Okay." Then he gently pulled back the door to its half-closed position and went to sit by the roof-window at the far end of the collection of offices. He waited for about twenty-five minutes. When he heard the girl had gone he returned to the office, stood tentatively in the doorway.

"Come in," she said. He sat down in the chair in front of her which placed him in right profile to her. "You'd better close the door," she said before he was fully comfortably-seated. He stood back up and closed the heavy oak door. When he sat down again it was with his legs thrust forward to their limit, his body leaning back, and his rear end on the edge of the seat. "So tell me what happened that night."

"A moment of insanity," he replied. He told her about how his parents had left, that he'd been alone, alone for the first time in his life, and he'd needed someone to talk to. "Guess who I picked?" he said, and she laughed.

"But you haven't told me why it was you really wanted to see me," she dug, fishing for the real reason which she probably already knew.

"Well, I thought I'd spend the night," he replied with a hands-up gesture, aghast that he'd admitted such a thing, said it outright to her that way.

"Oh. I see. Do you do that sort of thing regularly?"

She meant knocking on people's doors on the spur of the moment, sleeping-around, one-night stands. Apparently, she believed he led a wilder sex life than he did.

"No." She was amused.

"And why me particularly?"

"Well, I was in love with you." And it wasn't amusing anymore. He added quickly, soberly, with a realization of the full painful impact it carried because of her living-situation, "I am in love with you." He said it almost as if he regretted it, that it was something done against his will, that he would not love her if he could help it. She knew he was serious now, and her expression correspondingly changed. "I think that you knew that, didn't you?"

"I wasn't sure," she replied, "if you were interested in me strictly intellectually, that our relationship was intellectual, or..."

"I didn't know you were married. I thought you were single like me," he added. He did not want to ask her about the man who'd opened the door, expectant, confident that she would tell him without his asking. She volunteered the information that he was quietly waiting for her to impart, knowing that it was part of the reason that he had come here today.

"The guy I live with—Charles (she spoke his name almost off-handedly, disgustedly)—was the one who

answered the door last night. He said someone opened it, said sorry, and went away. It must have been a big shock to you."

"Oh, yeah. Big shock." And they both laughed. The seriousness had been lost and this was not what he wanted—humour, amusement, levity. He wanted to return to a serious tone but did not know how; the moment of profundity and honesty had been lost. He'd just have to pretend it was all a big joke, a gross mistake. Then they discussed her future, her career. "You're the best," he said. "I've taken them all and you're the best. I mean, there's no comparison..."

"Well, that's very flattering," she replied. Then he asked her if she would like to teach the Jane Austen course next year. She wasn't too enthusiastic, though it seemed the course most compatible with her interests, and doubted that she would have a chance to do so because the professor who'd been on sabbatical, and who usually taught the course, was returning.

"Well, you never know. Maybe he'll decide to go elsewhere or someone in the department will get sick..."

"Have a nervous breakdown..." she rejoindered.

"What about American Literature?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"Would you like to teach the American Female Writers course again?"

"I wouldn't mind." He was disturbed by her response, thought she'd outgrown it.

"But don't you feel you've gone beyond that?"

"No," she replied. He'd grown slightly hostile to feminist literature, thought the course was a conduit to lesbianism, and did not want her hanging around with lesbians. It was a prejudiced view, but he wanted to make sure that she did not regress, and he thought that teaching the American Female Writers course might do that, might have that influence on her. "Professor Heffner says that the only openings they'll have will be in Shakespeare and Drama." And then he noticed she had a text of dramatic criticism on top of her desk. Did she want it that bad, that she was willing to bone up her expertise in a field in which she had never taught just on the chance they might hire her for their open drama course? If it was not desperation it was something akin to it; and he felt her pain and was angry at them for making her go through that anxiety.

"When they hired you before did they do it before the summer or after the summer?"

"After the summer."

"Well, maybe after June and July. August, probably." And he saw in her eyes that she hoped he was right, was counting on him to be right for her. Then he turned the conversation to religion. "Do you believe in Providence?" he asked. She didn't know exactly what he meant. "His eye

is on the sparrow; do you believe that?"

"Or Her eye."

"Or Her eye," he agreed.

"He misses an awful lot of sparrows," she replied.

"How can you live like that? Without believing in something greater than yourself?"

"I don't believe in an anthropomorphic God," she said. "Another form perhaps."

As he spoke he noticed some red slippers by the coatstand. Did they belong to her? He looked around the office, noticing the books. He gave her his telephone number and address. "So we don't lose track of each other," he said. She took out her black address book.

"They'll go right here," she said, patting the book. Then she wrote them down. "Obviously, you have my address," she responded in turn.

"Yeah." Then their conversation had ended. He stood up, flexing his legs. "So, sorry about having disturbed you," he offered as a final comment. She nodded, amused. And then he contemplated his shoe-tops, wanting to say something else. During their conversation, when he'd told her he'd been alone for the first time in his life, she'd asked him how old he was. "Twenty-six," he'd replied. Now he wanted to know her own age. "How old are you?" he asked.

"Thirty-five."

"Oh."

"How old did you think I was?"

"Thirty-two," he ventured. Then he left her and walked out of the building, headed for the business district. He was going to apply for a job at the newspaper office where he'd worked before one summer. It was late, after four o'clock.

He got to the newspaper building, but once there he could not go in. It had been a moment of regression. He couldn't go back. When he'd left her office he'd known he was thoroughly alone, that she had rejected the notion of investing in him, of perhaps allying herself and living with him. That was clearly what he had laid open to her, although not in words. It had seemed to him like a business transaction, a rejected offer of investment. It had been money which had been between them. It worried him terribly now, and the fear of what moneylessness—for they were to face a hard, a financially hard, summer and they knew it—had done to their love—momentarily choked it—worried him even more.

But the greatest failure had been the lack of faith, the lack of belief that together they could endure instead of separately. She still believed that she had to depend on "the other" instead of herself, that if she was weakened then "the other" would be strong and would support her (and the belief in her own weakness was immense), even though it was not emotional but financial support. And he was too choked by his own fear over real and present poverty, hardship, to do anything but wait. But he waited for her

nevertheless, convinced that any day she would call him, come see him at his home, run to him away from "the other"—even though he didn't know what they'd live on—and suffered heartbreak every night when she did not, and no word came.

He spent the days shopping for food, walking to a pond in the park in the west of the island, in Westmount Park, where he sat on a bench for an hour, watching the water gush and flow from the fountains, or ripple with the wind currents when the fountains were inactive. She was to leave for Prince Edward Island at the end of the month. Surely she would contact him before then, dash out madly on her live-in boyfriend, refuse to go—anything. He'd promised her he wouldn't hang around her house, and he didn't do so; but it was of sufficient proximity—the park and the path leading to it—that he felt he was still closely aligned with her. He waited and a week passed, two weeks. Every night he came home to the darkened flat, opened all the lights beforehand and checked for thieves or burglars before he closed the door, and then laid on his bed, sometimes watching t.v. and sometimes lying supine, tremulant with the ache of wanting and waiting for her, of the recent shock of the heartbreak that had happened to him. It had been the profoundest shock of his life, and it

was the first time that he'd ever felt his heart was in danger of physically breaking.

He saw her again briefly for the last time that spring as he was walking one day along a street above the lower section where she lived. He'd stopped at the intersection for the light, and a car, a yellow volkswagen, had suddenly come spurting forth and stopped momentarily as its light changed from yellow to green. The passenger to the right, the nearest side to him, turned her head, and he saw that it was her. She looked fresh, summery. She was wearing a white and green-striped terry-cloth blouse that he'd never seen before. When she'd turned her head she'd seen him at the intersection and then had looked straight ahead. The man beside her driving he did not see clearly, only caught a glimpse of his hairy forearms on the wheel. The car sped ahead with the light change, and he stood at the intersection stunned by this coincidental encounter. They were to leave in a few days probably and that was her goodbye to him, his goodbye to her. He was not to see her for another three months.

He spent the rest of the summer doing his shopping and learning how to cook, sitting on the bench near the pond in the park, walking the city streets at night and day, wondering and worrying if she would be back in the fall at the university, and reading, although it was very hard for him—he could not concentrate and he read the least of any summer he could remember. He would purchase five or ten books from the second-hand bookstore where he usually shopped and then would lay them aside, unable to read them, wondering what had prompted him to buy them in the first place. He found he could only read for brief stretches at a time, fifteen to twenty-five pages per night, sometimes less. He received postcards in the mail from his parents, talked to his sister on the telephone every week, getting recipes from her and instructions about housework like how to operate the automatic washer and when garbage collection took place. But what he did mainly was wait—till his parents returned and he would be relieved of the burden of supporting himself and performing all the chores that they usually performed, and he could return to the life of a student which was his calling; and till his money ran out and July came along when he could go to the university and request a loan in order to take a summer course which would mainly be undertaken because of his desperation for money and not because he was enamoured of the teacher, whom he'd had before, or the material.

It was a very long, trying ten weeks. Each day felt like a grain of sand in a full hourglass. To him, the waiting seemed interminable. Survival was all that he had in mind. He'd budgeted himself down to an expenditure of five dollars a day—at that rate his money would last till they returned. But some days he overspent and so had to proportionally cut down the day after, so that there were items which he sorely missed, necessities and petty luxuries which he did not buy. They owned their own house so there was no rent to worry about, and all the bills like the electricity and phone bill had been paid beforehand.

Finally, he reached the halfway point in his wait. His money had proportionally been cut in half and he realized that he had only to wait two more weeks until he could go to the university and ask them for money. What if they refused him? They would just have to accept him. He couldn't afford to think about the other alternative. The next few days he began to train himself to wake up early. The class was early, ten-thirty in the morning till twelve-thirty in the afternoon, a time he hated. He'd spent a lot of time around campus during the long summer, lying on the grass along a steep knoll, but he'd felt exiled from the internal activity. Now he'd be returning, but it would not be with pleasure, with any supreme pleasure. The driving force was necessity and habit. He'd always taken at least one course every summer

in order to keep him sane during the long summer months.

He was down to a hundred and fifty dollars on the day that the first class began. He'd also have to pay tuition that first day, which was fifty-seven dollars, leaving him just slightly over ninety dollars. He'd never been in such desperate financial straits before. He made an appointment at the student financial aid office, saw the female loan officer, whose character and physique reminded him of Eileen, and she assuaged his desperation and worry by her kindness and dignity. He told her he needed it—the sum—for food and other expenses, school expenses; and she listened sympathetically and complied, telling him he would have his money soon, within three days if the request for loan was accepted, which it would most likely be she seemed to suggest to him and to assure him.

He called her on the phone the next day as she'd asked, asked her if the loan had been accepted, was told that it had, and then thanked her profusely and politely. He could begin to live again, so he thought. But the arrival of his parents was approaching, and he knew that along with the arrest of financial worry he would lose a sense of freedom and independence that he'd obtained during their absence. He didn't know which was the greater good or the greater evil. It seemed to him you were always giving up something for another thing, losing one thing to gain another and vice versa. Why couldn't you have it

all? Later in his life would he learn that having it all was possible and that one didn't have to lose one thing for another? Time was running out. Her name had not appeared on the timetables and course description booklets for the fall and winter sessions which he'd recently seen, which had recently been issued. He was extremely worried now.

He attended the course daily and at the midpoint of its four-week duration his parents returned, greeted by a welcoming-home party. They'd lost weight. His father was thinner, had lost thirty pounds; his mother—slightly thinner than she'd been before. He felt a sadness when they returned, a sense that his sojourn as a Robinson Crusoe was over.

The course ended. It was now August. He'd applied for the master's program in English at the university and all summer had been in a tizzy about whether he would be accepted and what would his future be like if he were not. He began to hang around the hallway of the university regularly, then daily, pestering the secretary with his inquiries, certain that by the very weight of his desire and persistence he would make it. He waited till the end of

August when the committee—the graduate acceptance committee—was to meet. The campus was more alive now. People were returning from their summer vacations, returning from their summer sojourns at their home residences to their academic-year student residences, preparing for the fall.

A week before the committee was to meet he rose early and took the park-length walk towards the university campus. On his way, along the short east-west street, which ran through the student ghetto and which led to the eastern gate of the university, he saw a figure speeding by him on a bicycle. She wore a blue denim shirt and he'd caught only a quick glimpse of her face—brown-tanned. It had been her. The novelty of it—her riding a bicycle—had struck him. Reflecting on it later, he imagined she resembled Miss Moffat, the teacher-heroine from The Corn Is Green, peddling her bicycle along the Welsh countryside—and he, ostensibly, the protege student who loved her best. Had she seen him? Probably. It would have been awkward for her to stop. Perhaps she was waiting for September when they would be together again. Anyway, she was back—back from the country, back from P.E.I.. He felt elated. He'd been waiting for her return for so long. That night—and the following night—he took a walk by her place; and there was the yellow

volkswagen parked in front of her place, and a light in the upper window. Yes, they were definitely back.

A week later the committee met. It was also the day that the supplemental examinations in her course were to be held. He was looking forward to both events with equal apprehension and enthusiasm. He thought she might be there to supervise the supplemental exams. He would check to see. If she were he would talk to her. Imagine! Talking to her after so long a wait!

He got down to the university about one-thirty. He rushed down the hallway, greeted two girls he knew with nods; but his destination was the second-floor classroom where the examinations were to be held. On his way he had to pass the Graduate English Office, and when he did so, the secretary spotted him, stopped him, and said that his application had been accepted by the committee. "Looks like you're in." He was elated. This was what he had waited so long for. A master's degree in English—a real possibility now. But his mind was still on the second-floor classroom and seeing her, if she was there. He thanked the secretary. He'd pick up all the information about registration and other matters later on in the week. He felt like whooping but only smiled profusely. "Son of a bitch," he muttered to himself. "Unbelievable."

He headed for the stairs. Up there he checked the inside of the classroom, peering through the open door from outside in the hallway. The exam was being supervised by university-hired invigilators. She was not there. He felt once again the dullness and thudding heartache which her absence had come to make in his life. Not to worry, however; he'd soon see her somewhere. If not at the university, somewhere else. She was in the city and that was the important thing.

He waited every day until school began for some sign, some announcement that there had been a switch in the teachers' names, that some professor had become ill or a course had been added. There were changes alright, but none contained her name. A week before his term was to begin her semester at Dawson would start. He'd known this because he'd picked up the college calendars and had phoned the college to confirm times and classrooms and dates, as well as obtaining a rundown of the reading lists for her courses. If he couldn't see her here he'd decided to see her there. But he kept hoping that she would come to the university, that she would be teaching there. He'd also discovered that her live-in boyfriend was also teaching at Dawson—quite by accident. He'd come across the name

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Charles Levitt in one of the course calendars, had surmised that it might be the "Charles" she'd meant, had looked for his name in the phone book and, sure enough, it was the same address and telephone number.

When the first day of classes at the university had nearly arrived he'd decided that he'd waited long enough. On the morning of that first day he'd gotten up early—at eight o'clock (her class on the English Novel Of The Nineteenth Century, the course which he figured he'd audit, was at ten)—and taken the bus down to the college which was about a half-mile from the university. He'd never been in it before, not that particular campus, except for one day the previous week when he'd surveyed the classrooms beforehand so that he would not be lost on that first day.

He rushed up the stairs—he was five minutes late—and turned left along a long corridor. The college was smaller, narrower, more shrunken than what he'd been used to at the university. Its walls of stucco were painted a pastel blue and orange, and everywhere there was rust-coloured carpeting. He found her classroom, tried to peek inside, but the window portion of the classroom door was blocked out, and entered—he hoped as

inconspicuously as possible.

She was standing in front of about fifteen students who were spaced far apart—the classrooms inside, oddly, were wide in area in contrast to the narrow corridors—and when she heard someone enter she stopped, her hands in mid-air, turned to look, saw him, gulped and nodded and said, "Hi." He said "hi" in return and sat down in the seat closest to him near the door not wanting to create any more of a disturbance. She went on.

She was doing Jane Austen's Pride And Prejudice. There were five novels on the reading list, one of which he'd already read, and by authors that he'd already done with her—but different novels in most cases: Pride And Prejudice, Jane Austen; Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte; The Mill On The Floss, George Eliot; Hard Times, Charles Dickens; and Tess Of The D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy. She was wearing a white, red-striped outfit which made her seem like she'd just returned from the sunny beaches of Florida. She looked again like the woman he'd seen that first year at the university, like the old, easy rich-lifer, like the suburban ingénue he'd imagined she'd been in her life in Syracuse in upstate New York. But it was a deception because, if she looked that way, her character was not that way—had grown more matronly. She'd lost that girlishness inside herself; and although she had retained its aspects in her dress, there was a hardness and a worldliness in her manner

that said she could never again re-attain the girlishness. He'd made her a woman, he thought, and she'd made him a man—and once you became that you couldn't return.

Her eyes had the quality of tarnished jade (they were actually blue, a milky blue)—heavy, sockets sunken; and her hair the aspect of tarnished copper. He noticed as she spoke that she wore dark brown stockings which hid, down below her left calf, an ulcerous or varicose vein. Her hair had the same golden curliness as when he'd first met her, but its colour had deepened. It was darker now, less like cotton candy than crinkly gilt. Why was she over-dressed in this manner—he meant too-expensively dressed—for a bunch of college students? Did she want to make an impression on her first day? She seemed to want to convey an impression of the nouveau-riche. Why wasn't she dressed casually in jeans, or a plain skirt and sweater? He liked her better that way, although he could never be said to have disliked her in any of her guises or outfits; she seemed more natural.

She was talking about the sort of lifestyle people led in the nineteenth century, elaborating on the parlour-room type of existence Jane Austen led and which she depicted in her novels. He would begin reading the book immediately, would take it out of the library that afternoon and purchase it on the weekend. He did not take notes as he did at the university. He'd decided this time

around to just listen to her words, pay exclusive attention to her face and movements as she spoke instead of having his eyes buried half the time on the notepaper in front of him. Besides, there was no exam to prepare for. He was auditing the class, though not officially. There was no official auditing process, only her spoken permission was required—which he hoped to obtain. And anyway, he felt he would learn more this way, retain more of the experience of her in his memory. He leaned back and listened.

The class lasted a shorter time this way, however. It was only an hour-and-fifteen-minute class, not the hour and a half he was used to; and he could hardly believe the time had flown so quickly when she finished. During the lecture she had looked at him occasionally. At one point when she had paused she had deliberately turned to him, stared, seemed to regain some inspiration, and went on. Now, while she lingered by her desk-table at the front, he waited as some of the students, most of whom she didn't seem to know or who were taking one of her classes for the first time, filed by her and said a one-word "goodbye" to her. Then the classroom was almost empty and some students were waiting outside the door for the next class. He got up and approached her. She leaned over the desktop with her back to him to pick up her books, and as she did so she gave a glance backwards at him with a goofy, expectant

smile on her lips.

"Hi," she said, and walked with him towards the door.

"Was that an hour and fifteen minutes?" he asked, stupefied, and not knowing what else to say by way of introduction.

"Yep."

"That was fast," he added. Then they were by the door. "I'd like to ask you if I could audit the course," he muttered, and then added after a pause, "with your permission."

She shrugged and said, "Sure, if you want to. I'm flattered by your loyalty, but are you sure it's not too basic for you?"

"No. It's not too basic."

"I mean, it's an introductory course at the cegep-level..."

"I was surprised by the ages of the people in the class. They don't look like cegep-students. They look older, like university freshmen even."

"Oh, yeah," she shrugged, "you get various ages."

"How was P.E.I.?" he asked.

"Fine. I've got a house down there, you know."

"I know; you told me. Did you do any creative writing?"

"Yeah," she shrugged. "Some. A couple of short stories."

"Are you going to try and get them published?" he asked. He was again taking up the role of mentor to her career.

"Yeah," she said, but the reluctant manner in which she uttered the response told him that she did not believe anyone would accept them, and what was he trying to do by making her believe that they might be accepted somewhere—giving her false hope again? And then she asked him what he knew she would ask and had been expecting. "So, did you get in?"

"Yeah," he said, attempting to suppress the pride that he felt, "I got in, finally. I was surprised. I thought I'd have to take another degree, another B.A...." She did not seem to derive any sense of pleasure from his triumph, but he knew that that was her way—that deep down inside her she felt triumphant and happy for him, cognizant of the role she had played in that triumph, and that later it would fully sink into her consciousness and she would reason it out. Then he looked at her guiltily, did not know how to approach that delicate subject between them, afraid that she had been fuming at him all summer for having given her false hope and now might even reproach him. "I felt sure you'd be back," he ventured warily. She took up the cue in a way he hadn't expected.

"Well, it's funny that you should mention that. I got a phone call on Friday asking me to possibly teach the

Modern British Literature course. One of the teachers is going in for an eye operation and they need a replacement."

"Oh, yeah?" he said, dumbfounded and extraordinarily pleased. "I saw that course in the course description booklet. Would you teach the same authors?"

"No. I'd probably keep the Orwell and throw the other two away—Koestler and Wilson."

"Who'd you replace them with?"

"Muriel Spark and Doris Lessing."

"That's great," he said. But then she was troubled by his enthusiasm, his happiness.

"I probably won't get it," she said with distaste and with a cynicism in her eyes, in an effort to rein in his overleaping enthusiasm.

"Well, if you get it, I'll see you there. If you don't, I'll see you here." She beamed at this show of loyalty, at his determination to be with her whatever happened. The students who were waiting for the next class were looking at them, some listening, some smiling at the obviously happy couple which they made.

"When do you start?"

"Today. This afternoon. I've got a class at one." She seemed momentarily jealous, troubled that she was left out in the cold, but it passed. Some of the students filed past them into the classroom. Their movements seemed to be pressing on them, too. "Well, okay, I'll see you on Wednesday then," he said.

"Wednesday," she replied amiably. And then she turned up the hallway towards her office, he believed, while he headed down the hallway towards the stairs.

He had to wake up early and this interfered with his health. He was not used to the early hours, had never been a morning person, and by the middle of those long days his body was sore from lack of sleep and his head was humming. He did not know how he would last it out, but still he was determined to.

He saw her again on Wednesday. By now he had borrowed a copy of Pride And Prejudice from the library. It was delightful. He liked it more than Emma. He'd also seen a chalk-written sign on the notice board at the university stating that the course which she was being considered for, Modern British Literature, would meet at the same hours and would be taught by the same instructor who had always given it. He knew now there would be no chance she would teach at the university in the fall. The term had started and unless someone got sick or rapidly departed she would not be there. Maybe in the second semester. He would have to inform her.

He attended the Wednesday class. She'd changed her dressing style somewhat. It had become more casual. She wore reddish-brown corduroys and a red shirt. She looked the way he always liked her best—like an older student, like an American girl from New York. She was being sociable and gentle today. She wanted to establish a sense of intimacy with her students and get them to know each other. So she started the class by having them all call out their names, one by one, and then repeating the process so that the names would sink into memory.

He was reluctant to get involved in such social amenities, thought she was wasting valuable class time. What was she doing? He didn't want to get to know these people. He was there because of her, and only her. She noticed his hostility. His asocial tendencies had always been a sore point with her. She did her best to get along with people, to get them to try to like her. He preferred to remain isolated, separate. This was part of the reason he needed and wanted her. She could be that sociable side of him that he found so difficult to release, especially around her. When he was not around her he could be half-sociable, could make an effort to meet people; but when he was around her he did not want to. He preferred the latter state. When it came time for him to call out his name he spoke it with a bitter disgust. He had not wanted to speak within this classroom, had wanted to remain silent.

He resented her for trying to bring him out of his shell, for trying to inflate the bubble of their private duosome to take in the larger body of the class and the world. They were irrelevant. Why didn't she see that? Why couldn't she keep things the way they were.

He followed her lecture in class, had begun to associate her with Elizabeth Bennet and himself with Mr. Darcy. One of the points she made about Mr. Darcy's nature was that he was taciturn and that he was content to simply listen in or eavesdrop on Elizabeth's conversations, that he, in effect, snooped on her from a very commendable motive—love. He felt she was talking about him. This was the way he had always behaved with her, and the shocking recognition of the similarities confirmed his belief that the story was about them, that Jane Austen had been writing the story of their love—so closely interwoven were the patterns.

At the end of the class he waited again. Some of the students felt more at ease with her now. There were no more one-word goodbyes and actual after-class conversations had developed between them. While she was engaged in these dialogues he waited for her by the door. He felt one of his roles was to fill her in on all the gossip about what was happening at the university. Now, his first words to her were about the university and the painful subject of her return. "Lots of beer bashes going on. The grass all over

campus is strewn with empty beer cans. They're holding the annual blood drive at the Union." He felt it was his duty to keep her abreast of the truth, that he alone could tell her the real truth, act as the messenger even if the news was bad so that she would not be tormented by false information and left to wallow in illusion. He felt a deep anger at those who had misinformed and misguided her, led her down the garden path. "The Linden thing doesn't look good," he said. "I saw a sign on the board saying that his class will be held today at one, and his name was written down below it." She seemed aware of the shift in circumstances, though not any the less hurt by it.

"Yeah. I don't know what happened. They told me he was supposed to go in for a cataract operation, but then he wasn't...I don't know what happened there."

There was quiet, suppressed anger in his voice now. "Who called you up?" he asked as gently as he could.

"Professor Heffner and then Mike." By "Mike" he thought she meant the interim department chairman while the regular chairman was on leave for that one year.

"Cavet?" he asked.

"Yes." And then his jaw set. She cocked her head slightly, seeing something in his eyes and in his expression that told her he was out to fight for her, to defend her, out for revenge on them because of what

they'd done to her. She was taken aback by this revelation, knew that it could only mean one thing—that he was truly and irredeemably in love with her. And yet, at the same time, she was disturbed and angry at him because he might resort to violence and hatred to avenge her, that he would stoop to such a thing as revenge. He was afraid that she'd seen the hatred and the desire for revenge in his eyes, and now looked away trying to protect her from the knowledge that he would, indeed, get even with her "enemies." But, at the same time, he half-smiled to himself, proud that he could feel a sense of protection for another human being, and that she realized the potential for revenge and violence in his nature. The violence and revenge which formulated in his mind was not physical, although he had contemplated it, but moral and professional. He would make them pay somehow through his efforts. She, on the other hand, believed that it could possibly be physical. She had always been a little afraid of his physicality, his anger. On numerous occasions she had observed that he had a very quick temper, and had seen that as a flaw (and an attractive trait) in him. He nodded his head as his eyes were averted, listening to her, trying to keep her eyes from his own so that she would not see the hatred there.

Then they discussed a few of the other teachers. She asked him what courses he was taking. He told her, adding how unenthusiastic he was about them, how difficult

one required course felt for him.

"God save us from required courses," he uttered.

"Yeah," she replied, but there was distaste on her lips. He'd lost some of his sheen in her eyes. She was troubled that he'd been manoeuvred into taking a required course instead of fighting the system.

Then he told her about the reading he'd done over the summer, especially that which pertained to her—the nineteenth century novels which he'd read. He told her he'd read Silas Marner and The Turn Of The Screw.

"I learned an appreciation of George Eliot," he said; and she smiled, happy that he'd seen the light about George Eliot. "My opinion of George Eliot went up and my opinion of Henry James went down. So that's been the shift in my attitudes. Portrait Of A Lady—yeah, I want to talk to you sometime about that novel. I think a lot of his attitudes are wrong, especially about love. We'll talk about that sometime. I really liked The Turn Of The Screw. I think that whole interpretation of it as a sexual fantasy on the part of the governess is fascinating." When he'd said "sexual fantasy" she'd been turned off; her eyes had flickered and shifted suddenly. She'd been angered somehow, believed that he'd rejected her. He was denying the idea that he might have returned in order to establish a sexual relationship between them. His apparent denial of a possible sexual relationship between them seemed to anger

her—angered her by the fact that he'd presumed such a thing, angered her because he might not have found her attractive, and because he might have been teasing her sexually. She nodded, not quite sure of the interpretation he was referring to. "Did you think he was homosexual?" he asked, meaning James, but perhaps also referring to himself.

"I don't know. They say he was. Have you read The Bostonians? Well, it's about a girl and her friendship with two people—male and female. She finds out that maybe neither one is good for her. Maybe that's what James was like—neither homosexual or heterosexual, just asexual." This angered him even more than the suggestion he might have been homosexual, for it implied the absence of sexual feelings for her or for anyone else. "Couldn't have a sexual relationship with anyone, wasn't able to make that shift between a purely intellectual existence and a sexual life." Was this how she saw him? As pure intellect, incapable of sexual initiation or response? He did not like her feeling that way about him—and he wasn't sure that that was the way she felt. Perhaps she'd been goading him, belittling his sexuality so that he'd respond, or had merely been retaliating for the apparent turn-off he'd shown her. It could all be sexual by-play, sexual preliminaries, foreplay, the teasing aggression that sometimes precedes intercourse. He would let it go, say nothing, just hope that if that was the way she truly

felt—although he did not believe it—that she would change her mind, come to realize that he did, indeed, have sexual feelings for her.

"I'm reading Adam Bede now. Have you read that?" he asked, turning the conversation onto George Eliot.

"Yes," she said, and seemed to be delighted by his interest in George Eliot and in that book particularly.

"I'm only about halfway through. She's more regenerative, more of a life-force than he is," he said, meaning Henry James. She was pleased by his observation, pleased by his suggestion that she was a greater life-force in his life than whomever or whatever—a man, a father, a father-figure—Henry James represented. That's how it was meant, too—as a compliment to her.

They stood just outside the doorway, and now it was time to go. He lingered around awhile after he left her, loitered around the hallways and then left the building, wondering where she went for lunch, whom she ate it with. Did she eat alone or with someone?

On their next session the following Monday he could tell right away that she was angry with him. The weekend had given her time to think, to digest the news that he had brought her. Apparently, she'd decided that he was to blame, that somehow his presence in her life

was responsible for the lost opportunity. It was a case of shooting the messenger who brought bad tidings. Her first words as she entered the classroom—a few minutes late—were: "Would someone please open a window. It seems a cloud of hot air got trapped in here over the weekend and doesn't want to leave." He was vilified. She'd clearly been referring to him, calling him "a cloud of hot air" because of the false hope and empty flattery he'd provided in the past, for his loyal-beyond-the-call-of-duty declaration that he'd see her there if she got the job and here if she didn't. Did she want him to leave? Was that it? How could she be so cruel, so cutting, so disrespectful, so disregarding of his dignity and pride? He'd never insult her that way—calling her a cloud of hot air. Had she been hurt that much by the loss of the university teaching position? Did she have to lash out at him that badly, that publicly? He thought that he would let it pass, that it was a momentary anger—at herself perhaps for being a few minutes late. She'd been angry before at him, and it had dissipated. "Let her be angry if she likes; it's good for her," he thought. "Better for her to be angry at me than at someone else." And yet he felt the injustice of it. Because he had brought her the truth he would pay for her anger. He wanted to tell her it was not his fault. But, deep down, did he want her at the university? Didn't he want her

here as punishment for her sins and because he could have her to himself—away from the associations she'd made at the university? This was his underlying guilt. And yet he did want her at the university, wanted what was best for her and what made her happy.

After the class was over she did not wait for him. He got up in his seat. She passed by him, said, "Hi," and then left. "Oh, no," he thought, "she's starting it again." This he could not bear—the flights from him, the denial of contact between them. He thought she'd outgrown it, knew how much it hurt him, knew that he needed that daily contact with her and was lost and desperate without it. He didn't know what to do. She'd left a book, a biography and critical analysis of Jane Austen, behind. He had been the last one to leaf through it, since he had been sitting at the extreme end of the classroom, and had kept it, intending to return it to her after class. Now that she'd rushed out he'd have to return it to her in her office. He followed her there, winding down the long corridors, turning right.

Her office was near the elevators and when he approached it he saw that she shared it with another female teacher, an older woman who was in there now in conference with a student. They were seated facing each other in their partitioned section of the office. He passed between them to where she was seated at her own desk, her back to him, a book open in her hands, reading, probably in

preparation for her afternoon class which was on the history of feminism and the women's movement. She was wearing a black tailored-coat over a yellow puff-sleeved and puff-collared blouse. He placed the book in front of her and she turned and looked over her right shoulder at him.

"You left your book behind."

"Thanks," she said, appreciating the thoughtfulness of the gesture and melting momentarily towards him. He could tell that she was still angry and distraught, however, still pained by not having gotten the job. She leaned over her chair with her arms on her lap now and they looked at each other in silence. They both knew what was on each other's minds—her hurt about not getting the job, and his desire to console her somehow. She looked up at him with a pathetic look on her face. He froze a grin, feeling sorry for her, and yet not wanting to show her he felt pity for her. He could not think how to console her. The only thing he could do was to try to reaffirm his faith in her.

"That course you teach—Perspectives On Women—does it have any fiction in it?"

"No," she replied. He'd wanted to show her that he was willing to increase their time and their involvement together—to flatter her.

"And the other..."

"No."

"Well, I'll be taking the second part of this course

in the winter." She nodded, assured by his loyalty and the promise of his continual presence. He had spoken softly to her in a half-whisper so as not to disturb the other dialogue which was taking place and not to have their words overheard; and this had increased the sense of intimacy between them. He had felt very close to her at that moment. Her pain had made her real to him, had made her more lovable and angelic.

He uttered his goodbyes to her in a low voice, telling her he'd see her again on Wednesday, silently assuring her that there was a long and happy road ahead of them. He felt at that moment very much like her husband—supportive, consoling.

But the toll on his health was beginning to tell. He missed a few classes at the university. And he labored to get up in the morning. The physical debilitation had erased the desire for conversation. It was hard to talk in the morning, especially if you were tired and had gotten little sleep the night before. Fatigue defeated your will, plundered your very desire to live.

It was with this feeling of extreme fatigue that he'd gotten up the next Wednesday. It was the first time that he'd not been looking forward to going to one of

her classes, had felt it was a duty instead of a privilege. He knew his feelings would change once he got there, but now, in the early hours as he prepared to go, this was how he felt. He'd read a terrible book the night before as well and it was acting on his psyche. He arrived at the college a bit later than usual. They were writing an exam. He'd run all the way from the bus stop and was panting. He sat down and the sweat trickled off him as he waited for them to finish. He felt conspicuous, left out, because of his auditor's status. The others must have wondered why he wasn't writing. He did not feel like one of them, felt like an unbridgeable chasm or gate had been thrust between them. When they'd finished and she'd collected all the exam-papers she went on with her regular lecture.

He felt a deep sense of alienation. She herself had seemed to cease thinking of him as part of the class. The exam had made that fact stick out—for her, for him, and for the rest—like a sore thumb. She'd flirted with one of the boys as well when he'd returned his exam-paper, and had talked to him at length in class during the lecture. The boy seemed to be dominating the class conversation. Was she attracted to him? No, not really. He'd seen it before. She always flirted with the ones she disliked most, he remembered. But it troubled him nevertheless.

After the class was over he felt like there had been no class at all—so brief had it been. But he waited for her dutifully, not really relishing the conversation

that would occur between them because of his fatigue, but hoping that it would put a capper on the day, make him feel like there had been a class after all. She did not stop for him, just smiled and went on her way. She'd been annoyed by his special status that had become evident to everyone, annoyed that he might have been taking advantage of her and might become a threat to class discipline. He did not pursue her to her office this time; he had no excuse. He hung around the college, hoping he might run into her in the hallway as she was going out to lunch or wherever. Then he walked towards her office, not wanting to go in, not wanting to disturb her because she had made it clear that she had not wanted to talk to him today, but lingering outside of it anyway. He pressed the back of his head against the wall outside her doorway, feeling the need for her, rolling his head and speaking to himself. Then someone—a man—walked by him, glanced at him curiously loitering there, and entered the office. It had been him, he thought—Charles. He moved away from the wall slowly towards the staircase.

He had a class at the university at two, but his mind wasn't on it. He walked the half-mile towards the university and then returned to the college when he could not bear not having talked to her that day. It was still just a little after twelve. She'd be gone for lunch. He walked into the building, wandering towards and through the cafeteria and then up again to her office. He waited

there, hoping she might return, and hoping that she wouldn't see him, at the same time, and realize his desperation. It was nearly one-thirty. She hadn't returned yet. He'd have just enough time to make his two o'clock class.

He returned to the university for the second time that day, sat in on his class in Contemporary American Literature, and, when it was over, rushed again to the college on foot for the third time that day. It was a quarter past four. All the classes had let out for the day and the building was nearly deserted. On the way he'd decided what he would do. He had with him a letter he'd written for her in the spring, before he'd known about Charles, in which he'd told her all about how he felt, how he thought about her all the time, how he wanted a commitment from her—perhaps even marriage. He would give it to her.

He entered the building and made his way down to her office. Coincidentally, as he arrived there, she emerged from the office which she'd just shut for the day. She was braying something down the hallway to someone. She saw him, didn't look surprised, and said, "Hi." He said, "Hi," and then gave her the letter. There was a uniformed security guard near her.

"Here. I wrote this about four months ago. It's for you. Read it. And do whatever you like with it."

She nodded, took the letter from his hand and placed it inside her purse, and said, "Okay." And just as quickly he was gone.

He spent the evening sitting on a stone bench by the campus grounds, watching the sparrows in the darkening sunset. There was fear and apprehension in his heart—fear that she might take him up on his proposal, and apprehension over the immediate future between them if she did or didn't. It had been an act of desperation, and yet he was proud of it. He had finally, truly told her what he felt, had erased the cowardice that had led him to pass it all off as a joke last spring in their final interview. He feared she would take him up on it, and he wanted her to take him up on it—wanted her to do nothing else. But how would he manage; how would they manage? He was literally shaking with the apprehension, knew that something would have to happen soon to relieve the unbearable pressure which he was feeling. He'd not yet registered at the university that term—his acceptance was late in being officialized—and this was weighing on his mind also. He needed the registration papers to obtain his loan for the year. As always, he was short of money and this had been part of his desperation. But most of all what he'd wanted was a commitment, a recognition and understanding of what they'd meant to each other.

He went home and read seventy-five pages of a novel he hated but which had been assigned for a class,

the first session of which he'd deliberately not attended because he hated the author so much. Her course, hopefully, would be compensation for the garbage he sometimes had to read at the university, and the required courses, and the academic rigmarole, and the mental torture it put him through. He lay flat out on his bed while reading. The novel was seducing him. He knew he hated it and that he was committing a transgression against his own dignity by reading it, and yet he had to prepare for it in class. He knew that what he was reading was lies, and yet did not know how to avert their destructive effect. He fell asleep from nervous exhaustion from the day's events, with his head and mind in a frazzle.

He was eating lunch the next morning, getting ready to go to his Thursday class, when the telephone rang. His six-year-old nephew, whom his mother cared for during the day, answered. He did not seem to understand what was being said at the other end of the line. He laid the receiver down after awhile. Then the telephone rang again. He was still eating his lunch, a pair of fried eggs. This time he answered, his mouth filled with food.

"Hello, Louis Warren," he heard her voice declare at the other end of the line.

"Yes," he replied. Why was she calling him? Did she want to give him her answer so quickly, was so affected by his proposal that she could not wait? He'd expected that they would talk to each other face-to-face on Monday. He'd expected to speak with her in person, not over the telephone.

"This is Eileen Fleming. I read your letter and I'm calling you to tell you that I was very disturbed by it. I don't want you coming to my classes anymore. I'm withdrawing my permission. I shouldn't have given it in the first place."

He could not believe what he had heard, had had no inkling that she would want to terminate their relationship as a result. If he'd known she'd react in this fashion he wouldn't have risked it. Oh, wouldn't he have? He felt he could calm her down, make her listen to reason.

"Don't tell me that," he said, his heart in his mouth, gulping out the words.

"You've invented a whole relationship between us."

"No, I haven't."

"My interest in you was strictly professional. You were my student and I was your teacher. I don't want to see you; I don't want to hear from you. If you persist in coming to my class I will refuse to teach the class if you are there. I don't want to have to take any other measures." She was referring to calling the security staff or perhaps the police on him. How had things come this far? What was

it? Was she having a bad day? Had getting up early for her eight-thirty class affected her head? Was she sick—a severe headache? Was it a moment of insanity?

"Why? What have I done?"

"You gave me the letter, didn't you?" She meant he shouldn't have overtly declared his love for her, should have kept it a secret within himself if he'd still felt that way, and allowed things to continue on a strictly professional basis—as a student auditing a favorite teacher's lectures.

"I can't believe this is happening," he said over the line.

"I think you need professional help," she said. She thought he was crazy. It was the ultimate insult.

"Listen, despite what you may think, I'm not crazy," he bit off.

"When you rang my doorbell that night and then we talked about it I thought that things had been settled. But now you gave me this letter..."

"I gave it to you because I thought that you might not think that I still felt the same way about you."

"You've invented..."

"Listen," he said, thinking that by the force and conviction of his love he could persuade her. "I do love you." He gulped it down, afraid that his mother in the next room might hear.

"What?" she said, feigning shock at his statement

and, at the same time, wanting to be reassured that he had said it, wanting to know, to be certain, that he did love her; and that had been the true reason that she'd called him.

"I do love you," he repeated.

"Well, thanks, but...no thanks. I don't feel that way about you. Forget about me," she said.

"How?" he asked helplessly. "I tried. Over the summer. I can't."

"Try again."

"How? It's hard. It was terrible..." he said, referring to the summer months. "I can't forget about you. Don't run away from me again."

"Run away from you? I didn't run—"

"You ran away from me!" His voice was full of accusation. This was the sore point between them, he felt, the reason why she wasn't back at the university—her sin. She'd run away from him—the responsibility of him. She had cowardly opted for security with Charles instead of her love for him and his love for her.

"I'm not prepared to discuss it anymore," she declared. "I'm going to hang up now." He paused, wanting her to linger on the line, not wanting her to hang up. He didn't think she would if he continued talking.

"You're so hard and cold," he said. "When I talk to you in person you're one way—you're different, you're

so nice and warm—and then when I talk to you today you're so hard and cold. I don't know who you are."

"Well, I'm going to hang up now."

"Listen. Remember a conversation we had about talking over telephones?"

"No."

"That they're bad luck?" There was no response over the line. "If I talked to you in person maybe—"

"I've told you I don't want to see you."

"Well, okay, I'll do as you say, but I can't agree. I hope you'll change your mind."

"I'm not going to change my mind." She said it little-girl fashion, trying to convince him of her determination but not convinced herself.

"Well, I hope you'll change your mind. Maybe we'll run into each other somewhere."

"Goodbye," she said.

"Goodbye," he answered, and then quickly added, "I love you."

"What?" she asked before putting down the receiver.

"I love you," he repeated.

"Well, goodbye."

"Bye."

And then both lines were down. As he returned the phone to its proper place he saw his mother staring at him. She had overheard. He did not care. He finished his

lunch and rushed out of the house quickly. He had a twelve o'clock class to make and would be late because of the telephone conversation.

His mind had still not accepted the fact that he would not see her again. He thought he would show up there on Monday and by some divine intervention, some encounter with her in the hallway, she would relent and apologize and ask him to come in and stay. Or perhaps she would phone him before then, over the weekend, telling him that she had changed her mind and that last Thursday had been a moment of insanity. But he'd never known her to make the effort to apologize before, at least not with the degree of difficulty that this would involve—only when he'd conveniently been around her—and he wouldn't be around her now. She could just let things slide, let things stand as they were. He knew she could and would most likely do that, perhaps waiting for a gesture from him or for her own brand of divine intervention. He saw how impossible it all could be, that weeks and then months might pass without a word between them. He did not believe he would never see her again; but he did believe it was likely that there would not be a conversation between them for a very long time. Her shame over what he'd said to her, over what she'd said, and her inability to face him with the knowledge of the proposal he'd made to her, not to mention the untenability of her living-arrangements with Charles with their love, made it so.

He'd wanted a commitment from her, and she'd wanted to have him committed, he thought now lightly. He felt like the degree of her anger had been a good sign. She would not have gotten so worked up about someone she did not care for, did not love. And he knew she loved him, and now knew that she knew it, too. He had acted like her equal in proposing to her, and that she had found insufferable. Who did he think he was—her equal for heaven's sake! What gave him the temerity to propose to her? Didn't he know how, socially, they were worlds apart? The cheek and the gall of it. That was what he'd caught in her words, in her tone.

He arrived at the class, did a minor presentation, and then, when it was over, waited for the weekend when he hoped she would call.

She did not call him that weekend or any other weekend, at least not overtly. She would never identify herself. She would call him sometimes and then hang up the phone when his mother or someone else answered—he hardly ever answered telephones. It was her way of maintaining contact with him, with his world. She would also ride by his house sometimes on her bicycle. As for him, his way was to hang around her house, which he did weekly and then nightly as the time passed.

The weekend turned into the next week, and the next

week into the next month. Finally, it had been a whole month and still they hadn't talked. He waited for her. He continued to go to the college every Monday and Wednesday morning and hung around the cafeteria during her class hours. He continued this in the hope that by breathing the same environment he could remain close to her. Once there was a fire alarm and the building was cleared. He hung around outside trying to get a peek at her in the crowd, and afraid that she might see him and know what he'd been doing. Maybe she'd believe that he had set the fire in retaliation. Then he grew tired of hanging around the college in the mornings, and then waited for her after the school day was over in the afternnoons. He stood on a street corner a couple of blocks from the school entrance and waited to catch sight of her as she left the building. He never did. Once there was a teachers' strike at the college, and he hoped to get a peek of her marching in one of the picket lines. She was not one of the demonstrators, at least not in the picket lines he saw in front of the school.

With winter soon approaching and early darkness with it, he grew tired of hanging around the college, and decided that he would hang around her house more regularly. He started by visiting her house on Monday evenings and on weekends, late at night. Once he saw her in a blue oldsmobile—they had traded in the yellow volkswagen for the blue oldsmobile—returning from some late-night outing. They drove up just as he was

passing their house. He stopped and went back in the opposite direction. He felt certain she'd seen him. That was good, he thought; she knows I haven't given up on her.

The teachers' strike lasted a week. He wondered if she had been suffering financially and what the enforced inactivity had done to her mentally. He also saw that in many ways it was good. She would not have to work and go out in the fall chill. Her health would not suffer—that was good. The strike was recalled and she began the term again; and then he was happy for her, happy that she would be doing the thing she'd been born for again.

The Indian summer had passed into cold autumn. He'd lost all faith in the academic process without her. His grades had suffered. He disliked most of his professors and the people around him. But he would keep it up for her sake, knew that she would not want him to quit—want him to get that master's degree for them both and then the higher degree and join her in the teaching profession. He felt like she was waiting for him, waiting for a time when he would have his profession and then they could be together.

In late spring, with classes gone, he could hang around her house every day and he planned to do so. Then he felt the need for greater contact and began to leave objects and written notes near her stairsteps. She dominated his life; thoughts of her were all that kept him going. The sense of proximity to her increased and his happiness,

which was a function of that sense of proximity, grew. He was waiting, and would wait forever if need be.

In that October the sparrows were singing. The Cardinals had won the World Series. He watched the sparrows as they hopped about searching for tiny morsels of food. He watched them from his stone bench underneath the shade of the elm trees on campus. The sparrows reminded him of her. Their grace, their beauty, their perfection, their passivity and harmony with nature, were her own, and provided a lesson on how to live in the world. Sparrows in October had always made him happy. They had always been a reassuring sign in autumn, a sign that the school year was in full-progress. They filled him with peace. He noted as they hopped about they moved somewhat like her. Her walk had been a sparrow-like shuffle from foot to foot, her body bending this way and that with each step. They were perfect, miniature creatures. The grace of God told in their wings and in their faces, their eyes and beaks. They would approach him on the stone bench and hover close. He did not disturb them with any sudden movements. He felt like Saint Francis Of Assisi or Thomas Aquinas in their presence. If God's eye was on the sparrows, then God's eye would be on her.

Providence would keep her safe until the vigil was fully transferred to him.

On the last Friday in October he decided to take the day off from school to do some shopping. His clothes were worn out and he needed some new shirts and jeans. He spent the hot afternoon hopping from store to store, searching for a red shirt, a green shirt, and the right style of jeans. The heat brought on showers and by four o'clock he was standing under the awning of a shoe store, wondering if he should buy some new shoes as well. The rain kept falling harder and it seemed that he would be stuck there for a half hour at least. He watched the passersby under the darkening sky, lit a cigarette and smoked. On the floor near the door of the shoe store he saw a fresh newspaper lying. He went to pick it up. He wanted to check the sports scores. He turned towards the sports section and then after ten minutes, after the rain kept falling, he decided to read the front section. His eyes glanced over the headlines. He turned to the next page. On page three, at the bottom, a small headline caught his eye. It read: "Two killed in auto accident." He was about to pass over it when he noticed the name Levitt. His heart stopped. He brought the item closer to his eyes. "Wednesday night at around 11:15 a blue 1981 Oldsmobile driven by Charles Levitt of Saint Henri collided with another car on Cotes des Neiges

Road, killing both passengers in the first car and seriously injuring the driver of the second car who was later taken to Montreal General Hospital. The second passenger in the blue oldsmobile was later identified as Eileen Fleming, also of Saint Henri. Charles Levitt died instantly. The second passenger, Eileen Fleming, later died in hospital of her injuries, two hours after arrival at the nearby Montreal General. Police stated the car skidded on the rain-covered road as it was coming down an embankment. The driver, Levitt, apparently lost control of the car and was hit head-on by the oncoming vehicle. The Cote des Neiges intersection has been the concern of many local citizen groups who have claimed in the past that it is one of the most dangerous intersections in the City of Montreal..." He couldn't read any further.

He threw the newspaper to the ground, and then retrieved the page where the item was contained. He ripped out the item, folded it and placed it in his pocket. He was in a frenzy now, in a panic. He started to run in the rain, fast down Ste. Catherine Street. It had been raining that night, Wednesday night—what had he been doing? He tried to remember. His forehead was burning, his vision clouded by the rain that fell on his glasses. He'd been home that night—watching t.v.. No, he'd been at the library, doing some homework. He ran and then turned up the street, up McGill College Avenue, towards the university campus. His side began to ache. He stopped, breathing heavily, panting and bending over. He could see the green of the campus a short distance away. He ran towards the Roddick Gates as if they were the finish line in a marathon. He ran

through the red light on Sherbrooke Street, was nearly hit by a car. "Died of her injuries in hospital."

In the rain the campus was nearly deserted. He crossed the Roddick Gates and headed towards a tree in the distance. His feet got soaked on the wet grass. When he reached the tree he bent his knees forward and collapsed onto the grass. There was no one around. He heard his own heavy breathing and felt the rain sliding down his face. He looked up at the sky and the rain kept falling into his eyes, blinding him. He could have kept her alive, he felt. God could have kept her alive. He closed his eyes to the rain and sat under the tree, shivering with the cold and the wind.

He sat there until evening, until the fact of her death had fully sunk into his being. He took the item out of his pocket a few times to read her name there. It, too, got soaked, and by evening, when he was ready to go home, he crumpled it into a ball and left it lying on the wet grass of the campus. He felt the crumpled paper under his feet as he stood up. He was cold and lonely. The rain had let up. He moved towards the lights of the English building. It was then the tears came to his eyes. She would be buried soon. Buried for all to see. He hadn't even said goodbye. He hadn't even held her or kissed her. Her words kept running in his mind: "He misses an awful lot of sparrows." She had been right; he had been wrong.

That night and for a series of nights after that he dreamed about her. Her ghost lingered in a chair in his room, watching him silently and then came wandering into his bed, holding him in her cool ghostly grip, murmuring something in his ears. He woke up murmuring, feverish, the sweat rolling down his temples, his eyes searching the darkness for the pale white figure. Then he would sleep again, holding on to nothing.

On Monday he returned to the university to obtain the news he desired. He heard the whisperings in the hallways, the secretaries and the professors crowded together in small groups. He heard her name whispered here and there. He learned from a professor who had known her that the funeral would be the next day, Tuesday. It would be held in a small church on Notre Dame Street. Burial would be at Mount Royal Cemetery. There had been no lying-in-state. The coffins were to be closed. She had no family in the city; no family except her mother who lived in Florida and who was too old to make the trip up. The university would be going en masse—all the professors in the Department who had known her. The Chairman would also attend.

On Tuesday, he awoke early. He'd laid out his clothes the night before. He'd borrowed his father's grey suit. He had not slept and his skin was ashen, his forehead sweating. He put on his tie with great deliberation, checking his ashen face in the mirror. It was eight o'clock; the service would

be at nine. He went out of the house and walked along the streets in the dark, overcast morning. He saw the children setting off for school, waiting for buses at intersections. The click of his black high-heeled shoes on the sidewalk thundered in his ears in the early morning. Soon he was tired and he had to lean against a parked car for support. He flagged down a taxi cab and told the driver the name of the church he wanted to be taken to. In the back seat he could feel the sweat rolling down his back, feel the damp skin beneath the silk shirt and the heavy suit jacket. It was a twenty minute ride and all the time he kept concentrating on his hands in front of him, folded on his knees. They did not shake; they were numbed like the rest of him.

On arriving at the church he told the cab driver to let him out on the other side of the street. He got out of the car and stood facing the church. There were dozens of cars parked in front of the church, people stood milling about on the steps and in the entranceway. He did not recognize any of them—did not, in fact, look closely at their faces. He stood across the street and lit a cigarette, waiting for them all to go in. He leaned against the wall of a building and waited for half an hour, till nine o'clock. When only a few stragglers remained he crossed the street and went up the stone steps quickly.

Inside, it was a small church. He took a seat near the back. At the head of the church, near the altar, dozens of flowers draped the linen-covered tables. The two bronze-colored coffins lay side-by-side on the raised platform directly in

front of the altar. He heard no crying, only the organ playing and the priest's voice signalling the beginning of the service. The church was not crowded. It was nearly half-empty. The people there consisted mostly of his family and some of her friends, he surmised, and the delegations from the college and the university. He spoke to no one; no one spoke to him. He focused his eyes on the coffins. He did not know which was hers. Somehow it seemed to matter to him—matter to him more than anything in the world—to know which was hers. He wanted to ask someone. Finally, he did. The man in the seat ahead of him told him that hers was the one on the left. He kneeled and sat and listened while the others prayed. He could not bring himself to utter the words of any prayer, to make the sign of the cross when the others did, keeping his hands folded in front of him. He kept his eyes squarely focused on the coffin to the left. As he stood in the church watching the coffin, listening to the words of the priest, the sound of the priest's voice became a drone. He blocked it out, listening instead for some other music that would signal some form of deliverance for her. He heard what he wanted to hear outside the stained-glass windows of the church. It was the sound of the sparrows.

But something had died in him nevertheless—the unshakable belief in a rightful order, in a wholly merciful God. He still believed in Providence, but it was tempered by the realization that some things did not have to happen. He had the sense that Providence or Fate could be very cruel

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and capricious. He had not know her very well and they had argued, but he believed that he had loved her despite everything; and now he felt closer to her than ever before. He had not wanted her to die, and he could see no good reason why she had to die. He could not believe in a God who chose to inflict suffering on the innocent or who chose to punish the guilty so severely, if they were guilty. He saw before him all the injustice of life, the needless suffering, the wasted effort. He felt that if God existed then He was as much a sadist as a benevolent force—at best a capricious old man who would bless you one moment and just as quickly and inexplicably torture you in the next. He believed that if he were given God's job he would be more merciful. He wanted with all his heart to return to the simple faith and belief of his old self, but he could not. He could not close his eyes to the senselessness of what he saw around him, to the world, to the needless pain and suffering, to the existence and triumph of evil. His younger self could believe that everything that happened was for the best; his older self realized that whatever happened was not necessarily for the best and could just as easily have gone another way.

He left the church before the service was completed. He would not go to the burial, would not see her put into the ground. He left quickly ahead of the others, before he could hear the tolling of the bells even at a far distance.

The period after her death brought a number of changes to his life. His parents had decided to move out of the city. His younger sister, who was to be married in the summer, moved in with his older sister. He was left alone in the house. He had to quit school in order to support himself. He got a job working on the newspaper—a job as a journalist. Later in the fall his parents sold the house and he moved into an apartment in the McGill ghetto. He met a young girl who was studying to be a teacher, an English master's student at McGill, who also lived in the ghetto. At times, she reminded him of Eileen—what she would have been like when she was younger, in her early twenties, when she was a student. He learned later in the fall from a professor who had known her that Eileen had planned to move away, go back to New York. She'd apparently gotten a teaching offer at Syracuse University, her alma mater. She would finally have had her opportunity to teach at the university level permanently. It did not shock him to learn she had planned to move hundreds of miles away from him; she had left him long ago. He did not feel any profound sorrow. He only wished that things had been different, had turned out differently, and that they would have been happy together. She had never left him in a sense—that she had been right about. But he could look inside himself now and put the anguish and turbulence to rest. Her ghost, which had haunted him whenever they were separated, did not haunt him now, for he had found a tangible love with the new girl. There were places that he could touch and still not feel because he had

been numbed by life and time, but still they were not the whole of him. Death and the loss of love had taught him that if he had to give up his life and love he could do so, willingly or unwillingly. And there was strength in that. He would take whatever came and still he would live until he died. Death did not seem such a remote stranger any longer. His life would have meaning or no meaning, but still it was his until someone or something came along and took it away. You were born alone and you died alone. You could ask for and expect love but you had to know that even this would not penetrate the essential loneliness of everyone. The young girl he could help and he could reach for in the night. And if the arms that met his were real or ghostly it might not have mattered except that it was so much more comforting to hear real voices and words and not the echoes of your own mind, to feel warmth and skin and bone, to hold that which held back.

AFTERWORD

Leslie Fiedler has labelled the non-adult in modern literature as "a cultural invention."¹ James William Johnson, by the same token, views the non-adult or adolescent protagonist in literature as "a distinctly Twentieth-Century manifestation, virtually without precedent in British or American fiction."² Fiedler, however, perceives the history of the adolescent protagonist or non-adult in literature to a clearer extent. He traces it back to Jean Jacques Rousseau. Emile (1762) is a work which deals with the education of adolescents. However, Emile had two important precedents from the eighteenth century. These were Pamela by Samuel Richardson and Tom Jones by Henry Fielding. Both these novels, Pamela (1740) and Tom Jones (1749), dealt to some extent with the adolescent experience.

In addition, in German literature we find an even greater influence on the subsequent literature dealing with adolescents. Goethe's The Sorrows Of Young Werther (1774) and Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship (1796) are prototypes of the bildungsroman, a novel tracing the education or apprenticeship of a young protagonist. They provided a serious and sentimental study of youthful confrontation with life and meaning. The influence of Goethe was probably greater than that of Richardson, Fielding, or Rousseau on such later important English nineteenth century novels of adolescence as Thackeray's Pendennis (1849), Dickens' David Copperfield (1850) and Great Expectations (1861), George Meredith's The Ordeal Of Richard Feverel (1859), and George Eliot's The Mill On The Floss (1860)—all realistic studies of the experience of youth.

In American literature, the most important works dealing with adolescents were Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn (1884) and Stephen Crane's The Red Badge Of Courage (1895). Both these novels presented the psychological struggles of the adolescent in confrontation with the world and reality. However, although The Red Badge Of Courage is a searing account of a harrowing psychological experience, the nineteenth-century American novel, in general, did not examine as deeply the psychological struggles of the adolescent as its twentieth-century counterpart. The adolescent had appeared prominently in some nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American novels, but not until after the First World War did the practise of dealing with the broad range of his experience emerge as a widespread and general trend in American literature. The adolescent, in fact, became the representative of the problem of the confrontation with experience since it was in him that the drama, the battleground between innocence and experience, was most poignant and most deeply-felt.

This was considerably later than the emergence of similar trends in French and English literature. In The Novel Of Adolescence In France, Justin O'Brien locates 1890 as the date when this sort of novel truly emerged. He does mention, however, some earlier novels which dealt with the adolescent experience, as opposed to the childhood experience: Honoré de Balzac's Louis Lambert (1832), Gustave Flaubert's Novembre (1842), and Hippolyte Taine's Etienne Mayran (1861-62).³

O'Brien lists a number of reasons for the French interest in adolescence during this period: a rapidly declining birth rate,

rendering the existing young more valuable to their parents; the new prominence of adolescent athletes; the perfection of the bicycle causing parental worry over the young since they could easily evade their parents' surveillance as a result.⁴

Sociologists, psychologists, teachers in the 1890's were preoccupied with the young. Writers reflected this increased preoccupation with adolescence so that by the 1920's a saturation existed, in many critical minds, with the theme of adolescence.⁵ The most important of the French novelists of adolescence was André Gide. It is uncertain to what extent the French novelists of adolescence influenced the American writers. The French, however, influenced the English writers, and the English, in turn, influenced the Americans.

The most important English novels of adolescence of the early twentieth century were: Samuel Butler's The Way Of All Flesh (1903), D.H. Lawrence's Sons And Lovers (1913), Somerset Maugham's Of Human Bondage (1915), and James Joyce's A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man (1916). Of these, Lawrence and Joyce were especially influential on their American counterparts who dealt with the theme of adolescence in their works, such writers as Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Wolfe, and William Faulkner.

The modern American novel of adolescence did not appear spontaneously in 1920. Besides the earlier French and English traditions, both stemming from eighteenth-century works by Richardson, Fielding, Rousseau, and Goethe, there were serious and perceptive novels of adolescence published before 1920 by Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Willa Cather. The new

serious and realistic treatment of adolescence after 1920, however, came as a reaction against the genteel tradition, the dominant trend in American literature from about 1870 to 1920. The various characteristics of the genteel tradition can be seen in the majority of novels of adolescence published in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The most popular authors of such novels were Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton-Porter, Booth Tarkington, Burt Standish, and Owen Johnson, who tended to portray glossed-over, sentimental, or false pictures of adolescence. The sentimental drama and the condescending humour exemplified in their novels are characteristic of the genteel tradition, and go back to well-established precedents. The problems of adolescents are treated in a light-hearted manner, in George Wilbur Peck's collected sketches, Peck's Bad Boy (1883), in Thomas Bailey Aldrich's The Story Of A Bad Boy (1870), and in Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer (1876) and Huckleberry Finn (1884). This tradition goes back through English fiction even to Henry Fielding's Tom Jones (1749). Similarly, the sentimental treatment of adolescents in fiction has been the stock and trade of many of the most popular English and American novelists, as evidenced by Martha Farquharson's Elsie Dinsmore series (1867-1905), Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches romances (1866-99), Louisa May Alcott's Little Women (1868-69) and Little Men (1871), Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist (1837-38) and Old Curiosity Shop (1840-41), and even the eighteenth-century novels of Samuel Richardson.

The genteel tradition, of course, did not end abruptly in 1920, nor was it the only influence on the fictional

treatment of adolescence before that date. The most powerful literary force against it was naturalism. But it was 1920 before the sentimental American novelists like Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton-Porter, Booth Tarkington, Burt Standish, and Eleanor H. Porter were replaced in popular favor by moderate realists. The twenties and thirties brought forth the naturalistic novels; and the forties and fifties tended to stress symbolism and depth psychology.

One usually associates "initiation" with the adolescent's process of maturation. The term "adolescence", however, is difficult to limit or define. There is intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral adolescence. We can only locate physical adolescence, because of its easily-perceived outward signs. Physical adolescence can be set between ten and twenty-four years of age. The other kinds of adolescence are not so easily defined or limited in terms of age. Literary characters achieve social, intellectual and emotional maturity at different ages, sometimes well past the age of twenty-four. Rachel Cameron in Margaret Laurence's A Jest Of God, for example, achieves emotional maturity when she is in her thirties. Saul Bellow's Moses Herzog achieves emotional maturity when he is middle-aged.

The kind of initiation that will be referred to in the following pages is one that includes all kinds that have been mentioned in the above paragraph. It refers to a process through which the protagonist acquires self-knowledge and discovers and understands his own identity. He also learns about the nature

of the world he inhabits, and the nature of evil. If the process is successful and he acquires greater self-knowledge, he then possesses enough knowledge to locate his own place in the social schema. The purpose of his successful initiation, therefore, is integration into society.

The initiation theme is not new to world or American literature. The Ramayana, the Aeneid, Paradise Lost, The Sorrows Of Young Werther are but a few of the great works of literature that make at least an indirect reference to initiation. The crisis of initiation is implicit in human experience. It enables the writer to focus on the crucial period in adolescence when the protagonist makes the transition into knowledge and maturity, when he confronts the hostile or friendly forces in his quest for experience, and it brings in the problems of existential choice. The theme thus possesses a universality not found in other themes.

Hemingway claimed that all modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn. The statement possesses even greater validity in relationship to modern American literature of initiation. Huckleberry Finn is the prototype of the twentieth-century initiate, the antecedent of Hemingway's Nick Adams and J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, for example. The journey down the river in that novel is a "rite de passage." It is during that journey with Jim, his slave-friend, that Huck experiences the great moral crisis in his adolescence. The crisis is embodied in the tension between Huck's individual and social consciences. He is torn between the code of the raft and the code of the shore.

His initiation becomes complete when the code of the raft wins out and the conflict is defeated. He decides to follow his heart and refuses to hand Jim over to the slave hunters, recognizing his kindredness with Jim. "All right then, I'll go to hell,"⁶ he states, and he turns his back on the corruption of society. Jim also experiences an initiation into moral manhood. He jeopardizes his own independence in order to rescue Huck and Tom Sawyer. Initiation doesn't always end in the protagonist's integration into the adult world, as we see in this novel. Huck Finn, at the end of the novel, "lights out for the territory ahead,"⁷ unable to bear the thought of returning to the "sivilizing" influence of his Aunt Sally. But there is no doubt of his initiation. It is evident in his existential confrontation with the world, his newly acquired knowledge of evil, and his spiritual development or growth.

In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in the United States the atmosphere was ripe for the rise of the literature of adolescence and the maturation theme from the 1920's onward. An important part of initiation—loss of innocence—became a prominent topic among writers. The U.S. was gradually losing its innocence during the years of World War I. Henry F. May, in The End Of American Innocence, who described this innocence as "the absence of guilt and doubt and the complexity that goes with them,"⁸ and which had been characteristic of American literature and culture before World War I, states that it was rapidly disappearing during the war decade and was almost completely gone in the 1920's:

This innocence had often been rather precariously maintained. Many had glimpsed a world whose central meaning was neither clear nor cheerful, but very few had come to live in such a world as a matter of course. Exceptions to innocence had existed in all camps—they had included unhappy elder thinkers like Henry Adams, rueful naturalists like Dreiser, and vigorous skeptics like Mencken. None of them had yet deeply affected the country's image of itself; all, including Henry Adams, who died in 1918, were to become influential in the twenties.

This change, on the way for a long time and precipitated by the war, is worth looking at very briefly, as it affected several segments of the increasingly divided nation. The most obvious aspect of change was the complete disintegration of the old order, the set of ideas which had dominated the American mind so effectively from the mid-nineteenth century until 1912. The heresies of the nineties had undermined this set of beliefs; the Rebellion had successfully defied it; the twenties hardly had to fight it. After the war it was hard to find a convincing or intellectually respectable spokesman for the prewar faith.⁹

By the nineteen-twenties American novelists began to write almost exclusively about loss of innocence, initiation, and maturation. The trend was so widespread that it came to be regarded as a particularly American phenomenon. James William Johnson, writing in "The Adolescent Hero: A Trend In Modern Fiction" (1959), states:

The emergence within the past thirty years of the child and the adolescent as heroes of much important fiction is a phenomenon only recently noted by the critics...The

truth seems to be that an entirely new sort of hero has appeared in the fiction of recent years, reflecting a peculiar system of values and effecting important changes in literary technique. The adolescent protagonist, as we have come to know him in the persons of a Holden Caulfield, a Eugene Gant, or a Nick Adams, is a distinctly Twentieth-Century manifestation, virtually without precedent in British or American fiction.¹⁰

Another important critic of the contemporary American novel, Ihab Hassan, regards innocence as the great and abiding theme at the beginning of the twentieth century. The innocence, he claims, later gave way to the burden of experience which, in turn, engendered the cult of adolescence.¹¹ In his book, Radical Innocence: Studies In The Contemporary American Novel (1961), however, he claims "innocence has not come to an end in America—it has become more radical."¹²

The important influences that shaped the twentieth-century fiction of adolescence were literary naturalism, the example of the English novel, and the growth of the new science of psychology. The genteel tradition did not, of course, end abruptly in 1920. The most powerful literary force against it was naturalism, originating in France with the novels of Zola, Flaubert, and the brothers Goncourt, and with the criticism of Hippolyte Taine, and making its first American appearance in Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl Of The Streets (1893) and Crane's The Red Badge Of Courage (1895), which presents the adolescent Henry Fleming initiated into adulthood by the searing experience of war. Theodore Dreiser's first novel, Sister Carrie (1900), presented a naturalistic picture of an

eighteen-year-old girl trying to support herself in Chicago. The majority of the novel, however, dealt with Sister Carrie's experience as an adult. The trend towards naturalism influenced some serious novelists to treat adolescents more realistically than the genteel tradition would have treated them: Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio (1919); Willa Cather, The Song Of The Lark (1915) and My Antonia (1918); Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Bent Twig (1915). It was 1920 before the sentimental novelists like Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton-Porter and Eleanor H. Porter were replaced in popular favor by moderate realists like Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Sinclair Lewis, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The work of Emile Zola and particularly that of his American disciples, Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl Of The Streets (1893) and The Red Badge Of Courage (1895), and Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (1900), initiated the frank naturalistic description of adolescence and the painful passage to maturity in a hostile world.

Besides the growth of naturalism, one of the chief influences towards a franker treatment of adolescence in American fiction was a similar trend in English fiction. As early as 1859 George Meredith had presented in The Ordeal Of Richard Feverel the tragedy of the education of an adolescent by his parents. The most popular novelist of the Victorian age was Charles Dickens. He provided innumerable portraits of youth and invented such enduring young heroes as Pip, Oliver Twist, and David Copperfield. The early twentieth century English novel headed towards a candid portrayal of adolescence and the adolescent's

self-realization. Samuel Butler's The Way Of All Flesh (1903) was, in essence, the story of Ernest Pontifex's maturation. Somerset Maugham's Of Human Bondage (1915) and D.H. Lawrence's Sons And Lovers (1913) were, similarly, stories about the maturation of Philip Carey and Paul Morel. James Joyce's A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man (1916), presented in a kind of stream of consciousness the increasing complexity of thought of the maturing adolescent, the artist-hero, Stephen Dedalus, as he moved from infantile babblings and perceptions to young adulthood. All of these novels presented adolescence as a solemn and influential time of life. They all served as models for the works of some of the more serious American novelists.

The third important influence was the development of psychology as a science. Increased understanding of psychology brought a new appreciation of the obscure motives of the subconscious mind. There is no doubt that Freud and his followers, particularly Carl Jung, have been of great importance in bringing this psychological influence into literature. Freudian psychology held that the conflicts experienced in childhood were increased during adolescence. This heightened the writers' awareness of the importance of the initiation process. It also gave them near-scientific material to build from. The Jungians helped to clarify the use of literary myths and archetypes (some of the archetypes to be found in the fiction of adolescence are: the descent into Hades or Hell, the Night Journey, the search for a father or father-figure, the quest, the cycle of death and rebirth, the process of

initiation, and the alienated-rebel figure). Jung's most significant contribution to the literature of initiation was his theory of the individuation process. Individuation is a psychological maturation, the process of discovering those aspects of one's self that renders one an individual apart from others. It is a process of recognition, of self-awareness, understanding of one's own weaknesses and strengths, that takes place as one matures. These studies have helped modern novelists to understand and depict the initiation process, to characterize and get an insight into their initiate-protagonists, like the neurotic initiate of J.D. Salinger's The Catcher In The Rye; for example—Holden Caulfield. Frederick Hoffman in Freudianism And The Literary Mind (1957), points out that Dostoyevsky in Russia, long before Freud, helped to bring new understanding of the complexity of the human mind.¹³ In addition, the influence of Henry James, whose fiction is as concerned with mental processes as are the works of William James, his psychologist brother, undoubtedly affected the novelists of the twentieth century.

In the following pages a variety of definitions of the initiation process that have been formulated by reputed critics will be briefly discussed.

The word "initiation" was probably first used by anthropologists to describe the rites of passage from childhood or adolescence into maturity. In some cases, initiation was simply a ceremony signifying the initiate's change in status once he reached puberty. It marked his formal entry into the clan or society. At other times, the rites consisted of trials

by ordeal, feats of strength and courage, testing the initiate's endurance and loyalty to the tribe and community. Joseph Campbell has made a study of the hero-initiate. He describes the process:

The so-called rites of passage which occupy such a prominent place in the life of the primitive society (ceremonials of birth, naming, puberty, marriage, burial, etc.), are distinguished by formal, and usually very severe exercises of severance, whereby the mind is radically cut away from the attitudes, attachments, and life patterns of the stage being left behind. This follows an interval of more or less extended retirement during which are enacted rituals designed to introduce the life adventure to the forms and proper feelings of his new estate, so that when, at last, the time has ripened for the return to the normal world, the initiate will be as good as reborn.¹⁴

Campbell devotes a whole chapter to initiation. He further states:

The traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and perogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images. The mystagogue (father or father-substitute) is to entrust the symbols of office only to a son who has been effectually purged of all inappropriate infantile cathexes...[The invested one] is the twice born.¹⁵

The confirmation ritual in Christian theology and the bar mitzvah in Jewish theology are the equivalents of these initiation rites. The elaborate ceremonies and trials by ordeal which college fraternities and other secret societies demand, symbolizing the entry of the initiate into their circle, are further examples of "initiation."

Initiation in literature, however, possesses only a peripheral relationship to this kind of initiation. The initiation of literary protagonists is fashioned by ritual only in a few cases. The initiations tend to be individual as well; almost in no case are they a group activity. The hero or heroine achieves initiation after an intense personal experience.

There have been many different ways of defining initiation in literature. Following are some of the critical definitions fashioned by reputed scholars and critics.

According to Virgil Scott and Adrian H. Jaffe, initiation takes place when "a character in the course of the story learns something that he did not know before, and...what he learns is already known to, and shared by, the larger group of the world."¹⁶

Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks regard initiation as occurring when the adolescent protagonist "discovers something about the nature of evil, and tries to find some way of coming to terms with his discovery."¹⁷

Albert Guerard sees initiation as "progress through temporary reversion and achieved self-knowledge, the theme of man's exploratory descent into the primitive sources of being."¹⁸ The focus of his study is Conrad. He also sees that this knowledge of evil makes man capable of good.

In his chapter on initiation Joseph Campbell claims that initiation is a stage in every human life. He states that the literary hero and the mythical hero pass through similar experiences. They try to come to terms with existential forces in their encounter with the goddess, the woman as temptress, and the tyrant father.¹⁹

Carl Benson views initiation as "a passage from egocentric youth to human solidarity."²⁰ He sees it as a movement from irresponsibility at the beginning to a tolerant respect for others at the end. Benson, like Guerard, focuses his study on Conrad and his two stories of initiation, The Shadowline and The Secret Sharer.

Mrs. Helen White Childers in an unpublished doctoral dissertation "American Novels About Adolescents, 1917-1953," George Peabody College For Teachers (1958), states there are four main types of adolescent novels:

The four large groups into which the novels fall are: adolescent life histories ending in more or less successful initiation into adulthood, in which works depicting the artist as adolescent constitute a subdivision; sociological studies portraying victims of social forces; psychological studies of adolescents who fail in the initiation; novels in which the adolescent is a technical device.²¹

Leslie Fiedler in a series of articles in the New Leader in the spring of 1958, discussing children and adolescents in

fiction, noted the adoration of childish innocence in English and American literature. To Fiedler this preoccupation with and admiration of immature innocence seems unhealthy, and he is encouraged to see signs of reaction against it, a trend which he earlier implied in the very title of his first collection of essays, An End To Innocence (1955). Without admiring Lolita as literature, Fiedler is pleased to see in it "a resolve to reassess the innocence of the child, to reveal it as a kind of moral idiocy, a dangerous freedom from the restraints of culture and custom, a threat to order."²² He lauds the reaction against the sentimental vision of childhood. More importantly he notes the frequent recurrences in modern fiction of the theme of initiation into maturity, and that such initiation means a loss of innocence. Fiedler expresses the notion that "an initiation is a fall through knowledge to maturity; behind it there persists the myth of the Garden of Eden, the assumption that to know good and evil is to be done with the joy of innocence and to take on the burdens of work and childbearing and death."²³

Ray B. West, Jr. regards initiation as a descent into knowledge—"the downhill path to wisdom."²⁴ It leads ultimately to self-understanding because in coming to terms with his new knowledge the initiate begins to understand himself.

Mircea Eliade, in Birth And Rebirth, defines initiation in terms of a rebirth:

In philosophical terms initiation is equivalent to a basic change in existential condition; the novice emerges from his ordeal endowed with a totally different being

from that which he possessed before his initiation, he has become another.

...Initiation introduces the candidate into the human community and into the world of spiritual and cultural values.²⁵

James William Johnson, in "The Adolescent Hero: A Trend In Modern Fiction," appearing in Twentieth Century Literature for April, 1959, suggests that the sincere and candid depiction of the experience of adolescents in novels of the last few decades has produced the most convincing—perhaps the only convincing—adolescent heroes and heroines to appear in English fiction. After listing some of the more obvious elements in the "new mythos of man's youth"—tentativeness in tone, ambiguity of attitude, the leitmotif of change, the themes of search and shocking discovery, Johnson points out subtler elements in six of the most important novels of the past thirty years. Johnson notes that during initiation the adolescent experiences (1) an inexplicable sense of loss, with no poignancy in the memory of childhood, but only a realization that it is gone and some anxiety about the future; (2) a sharp awareness of strange shapes and sensations in the body; (3) some sexual confusion, particularly when the protagonist is a girl; (4) a sense of isolation and loneliness in a world of similar but alien beings; (5) a desire to escape familiar surroundings, thus asserting physical independence and rejecting dependence on the past; (6) the realization (often revealed in a vision) that there can be no escape from a duty correlative to man's existence in time and his biological connection to others.²⁶

After noting that earlier novelists, just as the ancient Greeks, recognized only three phases of human life—infancy or childhood, maturity or adulthood, and old age or senility—Johnson attributes "the discovery of the adolescent" to both the psychologist and the sociologist. Finally, he declares that the adolescent has become the archetypal figure for the confusions of our age.

Mordecai Marcus's definition of initiation is a synthesis of the previous ones:

An initiation story may be said to show its young protagonist a significant change of knowledge about the world or himself, or a change of character, or of both, and this change must point or lead him towards an adult world. It may or may not contain some form of ritual, but it should give some evidence that the change is at least likely to have permanent effects.²⁷

He made an important contribution to the study of fictional initiation by dividing initiations into categories according to the degree of their power or effect. He states:

Initiation stories obviously center on a variety of experiences and the initiations vary in effect. It will be useful, therefore, to divide initiations into types according to their power and effect. First, some initiations lead only to the threshold of maturity and understanding but do not definitely cross it. Such stories emphasize the shocking effect of experience, and their protagonists tend to be distinctly young. Second, some initiations take their protagonists across a threshold of maturity and understanding but leave them enmeshed in a struggle for certainty.

These initiations sometimes involve self-discovery. Third, the most decisive initiations carry their protagonists firmly into maturity and understanding, or at least show them decisively embarked toward maturity. These initiations usually center on self-discovery. For convenience, I will call these types tentative, uncompleted, and decisive initiations.²⁸

In an unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled "The Origins And Importance Of The Initiation Story In Twentieth Century British And American Fiction," University of New Mexico (1961), Robert S. Bickham states:

In fact the recurrent motifs of the modern initiation story—whose action is a ritualization of the sturm und drang of western adolescence—are identical to those of initiation rites: feats of physical and hunting prowess, bravery and self-denial, isolation from community and family, sexual education, acceptance of personal responsibility, recognition of a new social status, and a new understanding of man, nature and self.²⁹

Ihab Hassan in "The Idea Of Adolescence In American Fiction" which appeared in the American Quarterly for the fall of 1958, termed initiation "an abrasive process."³⁰ Hassan in Radical Innocence: The Contemporary American Novel (1961), in a chapter entitled "The Dialectic Of Initiation," defines initiation as "the first existential ordeal, crisis, or encounter with experience in the life of a youth. Its ideal aim is knowledge, recognition, and confirmation in the world, to which the actions of the initiate, however painful, must tend. It is, quite simply,

the viable mode of confronting adult realities."³¹ Hassan claims that this ideal is seldom realized, with the result that instead of knowledge, recognition and confirmation in the world, the hero feels guilt and estrangement from the world, culminating in renunciation. "Initiation did not end with communion; it led to estrangement."³²

In his essay, "The Idea Of Adolescence In American Fiction," Hassan claims that adolescence is more a process than a state. Adolescence is also a period of contradiction. "Rejection and affirmation, revolt and conformity, recklessness and sensitivity," characterize the adolescent, who seems "at once innocent and guilty, hopeful and disillusioned, Arcadian and Utopian, empirical and idealistic."³³ These oppositions of rejection and affirmation, revolt and conformity, recklessness and sensitivity "are all parts of the abrasive process. The process is obviously one of initiation, of recognition, adjustment and renunciation. It requires agile experiments with new roles, a search for balance and an effort of reconception on the part of the adolescent. But it is attended throughout by passionate ambivalences. Caught as he is between two worlds the adolescent engages in a dialectic to reconcile both worlds to his own."³⁴ Initiation, then, is not a simple matter of accepting or rejecting adult values. It is a complicated process.

In analyzing the various definitions of initiation we can extract the common denominators and isolate those elements which are important to the concept of initiation. Almost all

the critics and scholars emphasize some form or other of integration into society, on successful and complete initiation. The very term "initiation" suggests a primary movement into something, in this case, adult society or the world. Warren and Brooks claim the adolescent hero discovers the nature of evil and endeavours to come to terms with this knowledge with the idea of integration in mind. Scott and Jaffe say that the protagonist learns something he didn't know before and that this knowledge is shared by the larger group of the world. Benson sees the ultimate goal of initiation as human solidarity, and a tolerant respect for others at the end. Campbell's initiate, like the mythical hero, seeks adjustment and union with the forces of existence. He hopes to appease or gain the favor of the adult community or the supernatural powers. Childers sees successful initiation as integration into adulthood, and unsuccessful initiation as the hero becoming victim to social forces. Fiedler's concept of initiation involves the individual taking an active, adult role in society—taking up the burdens of work, childbearing and death. James Johnson recognizes that the protagonist in the midst of his initiation longs to escape and yet he realizes that there can be no escape from a duty correlative to man's existence in time and his biological connection with others. Both Marcus and Eliade are of the opinion that initiation occurs when there is a change in character which must point or lead the initiate to an adult world. Beckham views initiation as leading to "a new recognition of a new social status, and a new understanding of man, nature

and self." Hassan sees it as, quite simply, "a viable mode of facing adult realities, and gaining confirmation in the world."

The discovery and knowledge of evil is an important part of initiation according to several of the critics. Warren and Brooks, Scott and Jaffe, Fiedler, West, Marcus, and Hassan agree that the protagonist learns about good and evil and in the process of coming to terms with this knowledge gains a greater understanding of himself. Fiedler says that the knowledge of evil is invariably accompanied by the loss of Edenic innocence. West suggests a loss of innocence when he states that the initiate "descends into knowledge" down the path to wisdom.

Initiation involves an individuation process, akin to Jung's theory of individuation. Guerard is the only critic whose definition is Jungian in orientation. He sees initiation as "progress through temporary reversion and achieved self-knowledge, the theme of man's exploratory descent into the primitive sources of being." It reminds one of Jung's theory of the individuation process discussed earlier.

Initiation involves an encounter, crisis or temporary reversion. Only Hassan and Guerard view initiation explicitly in terms of an encounter, crisis or temporary reversion.

A few of the critics, Campbell, Johnson, Bickham and Hassan, consider a sense of isolation and alienation a part of the process. Within Campbell's definition, the initiate, since he experiences what the mythic heroes of old did, passes through a period of isolation, either self-imposed or enforced. Johnson claims that the protagonist experiences "isolation and loneliness in a world of similar but alien beings." Bickham

describes the various stages of the initiation rites which include isolation from community and family. Hassan says that the protagonist experiences guilt and estrangement resulting, sometimes, in renunciation.

The critical definitions in essence can be arranged into three categories: the group that states the initiate learns something about the world and the nature of evil; the group that states the protagonist makes an important discovery about himself, and forges an adjustment to life; the group that regards the integration into society, the adult world as the most important aspect of the initiation process.

Perhaps the best definition belongs to Isaac Sequeira. In The Theme Of Initiation In Modern American Fiction (1975) he describes initiation in the following manner:

Initiation is an existential crisis or a series of encounters in life, almost always painful, with experience during which the adolescent protagonist gains valuable knowledge about himself, the nature of evil, or the world. This knowledge is accompanied by a sense of the loss of innocence and a sense of isolation, and if it is to have any permanent effect at all, must result in a change of character and behaviour; for if knowledge does not change an individual's thinking and behaviour, no learning—no acquisition of knowledge, per se—has taken place. In almost every case, the change leads toward an adjustable integration into the adult world.³⁵

Sequeira uses Marcus's divisions of initiations into three types, tentative, uncompleted and decisive initiations, which he finds most valid and congenial for his purposes:

Initiation is a very complicated process and there are different kinds of initiates coming from a variety of backgrounds. Hence it becomes necessary to make distinctions. Many adolescents do not go through the whole process nor do they become integrated into adult society...Hence, it is useful to consider the protagonists from the point of degree of initiation they have undergone.³⁶

Since Marcus's divisions, as Sequeira claims, offer a viable means of studying the different degrees of initiation, I employ them also. I have also relied on Sequeira's analyses of various twentieth-century American novels.

With a knowledge of the literary and cultural background and of the general observations which critics have made on the novels of initiation we can proceed to a specific study of the novels themselves. The treatment of initiation has so far been of an abstract and hypothetical nature. It is now time to consider concrete examples from literature.

Uncompleted initiation—Huckleberry Finn:

In the realm of initiates in American literature Huckleberry Finn is outstanding. The irreverent young Huck undergoes a series of comical and mordant lessons. His experience or journey leads him through the wide range of human corruption. Finally, he is faced with a central moral decision. Huck decides to remain loyal to Jim, the runaway slave, even though it grates against the dictates of his social conscience. Huck's decision affirms the power and triumph of love over social influences and conditioning. Huck reflects in a famous passage from The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn:

Then I thought a minute and says to myself, hold on; s'pose you'd a done right and give Jim up, would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad...Well, then, says I, what's the use of you learning to do right when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same?³⁷

Love wins over conscience, and instinct over logic. The conflict or oppositions within Huck's soul between freedom and society, individual conscience, independence and conformity, are embodied in the duality of the "estates." The opposition exists between Nature—the river—and Civilization—the towns on the banks. The raft represents a third estate, between the river and the land. It is a floating Eden or Noah's Ark, and it allows Huck to drift between the two worlds; and, at the same time, provides him with a measure of freedom from the corruption of society. The two figures inhabiting it, Huck and Jim, are caught in an unusual and abnormal situation. As they drift down the river, they never fully escape the guilt of the land which always remains within sight. The dream of the Open Road and the land's guilt arising from slavery are always at odds.

Huck's initiation, in essence, is incomplete and mixed. Huck does acquire a first-hand knowledge of evil. The knowledge he acquires is also tested, for he has to make a central decision. However, his ultimate resolve is to "light out for the territory ahead."³⁸ Huck chooses to disaffiliate himself from society, from the world. "I been there before,"³⁹

he claims. The author, in fact, employs Huck's initiation process as an extended criticism of the world itself. Twain's implication is that the act of acceptance is, in effect, tragic even if it is inescapable and necessary, as Adam's fall was both tragic and necessary. The ambiguities of Huck's initiation are like his future—what happens to him after the novel ends—indeterminate, incomplete.

Decisive initiation—The Red Badge Of Courage:

The Red Badge Of Courage by Stephen Crane examines a similar area of moral significance. Crane's hero, Henry Fleming, is engaged in the struggle for self-knowledge. In the narrative, he vacillates between guilt and self-pity, arrogance and humility. His panicky desertion under fire and voluntary return to the front, as well as what he witnesses in war, delineate the struggle within his soul. The novel, in essence, may be viewed as a series of partial initiations. Their total effect is to reveal the brutality and anonymity of war, the failures of idealism, and the subtleties of illusions which the self builds up. War demands self-sacrifice and insane aggression, murder and solidarity unto death. Fleming's dilemma becomes the opposition between the public demand and the private response which, in war, are so helplessly at odds with each other. The young hero, Fleming, finds solace in the vision of a scampering squirrel as he is running away from battle. The squirrel, like himself, is responding to the instinct for self-preservation:

The youth felt triumphant at this exhibition. There was the law, he said. Nature had given him a sign. The squirrel, immediately upon recognizing danger, had taken to his legs without ado. He did not stand stolidly baring his furry belly to the missile, and die with an upward glance at the sympathetic heavens. On the contrary, he had fled as fast as his legs could carry him; and he was but an ordinary squirrel, too—doubtless no philosopher of his race. The youth wended, feeling that Nature was of his mind. She reenforced his argument with proofs that lived where the sun shone.⁴⁰

But war also provides the supreme test of man's relation to men in general. Fleming decides to return and to re-integrate himself with the group, only after he witnesses the shocking death of Jim Conklin, his friend. It is then that he experiences the full force of his guilt:

Suddenly his form stiffened and straightened. Then it was shaken by a prolonged ague. He stared into space. To the two watchers there was a curious and profound dignity in the firm lines of his awful face.

He was invaded by a creeping strangeness that slowly enveloped him. For a moment the tremor of his legs caused him to dance a sort of hideous hornpipe. His arms beat wildly about his head in expression of implike enthusiasm. ...The youth had watched spellbound, this ceremony at the place of meeting. His face had been twisted into an expression of every agony he had imagined for his friend.

He now sprang to his feet and, going close, gazed upon the pastelike face. The mouth was open and the teeth showed in a laugh.

As the flap of the blue jacket fell away from the body, he could see that the side looked like it had been

chewed by wolves.

The youth turned, with sudden, livid rage, toward the battlefield. He shook his fist. He seemed about to deliver a philippic.

"Hell"⁴¹

Initiation, therefore, takes the classic pattern of withdrawal and return. Its context is the conflict between instinctive and social behaviour, ideal choice and biological necessity.

The novel suggests that the initiation of Henry Fleming is successful, decisive. At the end of the story:

...He saw his vivid error, and he was afraid that it would stand before him all his life...

Yet gradually he mustered force to put his sin at a distance. And at last his eyes seemed to open to some new ways. He found that he could look back upon the brass and bombast of his earlier gospels and see them truly. He was gleeful when he discovered that he now despised them.

With this conviction came a store of assurance. He felt a quiet manhood, nonassertive but of sturdy and strong blood. He knew that he would no more quail before his guides wherever they should point. He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man.⁴²

Tentative initiation—This Side Of Paradise:

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side Of Paradise young Amory Blaine is the Princeton undergraduate and the soul of perpetual youth. He is aristocratic, imaginative, self-indulgent

and romantic. Blaine gets to know in the course of the action something about death—the death of a friend, Humbird, and the death wish of an entire generation—about the ruthlessness of the rich and social inequities, about the subtleties of his own egotism and the deceptions of his imagination. He perceives that the war has irrevocably changed his world. It has wiped out the possibilities of heroic individualism. The individualism of an earlier era, of an Aaron Burr or a General Lee, no longer exists. At the end of the novel he stands once again on the Princeton campus that had nurtured so many illusions, conscious that his social, artistic, and romantic aspirations have failed him. He stretches his arms out to the sky and cries out, "I know myself...but that is all."⁴³ In the fact of his initiation we must take his word for granted. In his case initiation amounts to disenchantment, acceptance of the discrepancy between reality and illusion, and the realization that a new order has come into the world—a generation that is "dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken..."⁴⁴ But we tend to inquire, initiation to what end and for what use? Blaine gives no answer. In his knowledge and in his actions, and least of all in the flurry of assertions and radical philosophizing on which the novel ends, Blaine implies no real transition into complete maturity or decisive initiation. The novel almost implies that there are no second acts in American lives—and Blaine remains essentially at that stage that he has embodied—spiritual

adolescence, perpetual youth—even though he has encountered or witnessed death, gained new knowledge of the world, and new insights about himself, his own identity. It is a tentative initiation at best because despite being initiated, it leads him nowhere. He remains, like so many of Fitzgerald's collegians, frozen in adolescence, on the threshold of maturity but yet to cross it.

Refusal, rejection, negation of initiation—Daisy Miller:

Henry James's Daisy Miller is an initiate of a different kind, neither tentative, uncompleted, or decisive; but rather the refuser, rejecter, negator of initiation. Daisy Miller self-destructs because of her refusal to let go of her own innocence. While Huckleberry Finn and Henry Fleming pursue their own processes of initiation (albeit sporadically), James's heroine rejects it point blank. Daisy refuses to compromise her innocence, ignorance or conscience. She will accept life only on her own terms. Her most characteristic action in the novel is also the most crucial. She refuses the ride which Mrs. Walker offers her that will protect her reputation. Spurning Mrs. Walker's carriage she chooses instead to walk along the Pincan Gardens with her Italian suitor, risking social censure and ostracization:

..."Should you prefer being thought a very reckless girl?" she [Mrs. Walker] accordingly asked.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Daisy. She looked again at Mr. Giovanelli; then she turned to her other companion...

"Does Mr. Winterbourne think," she put to him with a wonderful bright intensity of appeal, "that—to save my reputation—I ought to get into the carriage?"

...He took in again her exquisite prettiness and then said the more distinctly: "I think you should get into the carriage."

Daisy gave the rein to her amusement. "I never heard anything so stiff! If this is improper, Mrs. Walker," she pursued, "then I'm all improper, and you had better give me right up. Good-bye; I hope you'll have a lovely ride!"—and with Mr. Giovanelli, who made a triumphantly obsequious salute, she turned away.⁴⁵

By the gesture she affirms her faith in the rights of the individual versus those of the group. She also affirms the autonomy of candor:

..."That was not very clever of you," he [Winterbourne] said candidly, as the vehicle mingled again with the throng of carriages.

"In such a case," his companion answered, "I don't want to be clever—I only want to be true!"⁴⁶

In short, she is a rebel, and the price of her rebellion is death. She fails to win the unconditional love of Winterbourne, then she dies of Roman fever. It seems as simple as that. The splendid or quixotic gesture, however, does not escape James's irony. James seemed to know that if initiation to the world was sometimes tragic, the refusal of initiation was more often pathetic. His great heroines from Isabel Archer to Millie Theale to Catherine Sloper demonstrate that it is not merely in refusal, but in sacrifice, that the complex demands and oppositions of the world and the self are finally reconciled.

The prototypes of initiation we have just considered

have mainly come from the late nineteenth century. Let us now consider some twentieth-century examples with a greater depth, and with more-clearly-stated definitions of decisive, uncompleted, and tentative initiations.

This section deals with stories in which the protagonist achieves the most successful kind of initiation—decisive initiation. Decisive initiation, as Isaac Sequeira defines it (and which, in turn, is derived from Mordecai Marcus's categories):

...is a painful maturing process full of a variety of experiences during which the protagonist gains valuable knowledge about himself, and the nature of evil, and the world. This knowledge is accompanied by a sense of the loss of innocence and a profound sense of isolation. The maturing process invariably ends in the integration of the protagonist into adult society, since the knowledge gained so painfully must result in a decisive change in behaviour, and sometimes, even in character. In almost all cases the protagonist undergoes what Carl Jung calls the 'individuation process'—a process of self-understanding that gives him a much better idea of his own weaknesses and strengths, the capacity for good and evil in him, in short, a clearer idea of his own identity, especially in relation to society. Different fictional heroes achieve their decisive initiation in different ways. Many protagonists are not decisively initiated, and depending on the power and effect of their initiatory processes they achieve either tentative or uncompleted initiations.⁴⁷

Sections dealing with the latter two categories will be included in the pages following.

In Margaret Laurence's A Bird In The House the initiation which the adolescent protagonist, Vanessa McLeod, undergoes is into the pain of the lives of the members of her household, the insight she develops into the hitherto concealed layers of meaning in the lives of those around her and in life.

Grandfather Connor rules his household with a tyrannical hand and all of the female figures except the grandmother feel the repressiveness and restriction of his patriarchal command. A pall of gloom resides over the brick house, a stifled sense of life which Vanessa in her maturing process comes to recognize. The maturation of Vanessa, in fact, is linked to this observation of the latent pain which she has hitherto not been aware of. The figure of her Aunt Edna is an important one in terms of this revelation, for it is in observing Aunt Edna, overhearing her crying in her room over a lover, that Vanessa comes to understand the real tragedy in the lives of the members of the household and the scars left by the grandfather.

Edna is unmarried, living at home because the Depression has decreased the availability of secretarial positions, and she feels guilty about sponging off her parents. Grandfather Connor does not relieve her guilt but rather provokes her anger by his snide references and his aspersions about her lovers, claiming one is married (which he, indeed, to Edna's consternation, turns out to be), and being surly and gruff with them whenever they visit. Edna, through economic hardship, therefore, is relegated to the role of perpetual adolescent. Her destiny is what may lie in store for Vanessa herself if she does not manage

to flee from her grandfather's home. Edna, however, is ambivalent about the tyranny which is the price of living with the old man. It is an anomaly of her nature that she longs for liberation and yet does not really want to leave the security of her restricted life at home. As she explains to Vanessa's mother, she has the feeling that the absolute worst could never happen there.

It is Edna who is largely responsible for Vanessa's initiation, her baptism into the glimpse of the pain and suffering of life. First, she awakens Vanessa to the legacy of pain and enslavement which may await her. She informs Vanessa that she no longer finds her grandfather's "rocking-chair business" (his mode of conveying anger) embarrassing any longer, and then she tells Vanessa to remember it in a few years' time because it'll be her turn then. Aunt Edna manages to find escape through marriage to Wes Grigg, but not before the memory of her long and concealed suffering has been imprinted on Vanessa's mind. Edna's affair with Jimmy Lorimer which ends in heartbreak and separation, largely due to her grandfather's intervention, provides Vanessa with a terrifying glimpse into her aunt's secret torment:

...I heard her voice, and the held-in way she was crying, and the name she spoke, as though it hurt her to speak it even in a whisper.

Like some terrified poltergeist, I flitted back to the spare room and whipped into bed. I wanted only to forget that I had heard anything, but I knew I would not forget. There arose in my mind, mysteriously, the picture of a

barbaric queen, someone who had lived a long time ago. I could not reconcile this image with the known face, nor could I disconnect it. I thought of my aunt, her sturdy laughter, the way she tore into the housework, her hands and feet which she always disparagingly joked about, believing them to be clumsy. I thought of the story in the scribbler at home. I wanted to get home quickly, so I could destroy it.⁴⁸

Just as this glimpse into the pain of her aunt's life is important to Vanessa's initiation, so is the image of the grandfather and the awareness of his meaning to her own life. Just as Vanessa has trouble reconciling the image of her aunt with that of the barbaric queen (mourning for her lover), she has trouble reconciling the image of the grandfather with that of the man behind the mask of the bear. It troubles her that her stern, rock-faced grandfather crumbles when her grandmother dies. She cannot comprehend the sudden transformation and it frightens her:

...as I gazed at him, unable to take in the significance of what he had said, he did a horrifying thing. He gathered me into the relentless grip of his arms. He bent low over me, and sobbed against the cold skin of my face.

I wanted only to get away, to get as far away as possible and never come back. I wanted desperately to see my mother, yet I felt I could not enter the house, not ever again. Then my mother opened the front door and stood there in the doorway, her slight body shivering. Grandfather released me, straightened, became again the carved face I had seen when I approached the house.⁴⁹

It is Vanessa's journey in relationship to her grandfather, the transformation from hatred and fear to love and admiration, and, finally, a recognition of himself in her which marks the transition into maturity, the mature understanding of life which she achieves at novel's end. The glimpse into the man behind the mask ultimately proves therapeutic for Vanessa for it reveals his humanity:

Many years later, when Manawaka was far away from me, in miles and in time, I saw one day in a museum the Bear Mask of the Haida Indians. It was a weird mask. The features were ugly and yet powerful. The mouth was turned down in an expression of sullen rage. The eyes were empty caverns, revealing nothing. Yet as I looked, they seemed to draw my own eyes towards them, until I imagined I could see somewhere within that darkness, a look which I knew, a lurking bewilderment. I remembered then that in the days before it became a museum piece, the mask had concealed a man.⁵⁰

The recognition and acceptance of the grandfather, the knowledge of what he was, is the journey that Vanessa in her initiation towards adulthood undergoes, along with her glimpses into the pain of life and the burgeoning sense of the hidden layers. Vanessa finally comes to understand something of the old man, finally comes to love the old man, to respect his strength because it was strong-willedness which was responsible for the survival and prosperity of her immediate ancestors, most of whom had to depend on Grandfather Connor's strength if they had none of their own. These qualities of perseverance and

determination she can admire in retrospect even if she did not appreciate them as a child. In her earlier life Vanessa's mother could urge her towards "the sound of the singing" which was Uncle Dan's, away from the contrastingly gloomy presence of Grandfather Connor, and she would flee joyfully. But Uncle Dan possessed none of her grandfather's fortitude and determination which she has come to value and admire. Her ultimate release is a relaxation of the inner struggle against her grandfather and is echoed in her final statement: "I had feared and fought the old man, yet he proclaimed himself in my veins."⁵¹

It is a refrain of Aunt Edna's earlier recognition of the Connor bloodline in Vanessa, and of whose nature her own most closely resembles: " 'Not one of us could go any other way. And what's more, for all you're always saying Vanessa takes after Ewen, you know who she really takes after.' "⁵²

The title and central symbol of the collection of stories, a bird in the house, is an image of Vanessa herself. Like the bird, Vanessa manages to escape; she leaves Manawaka for the big city to pursue her education, thus fulfilling a dream which, by rights, should have belonged to her mother as well. She is fully-integrated into society and the world, by novel's end—a forty-year-old mature woman and mother looking back on her adolescence in the Connor home.

All initiates do not achieve decisive initiation, especially in modern fiction because of the complexity and variety of pressures they must confront. A good number of them achieve only an uncompleted initiation. This section deals with protagonists who have crossed the threshold of initiation but are still involved in the battle for certainty. They have achieved uncompleted initiation. Isaac Sequeira defines uncompleted initiation:

They gain a knowledge of themselves, of the nature of evil and the complexities of life in the adult world. But they cannot quite bring themselves to accept adult society in toto...having crossed the threshold of initiation they are not quite sure in which direction to proceed. Until they accept adult society, bridge the generation gap and integrate with society they cannot be decisively initiated. However, since they have been fairly successful in their quest for identity, and since they realize that they can exist and grow only in the social milieu they end up making compromises and adjustments. So there is always hope for a decisive initiation in the future and that is why it is called uncompleted.⁵³

Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams in the course of his journey or individuation process, experiences a lengthy and painful apprenticeship, the ultimate goal of which is to discover his real identity and be initiated. Nick Adams' initiation, however, isn't decisive or final. He doesn't quite discover a fully viable means of confronting adult responsibilities. He is somewhat like the hero of A Farewell To Arms, Lt. Frederick Henry. He forges

a separate peace with respect to the war and he manages a half-in and half-out existence in society. Nick Adams' initiation, therefore, falls into the category of uncompleted initiation.

In "Indian Camp," the first story on Nick's initiation journey, he witnesses the painful birth of an Indian child and the suicide of the father who cannot bear to hear his wife's labor screams. This exposure to the pain and harsh realities of existence augurs well for Nick's initiation, but his incomprehension and dismissal of the Indian father's death militates against the complete understanding of the fact of death that is necessary for decisive initiation.

In the second story, "The Doctor And The Doctor's Wife," Nick's confidence in his parents is shaken. He experiences the strife in his parents' marriage, and he witnesses the humiliation of his father both by the half-breed, Dick Boulton, who accuses him of stealing logs from the lumber company which float abandoned on the river, and by his mother who accuses the father of being responsible for the quarrel with Boulton.

In "Ten Indians," the next story, Nick gets his sexual initiation, and his first disappointment in love. "The End Of Something" and the one that follows, "The Three Day Blow," deal with Nick's short-lived puppy love-affair with Marjorie, and his introduction to alcohol, both stages of growing up. In "The Three Day Blow" Nick tells his friend Bill that "all of a sudden everything was over. I don't know why it was. I couldn't help it. Just like when the three day blows come now and rip all the leaves off the trees."⁵⁴

In the next three stories, "The Battler," "The Killers,"

and "The Light Of The World," we see Nick away from home on his initiation journey, facing the complexities of the world on his own. "The Killers" marks an important stage in Nick's initiation. He is faced with an existential choice—whether to become involved with life, the humanity around him, or to stay out, remain isolated. His dilemma is whether he should go and warn Anderson, the marked man, the intended victim of the hired killers he encounters in the roadside café, or to forget about it. He makes the decision to go and warn Anderson. It is a step, as it turns out, toward initiation. The experience also lends him insight into the complexity of the problem of life. It forcefully demonstrates to him the limitations of human strength and intelligence in dealing with the problem. He learns that even if the problem admits a solution, the solution is severely limited and circumscribed by the human propensity for violence and evil. All these are important lessons in Nick's education and maturation process. The prizefighter, Ole Anderson, on being informed by Nick of the killers' intentions, quietly thanks him and then turns his head to the blank wall of his room passively awaiting the killers' arrival. He's through with all the running around. He knows that it's not going to do any good. Nick goes back to the waiter, George, at the restaurant and tells him that he's going to leave town: " 'I can't stand to think about him waiting in his room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful.' "55

In "In Another Country" and the stories immediately following it, dealing with Nick's war experience, we see a Nick who has been hardened considerably. The experience of war

has been a severe test of his sanity and physical strength. In "Now I Lay Me" he is suffering the effects of shell shock and it has drawn him almost to the verge of insanity. He cannot sleep at night because he is afraid that "if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out my body."⁵⁶ His friends and tutors have given him conflicting advice. He is all alone once again, faced with several existential choices: whether to get out of the war or not, whether to get married or not. His loneliness and isolation are stages in the process of initiation, which is supposed to lead ultimately to integration in society. In "A Way You'll Never Be" Nick shows a sense of self-awareness at this stage in his maturation, an important part of initiation. It is leading to an important piece of knowledge about himself—he is not cut out for war. He had had an inkling of this fact about himself once before on the battlefield: " 'Senta Rinaldi, Senta. You and me we've made a separate peace...we not patriots.' "⁵⁷

The stories that follow concern Nick's road to recovery. In "Cross-Country Snow" we see him on a skiing vacation in the Alps, away from the turmoil of war. In between making his separate peace in Italy and coming to Switzerland he has gotten married to a girl named Helen, and is even expecting to be a father soon.

In "Big Two-Hearted River, Part One" and "Big Two-Hearted River, Part Two" we see Nick back from the war trying to recover from the psychic wounds which it has inflicted. He goes fishing in the river. For Nick, the river represents what the Mississippi represented to Huck Finn in Mark Twain's famous book about initiation. The life on the river was the epitome of the good

life for Huck. It represented freedom from the "sivilizing" influence of Aunt Sally, safety from his drunken father, and fraternity with his new-found father and friend, Jim, the runaway slave. It was the life of the "sound heart." Life on the banks, on the other hand, was rife with corruption and decadence. It was the life of the "deformed conscience." In the same fashion the river represents, for Nick, the life of the "sound heart"—a life of peace and tranquility. Life on the burned over banks, however, is a horrible reminder of the experiences of war he is so desperately trying to forget.

"Big Two-Hearted River" possesses two levels. On the surface level nothing much happens except the ritual of fishing in the river. But on the deeper level, the story is an account of Nick's descent or "night journey" into the self.

Nick in order to be completely cured and decisively initiated must take this night journey of self-exploration and self-recognition to come to terms with his war trauma, his "id" or "Jungian self." Initiation for Nick rests in temporary reversion and achieved self-knowledge—in a Jungian exploratory descent into the primitive sources of being. Nick, however, does not make the total or complete night journey into the heart of darkness, which was for Marlowe in Joseph Conrad's novel such a decisive initiation, because he shies away from fishing in the swamp. Nick consciously stays away from the one deep spot where the river narrows and goes into a swamp:

[He] did not want to go in there now. He felt a reaction against deep wading with the water deepening up under his armpits, to hook big trout in places impossible to land

them. In the swamp the banks were bare, the big cedars came together overhead, the sun did not come through, except in patches; in the fast deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. He did not want to go down the stream any further today.⁵⁸

He, therefore, does not come to terms with his trauma or totally confront the entity within the self. He seems, therefore, to be risking uncompleted initiation. Hope remains nevertheless in the notion that he will return someday to fish again: "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp."⁵⁹

In the last story in the Nick Adams saga, "Fathers And Sons," we see Nick in relationship to his father and to his son. Like his refusal to fish in the swamp, Nick's refusal to visit his father's grave represents a denial of the completion of the exploratory descent into self. He, once again, refuses to fish in the psychic swamp of his being. As a result, it renders his initiation incomplete, like the relationship with his father and with his son. Nick has crossed the difficult path of initiation but he fails to take the final small step ensuring his total integration into society, his complete acceptance of the fatherhood role, in short, his decisive initiation.

Returning to that great novel of initiation, The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn, we find this similarity between Huck and Nick—both achieve only an uncompleted initiation. Huck because he lights out for the territory ahead to escape society, and

Nick because of his refusal to make the exploratory descent into self and be truly integrated with society, achieve only uncompleted initiations. Until Nick comes to terms with his inner self he will not be completely initiated. And he will not be able to perform his true duties as father towards his son. There is a possibility, however, that he will be decisively initiated since he has fulfilled all the conditions of initiation except the last.

Truman Capote's The Grass Harp is another example of an uncompleted initiation. As in most initiation stories, the themes of the novel are the loss of innocence and the search for identity, love and freedom. Adjustments and compromises on this journey, however, are inevitable, since the protagonists seek these goals within the social framework. The novel deals with how these compromises are achieved and how the protagonists are initiated in the process.

The Grass Harp is a short novel dealing with the initiations of sixteen-year-old Collin Fenwick and sixty-year-old Dolly Talbo. Collin Fenwick learns the power of love from his cousin Dolly who is unwittingly his tutor. Tutor and pupil learn together in the matter of learning about the brutality and evil in the world. They learn about evil and cruelty during their period of asylum in the Chinaberry tree. The treehouse where they seek refuge together symbolizes a life of love and understanding against the cruel money-grubbing world, just as the raft in The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn symbolized the idyllic life of warmth and fellow feeling as opposed to the life of corruption and cruelty on the banks. The code of the

tree has a lot in common with the code of the raft. Both stand for a sense of solidarity and belonging, away from the cruel world. The tree and the raft are symbols of freedom. The occupants defy society for a few days during which Collin learns many important lessons that prove of great value to his initiation. He learns the power of love from Dolly's great compassion. The encounter with the harsh world even while they were in the Chinaberry tree has taught Dolly, as it had taught Collin, that evil exists in the world: "Regretfully she gazed at me. 'It's better you know it now, Collin; you shouldn't have to wait until you're old as I am: the world is a bad place.' "60

Dolly falls ill and dies of a stroke a few days later, after descending from the chinaberry tree. Her last lesson is once again about love:

"Carlie said that love is a chain of love. I hope you listened and understood him. Because when you can love one thing," she held the blue egg as preciously as the Judge had held a leaf, "you can love another, and that is owning, that is something to live with. You can forgive everything"61

Collin's stint in the Chinaberry tree has resulted in a loss of innocence, in an understanding of the power and permanence of love, and in an insight into himself. One of Collin's most important discoveries is that he still has a long way to go. From tentative initiation Collin has gone to uncompleted initiation. He has understood the wonder of love,

the existence of evil and the cruelty of the world. All that remains is for him to familiarize himself thoroughly with himself, get to know his weaknesses and strengths so that he will be able to say like Dolly did, "I am myself." Collin has achieved uncompleted initiation at the end of the story. But there is hope for a decisive initiation in the future since up till then his initiation has followed the right track. Collin has not rejected society, the world. Collin has enjoyed his taste of freedom in the Chinaberry tree. But he understands that he can't spend the rest of his days in the treehouse. He has made some compromises with necessity and society, in other words. He finds himself and the world around him. Collin Fenwick accepts the wider horizons of society instead of withdrawing into the narrow world of the self.

This section deals with protagonists who achieve tentative initiation. A large number of initiates, indeed, a larger number than that of decisive initiates, come up to the threshold of initiation and maturity but are not quite able to cross it. That is to say, they stop at tentative initiation. Isaac Sequeira defines tentative initiation in the following manner:

Many problems concerning themselves, the world, and society remain unresolved. The emphasis, however, is on experience. They are exposed to many shocks and learn about the existence of evil which in turn results in a loss of innocence. Tentative initiation is the first step in the process of maturation that starts the initiate moving from illusion towards reality. The

rosy, hopeful notions about the well constructed world and the order in society that the child is used to, give way to doubts and questions.⁶²

The Member Of The Wedding by Carson McCullers is the study of the initiation of a female protagonist, the adolescent Frankie Addams. Frankie Addams achieves only a tentative initiation. She makes a desperate attempt to belong to something, to become a member of some larger group because she suffers from a deep sense of loneliness. Her lack of understanding of the complexity of relationships in the adult world, finally, however, renders her initiation only tentative.

Frankie's feelings of alienation are presented in the very first page of the novel. It is the problem she is confronted with in her troubled adolescence:

It happened that green and crazy summer when Frankie was twelve years old. This was the summer when for a long time she had not been a member. She belonged to no club and was a member of nothing in the world. Frankie had become an unjoined person who hung around in doorways, and she was afraid.⁶³

Frankie for the first time in her life is aware of the problem of isolation. Frankie is faced with adolescent insecurity and loneliness. On the threshold of puberty the twelve-year-old Frankie is also on the threshold of initiation. The passage also represents a very accurate statement of her tentative initiation. Frankie remains at this stage at the end of the

novel, and this is her real problem. She achieves neither adult maturity nor remains immature like a child. She stays an "unjoined person," neither in or out. Frankie in her desperate effort to become a member of something has selected the wrong thing. She has chosen to become a member of someone else's wedding—her brother's. Frankie has learned a lot about the world and about herself, but not enough for either an uncompleted or a decisive initiation. In the meantime some changes have occurred. Frankie is older, for example. She has had a brief insight into the complexities of the world; and she has adopted a sophisticated name at the end of the story, signifying the transition.

In scaling the ladder of initiation she has halted at the penultimate rung. Like the last note ("do") of the song which she listens to, it is just outside her reach at the moment. There is hope that with time, however, she will become an initiated adult and strike the final note, finish the scale and chord. Her middling status between adulthood and childhood is suggested by her singing voice which slides between Berenice's low contralto and John Henry's high treble. Their voices represent the experience of adulthood and the innocence of childhood, respectively. Frankie remains in the middle register:

John Henry sang in a high wailing voice, and no matter what he named his tune, it sounded always just the same: one high trembling note that hung like a musical ceiling over the rest of the song. Berenice's voice was dark and definite and deep, and she rapped the offbeats with her heel. The old Frankie sang up and down the middle space

between John Henry and Berenice...⁶⁴

Her tentative initiation is also suggested by the dream she experiences. When Frankie goes to have her fortune told at the end of the story, she tells the fortune teller, Big Mama, of the dream she has had: " 'I dreamed there was a door...I was looking at it and while I watched, it began slowly to open. And it made me feel funny and I woke up.' "⁶⁵ The door, of course, is the door between adolescence and maturity. Frankie, however, doesn't know what the door is, where it is opening into, where it will lead her. That her complete initiation is interrupted, stalled, is signified by the fact that while the door beckons, Frankie wakes up before she can pass through it.

Frankie, the initiate, goes through a sexual initiation, though it is less complete than one might expect—like her overall initiation, tentative at best. Her knowledge of sex increases very gradually, and it arises not from one experience of sexual intercourse. Her first awareness of sex comes through the "nasty lies" which the other girls tell about married people. Then Frankie experiences a definite loss of innocence when in the neighbors' garage she commits "a secret and unknown sin" with an older boy, Barney MacKean: "they committed a queer sin, and how bad it was she did not know. The sin made a shrivelling sickness in her stomach, and she dreaded the eyes of everyone. She hated Barney MacKean and wanted to kill him."⁶⁶

Her next sexual confrontation is witnessing the sexual intercourse of a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Marlowe. She comes across them in the front room of her home, engaging in the sex

act. She doesn't quite comprehend what she witnesses, however. Frankie thinks that the tenant, Mr. Marlowe, is having a fit. When she asks the negro maid, Berenice, about it, the maid responds with vague statements. Frankie, perceptive as she is, however, realizes that there was more to it than she was told.

Her fourth contact with sex is more serious and violent. She dresses up and goes on a date with a young soldier. The soldier drunkenly attempts to seduce her in a hotel room. Frankie, however, hits him over the head with a water pitcher before anything is done to her. Then she runs away home, shaken by the experience which awakens but does not yet crystallize her awareness of sex:

...there slanted across her mind twisted remembrances of a common fit in the front room, basement remarks, and nasty Barney; but she did not let these separate glimpses fall together, and the word she repeated was 'crazy'.⁶⁷

Frankie puts all the pieces together only after the fiasco at her brother's wedding, when she decides to run away from home:

...she recalled the silence in the hotel room; and all at once a fit in the front room, the silence, the nasty talk behind the garage—these separate recollections fell together in the darkness of her mind, as shifting searchlights meet in night sky upon an aeroplane, so that in a flash there came in her an understanding. There was a feeling of cold surprise.⁶⁸

The initiation of Frankie Addams which, of course, includes her learning about sex, proceeds in three separate stages. The first stage of her initiation begins when she is twelve years old. Frankie is lonely. She is acutely aware of the fact that she belongs to nothing, is "a member of nothing in the world." All the other children in the neighborhood don't want to play with her. She is not accepted into their clubhouse. Her physical appearance stresses the alienation from her peers. Frankie is tall and gangling; her very height separates her from the rest. She is too young for the older group and too big for her own group. In addition, she is tomboyish. Her very name, Frankie, suggests her tomboyish, androgynous status. Frankie perceives her own freakishness. In the midst of a—for her—grotesque adolescence she is mortified by thoughts which liken her to the freaks she has seen at the fair and by comments from her father such as "who is this great big long-legged twelve-year-old blunderbuss who still wants to sleep with her old Papa?"⁶⁹ one night as she and her father are going to bed. She is accepted neither by the young nor by the old and this makes Frankie lonely and frustrated.

The second stage of Frankie's initiation deals with her desperate efforts to overcome this loneliness. The method she devises is to perceive all sorts of imaginary associations with the larger group of humanity. It is a satisfying and quick means of ending her isolation:

She wanted to donate a quart a week and her blood would be in the veins of Australians and Fighting French and

Chinese, all over the whole world, and it would be as though she were close kin to all of these people. She could hear the army doctors saying that the blood of Frankie Addams was the reddest and strongest blood that they had ever known.⁷⁰

These fantasies of kinship and connections, all methods of discovering quick solutions to her own sense of isolation, are finally focused on one central delusion, fantasy or solution—one which turns out to be the wrong solution to the problem of her isolation—her membership in her brother's wedding. Frankie mentally includes herself in Jarvis's and his fiancée, Janis's, forthcoming wedding and falls in love with the notion or idea of the wedding. She discovers that they are "the we of me." It is a kind of epiphany for her. Frankie in her own mind, through the membership, is transformed from an I-person to a we-person. Her brother and his fiancée are the only "we of me" she recognizes. In this Frankie is mistaken. To strengthen the association with her brother and his fiancée she changes her name to F. Jasmine. Her new name, like those of Janis and Jarvis, begins with the letters "Ja" and the relationship with those names is why she has consciously chosen it. The initials of her new name, Jasmine Addams, are also "JA" (which is also the German word for "yes"—Frankie, unconsciously, has chosen a word of affirmation in her new identity).

Once she includes herself as a member of the wedding the sense of isolation is replaced by a great sense of belonging: "Because of the wedding, F. Jasmine felt connected with all she saw, and it was as a sudden member that on this Saturday she

went around the town."⁷¹ Her sense of isolation shrinks and her heart expands in this new euphoria. She sees herself as a member of the whole world and her love spreads over everyone:

"We will just walk up to people and know them right away. We will be walking down a dark road and see a lighted house and knock on the door and strangers will rush to meet us and say: Come in! Come in! We will know decorated aviators and New York people and movie stars. We will have thousands of friends, thousands and thousands and thousands of friends. We will belong to so many clubs that we can't even keep track of all of them. We will be members of the whole world. Boyoman! Manoboy!"⁷²

The new knowledge also makes her certain of her identity, temporarily ending the pain, frustration and terrible fear of adolescence, and gives her a new sense of certainty of direction:

At last she knew just who she was and understood where she was going. She loved her brother and the bride and she was a member of the wedding. The three of them would go into the world and they would always be together. And finally, after the scared spring and the crazy summer, she was no more afraid.⁷³

The third stage of her initiation is the breakdown of these illusions, the disillusionment of the wedding. Her brother's wedding at Winter Hill turns into a nightmare for Frankie. She had thought that she would accompany the wedding couple on their honeymoon, that she would walk down the aisle between them. At the wedding, however, everyone treats her like a child

instead of the sophisticated and demure adult she imagines herself to be. In addition, to add insult to injury, at the crucial moment when the wedding couple drives off after the ceremony F. Jasmine Addams, the sophisticated and demure ingénue, is dragged away kicking and screaming. She is, furthermore, verbally reprimanded in front of the wedding guests. Frankie, faced with the extreme disappointment, tearfully begs to be taken along. No one pays any attention to her. Her sense of disappointment and sorrow are overwhelming as she watches her brother's car drive off. Frankie wants the whole world to die. She is nasty and insulting to everyone on the bus journey back from Winter Hill. It is at this point, when they return home, that Frankie decides to run away from home. Her efforts are unsuccessful, however. She has no inkling of where to go and what to do. It is an unmistakable sign of the tentativeness of her initiation. The insecurity and fear that had befallen her in the past few months return and she admits to herself that she is "too scared to go into the world alone."⁷⁴

It is a measure of Frankie's initiation that she has realized the inadequacy of her plans for membership in the world. In the end she realizes that there are no quick and easy answers to the problems that confront her. Frankie realizes that the complex problem of isolation and entry into the adult world requires a more complex and viable solution than the one she has formulated. She consolidates her tentative initiation, however. She accepts her own given name, Frances, and in the process adopts a more realistic and adult attitude to the problem of

identity. She has developed maturation in taste and speech; and she has found a new friend, Mary Littlejohn, with whom she can share her feelings and thoughts and plans for the future. Frances, however, refuses to accept the total experience or effects of John Henry's death. She almost forgets John Henry and his painful death because she refuses to associate the word "suffer" with John Henry, and because suffer "is a word she shrank from as before an unknown hollow darkness of the heart"⁷⁵—an obvious rejection of the process that would result in a deeper knowledge of experience and of self. Frances recognizes the limitations of her methods of integrating into adult society, resolves her frustrations and tries out newer ways of coming to terms with the adult world, and moves slowly in the direction of decisive initiation in the future.

The Catcher In The Rye by J.D. Salinger is a novel about an adolescent's search for his own identity in an adult world he doesn't appreciate or understand. Holden Caulfield, the adolescent protagonist, undergoes a painful initiation process. The process becomes a battle between the self and adult culture. It results in a mild case of neurosis in the protagonist. So hard does Holden find it to accept adult mores and behaviour that the process ends in a nervous breakdown.

It is Holden's notion that the whole adult world is "phony." So disgusted is he by adult phoniness that he rejects the notion of his own growth into adulthood—at least for the present. Holden is confused and troubled by what he perceives as the deviousness, complexity, and lack of genuine love in adult society. "I could puke" is his constant refrain. His

admiration is reserved exclusively for the world of the young, and he seeks escape in a kind of protracted childhood. Kids or adults influenced by kids are highest on the list of people he admires: Allie, the younger brother who died of leukemia; James Castle, the boy at the academy who jumped from a window, preferring death to reneging on some comments he had made; and Phoebe, his kid sister. It is Phoebe, ultimately, who will save Holden, keep him from running away from home and from society, even effect a cure for his neurosis. His admiration of children is so deep that Holden adopts the fantasy of becoming a catcher in the rye, preventing the children from falling over the edge of some crazy cliff. It is his one ambition in life—his answer to the persistent, nagging adult question of "what do you want to be when you grow up?" It is representative of the kind of illusion into which Holden escapes, and which is responsible for his imperfect tentative initiation. Holden becomes pretty run down in his efforts to reconcile harsh reality and illusion. He undergoes a painful transition between the adolescent's world of illusion and adult adjustment to reality, or conformity.

Part of Holden's problem is his hypersensitivity. He constantly worries about what happens to the ducks in Central Park in the winter when the pond freezes. And what about the fish—are they frozen beneath the lake or do they live and swim in the underlayer of water? The taxi driver he asks cannot provide him with adequate answers; indeed, he is irritated by the adolescent's questions. Holden comes to the conclusion that these concerns and interests are not shared by the adult world

which is inured and immune to love and feeling in his mind.

There are many other indications of his hypersensitivity and boundless compassion. Holden identifies with and feels sorry for nearly everyone he encounters. He even feels pity for obvious antagonists who bring him pain and grief. He feels sorry for Ackley, his sloppy roommate, both because of and in spite of Ackley's disregard for personal hygiene. He feels sorry for old Spencer, the teacher he visits before leaving Pencey, who is forced to flunk him because of the poor job he has done on his exam. He feels sorry for the two nuns he meets on the train who are obviously kind but poor. Because of his guilt over being able to afford a large meal while they eat a spartan breakfast, and because he has an expensive suitcase while they carry the cheapest kind of suitcases, he contributes ten dollars to them. He feels sorry for all the girls he meets: Sally Hayes, even though she is the queen of the phonies; Jane Gallagher, who in checkers always keeps her kings in the back row; the three girls he meets in a New York bar, secretaries out for a night of romantic adventure who lead obviously deprived lives; and Sunny, the young prostitute who extorts ten dollars from him with the help of her pimp-elevator boy, Maurice.

The statement which Holden makes to the reader or to the psychoanalyst at the end of the book indicates this compassion for everyone which Holden possesses:

About all I know is, I sort of miss everybody I told about. Even old Stradlater and Ackley, for instance. I

think I even miss that goddam Maurice. It's funny. Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do you start missing everybody.⁷⁶

His compassion for everyone doesn't dull his hyper-awareness of phoniness and falsity, however. He is one of the greatest detectors of phoniness in modern fiction. Holden sees phoniness all around him. Furthermore, the fact that phony adultism is all that he can look forward to when he grows up and becomes initiated drives him crazy. The cast of phonies is an extensive one. At Pencey there is Old Thurmer, the headmaster, who solemnly believes the lies of the school advertisement about molding boys into splendid clear-thinking young men; Ossenburger, the rich undertaker, who in a school speech asked the boys to talk to Jesus when they prayed; and Stradlater, the vain, secret slob who borrows Holden's hound's-tooth jacket and manœuvres Holden into doing his homework for him. In the world outside Pencey there is Sally Hayes, the queen of phonies; Lillian Simmons, his older brother's friend who is interested in Holden merely because he is D.B.'s brother; Carl Luce, a sexually proficient friend who has been aided to a proper psychological adjustment by his father; and a whole list of other society phonies and double-dealers. Also included is D.B. who Holden believes has sold out in his own way. Holden thinks of D.B. as a good writer who has prostituted his talents to Hollywood. He dislikes movies, night clubs, and adult pretentions. He is critical of the black piano player, Ernie, whom he accuses of false humility and phony cordiality. He is critical of the

Lunts who seem too smooth and professional, in the movies anyway. He sees through the pretentiousness and sham of the Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall. He is suspicious of people who cry a lot at the movies. He recalls an incident with a woman who refused to take her little boy to the bathroom because she was too busy crying over the sentimental movie:

She was about as kindhearted as a goddam wolf. You take somebody that cries their goddam eyes over phony stuff in the movies, and nine times out of ten they're mean bastards at heart. I'm not kidding.^{??}

His hypersensitivity isolates him from the adult world and also from his own age group. As an adolescent he finds it impossible to communicate with the phony adults, and as a sensitive adolescent he just cannot get through to his own peers. It is the communication with and the understanding of the people around him which in Holden's case does not come. He realizes that when people do communicate they use hollow epitaphs like "Good luck," "Glad to meet you," "Grand," etc. The pervasive non-communication begins to get to him, too. He grows disillusioned and isolated.

The isolation leads him into strange fantasies. As a result of his disillusionment the very positive catcher fantasy gives way to a very negative deaf-mute fantasy—he thinks he'd like to be a deaf-mute—from which Phoebe eventually saves him. In addition to these two fantasies, he has a strange kind of fantasy where he imagines himself shot in the stomach by Maurice,

the pimp in the New York hotel. This fantasy repeats itself in the bar when he meets Carl Luce. Holden's fantasies interfere with his initiation into manhood. They interfere with his acceptance of adult realities and are sometimes used as an escape mechanism. However, Holden in other respects is quite able to face the truth about himself and things. He calls himself a crazy bastard a number of times. He also admits that he is an incorrigible liar. There isn't any attempt to gloss over the impalatable facts about himself or about others.

This ability to face facts is very useful to Holden and is one of the contributing factors to his achievement of a tentative initiation despite his nervous breakdown. Holden perceives that he is pretty hardboiled in his fantasies and reveries, but that he is terribly immature in dealing with practical situations. He recognizes the phoniness and limitations of the people around him and, at the same time, he recognizes his own shortcomings and limitations. He realizes that there are many things he does not understand—the ducks in Central Park, adult society, the world and himself. This itself is a very valuable initiatory insight about himself. Though he knows quite a bit about sex, for example, he is still not sexually initiated. He remains a virgin, not only because he can't force himself to take advantage of girls but because he doesn't quite understand sex: "Sex is something I really don't understand too hot. You never know where the hell you are. I keep making up these sex rules for myself, and then I break them right away."⁷⁸

The unresolved questions about life and the world, the

tensions and insecurity of adolescence, the phoniness of adults and the lack of understanding about himself, finally, lead Holden to the hospital and psychiatric treatment. The tutors he has had have proven unequal to the task of properly educating and initiating him. Old Spencer, all the while smelling of Vicks Nose Drops and picking his nose, tells him that "life is a game played according to the rules." Holden feels some sentiment for the old professor, but as a representative of the older generation he lacks vitality, the mere werewithal to toss an exam paper onto a bed a few inches away, and so he must be rejected. Of the two tutors Antolini is less of a failure. Despite the fact that his own married life isn't a success, that he is a near-alcoholic and may even be homosexual (he makes what Holden interprets as a homosexual pass while Holden lies sleeping on the couch in his apartment) he is one of the very few adults that Holden can communicate with and talk to on an equal level. And, for what it is worth, he passes on to Holden a significant insight: "The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one." "79

That Holden is initiated at all may or may not be due to this insight (it may be responsible for counteracting Holden's strong death wish). It is certainly due to the redeeming effect that Phoebe has on him. It is Phoebe who forces him to relinquish the notion of running away from home and adulthood by insisting on going along with him when he decides to run away. It is Phoebe who leads him to the realization that communication in

the world is possible, through her innocence and intuitive capacity for love. Phoebe is instrumental in curing Holden of his neurosis. It is because of her that he decides to go back home and seek psychiatric treatment.

Phoebe's ride in the carousel is a symbol of the circular activity of life, of the principle of dynamic movement in a static motionlessness, and of security and changlessness because of the same music being played always.⁸⁰ It is also an epiphany and moving experience for Holden. He realizes that he is both child and adult. And he realizes that he has the responsibility of protecting his younger sister, the one human being he loves and understands: "I felt so damn happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going around and around. I was damn near bawling. I felt so happy, if you want to know the truth."⁸¹

Nevertheless, one cannot say that Holden achieves more than a tentative initiation, because the story ends with Holden in a California hospital under psychiatric treatment. However, there are indications that he is on the road to recovery. An encouraging sign is the fact that he has submitted to psychiatric care. He has not made a commitment to the future or to his own adulthood. He has not formulated a plan of action. His tentative initiation is underlined by his comment, "I mean how do you know what you're going to do until you do it?"⁸² And he has yet learned to embrace and accept other adults, human beings, as he loves and accepts Phoebe. But there is hope for his decisive initiation in the future, since he ends his story on the level of a broad

compassion for all the people he has mentioned and encountered.

The initiation which the protagonist in my novel, Sparrows In October, undergoes is a decisive initiation. The initiate, Louis Warren, pursues an initiation process that leads him past the threshold of initiation and maturity, mature understanding, and at the end of the story he is definitely embarked towards adulthood. There is no struggle for certainty still in progress in his case, which would render his initiation an uncompleted initiation. And he definitely goes beyond mere arrival at the threshold of initiation and maturity, which would render his case a tentative initiation. In the process he achieves greater self-knowledge, new knowledge of the world, and knowledge of the nature of evil. He achieves these insights in the confrontation with the experience and loss of love, and the confrontation with death. The new knowledge of the world he achieves is that it is a complex place, more complex than he had thought, that there are hidden layers of meaning in existence, and that the rightful order in which he'd believed no longer seems to exist. He has relied on a simple faith or vision of the world. He has believed in the benevolent forces of the universe, in Providence. The experience of the loss of love and the death of his beloved shows him differently. There is a transformation in his vision of the world as a result. It becomes a less-ordered or meaningful place for him—a place that is characterized by the askew nature of life, relationships. The world becomes a nihilistic environment, totally without balance or perceivable meaning. Rather than feeling totally alienated in this new environment, he recognizes

it for what it is and tries to make an adjustment. His alienation has derived from the shocking experiences of loss of love and death, and he finds new accommodation with the new perception of the world. He has been frightened, shown his own terrible vulnerability by these experiences (especially in the course of the love relationship), but the fear which existed in him—an adolescent's fear (of the unknown, of the frightening nature of new experience, shock, discovery)—dissipates and no longer exists once he has achieved mature understanding or status. The world loses its frightening aspect even though his new vision of it is that of a more unpatterned, disconnected world than he believed. He adopts a realistic attitude towards existence, the world, in other words.

The new knowledge he obtains about himself is that he learns about his own weaknesses and strengths, and he learns that he can survive whatever life has to offer. He also learns about the subtleties of his own self-deceptions, about the discrepancy between illusion and reality. He learns about himself in relationship to other human beings. In the course of the love relationship with the young teacher he learns about the complexity of relationships. And he learns about the complexity of relationships in the adult world. He learns that adult love relationships are sometimes based on compromise and necessity, on the various demands of harsh existence, and that they sometimes defy comprehension and understanding. He learns that the illusions which he has held are not viable modes or patterns of existence in real life. He discovers new feelings as well. He learns about heterosexual love, makes the transition between homosexual self-perceptions to love

for a woman. He learns the secrets or ins-and-outs of male-female relationships and is engaged in the experience of first love—a learning process that will hopefully lead him towards a more stable and mature relationship in the future. The new knowledge of himself in confrontation with life also tells him that he is stronger than he believes. He faces the experience of living with a sudden awareness of his extreme vulnerability after a period when he thought he had overcome his susceptibility to emotional unbalance, and he realizes that his former stability had only been temporary. The new change in him, the new balance and maturity at the end of the novel, is, on the other hand, likely to have permanent effects. He, in essence, undergoes a change in behaviour and character. He becomes another being, as it were—an older, more wizened being who will not forget and who has been transformed by the effects of his experiences. He is more certain of his identity in relationship to society, and more perceptive about the conditions of the world, the nature of existence—has lost his innocence.

He has learned new knowledge of the nature of evil. Evil has revealed itself to him in terms of the destruction or breakdown of innocent illusions and in the awareness of the non-existence of a rightful order or pattern. He has learned that love and good does not always emerge triumphant, that good and evil exist in the world and that evil often predominates or triumphs over good. The evil is apparent in the malevolent or meaningless forces which seemingly rule the universe. The death of **his** beloved, the loss of love in the love relationship

with the teacher, are evidence of the existence of these meaningless or malevolent forces, and he realizes that his life has been significantly altered by the sudden interruption or hand of these malevolent forces which could just as easily have been benevolent forces that would have pointed the love relationship in another direction or not have caused his beloved's death.

The loss of innocence forms an important part of the initiation process and it indicates that initiation has occurred. Louis Warren is by no means an adolescent in years. Physically, he has passed beyond the adolescent stage. But he nevertheless possesses an innocence which likens him to an adolescent. He, like Margaret Laurence's Rachel Cameron and Saul Bellow's Moses Herzog, does not achieve emotional maturity till he has passed the period of physical adolescence—which is usually limited to the ages between ten and twenty-four. The loss of innocence is completed mainly through the two major crises in his young life—the confrontation with death (the death of his beloved) and the loss of love. The loss of innocence represents a fall. It is a fall through knowledge—akin to the fall of Adam and his loss of Edenic innocence. That Louis Warren falls from his innocent status can be perceived from the innocent near-adolescent who begins the story to the serious, experienced, mature, responsible near-adult who emerges at the end of the novel. He has undergone in the process a baptism of fire (not unlike the experience of war). His adolescent-like sensibilities have been attacked and bombarded so that he is like a soldier with shell-shock during the crises, and who emerges with a new sense of the harrowing experience of life, determined to find a new mode of survival

in the world. His loss of innocence is also effected through the burgeoning sense of the hidden layers of life—in the lives of others—which he, in his adolescent illusions, has hitherto not been aware of. He learns that there is much that he did not know, that there is much to learn about life, himself, and other human beings. He becomes initiated in terms of the complexity of adult relationships, and he sheds his adolescent skin, behaviour, and innocence. Innocence no longer defines him as an individual. Naivety, lack of experience have characterized his mode of confrontation with life, experience. From this uninitiated standpoint he has made a number of mistakes, fallen into traps, been wounded. The forceful experiences of adolescent error demand a new approach, a new viable mode of survival. He must dissemble his innocence if he is to gain any sort of confirmation in the world. The innocence cannot serve him in his role of independent adult, cannot be sustained because life teaches him its lessons and a development, progression must result. The sense of innocence grows weaker as the transition into maturity progresses and he loses some of his sensibility in the process—becomes inured or immune to emotional bombardment, shock, turbulence as a necessary survival mechanism. The loss of the sensibility may be mourned, as the loss of innocence is sometimes mourned in young girls and boys by adults, but he develops a different kind of sensibility which is more submerged, sensible, realistically-oriented, and less adolescent in nature. The loss of innocence has meant the loss of emotion to a degree, but the emotional balance, temperance and new outlook that has replaced it may serve him better in

dealing with the adult world, the later stages of experience.

The initiation process is also accompanied by a profound sense of isolation. Louis Warren by nature has felt alienated from the rest of humanity throughout his young life, has felt his separation from mankind very deeply. But in Eileen Fleming and in love he had temporarily found a shrinkage of that sense of alienation and isolation—had found community with another human being and, by extension, the rest of the world. But then his illusions about her are shattered and the isolation becomes extreme. His initiation process has revealed to him the essential spiritual isolation of every human being. He understands that one is born and one dies alone, and that human communication and intimacy is sporadic and tentative at best. From this new awareness, standpoint, he can then search after this human communication and love, knowing that it will not solve the existential loneliness of the individual and able to accept it on its own terms for what it is (for the limited, temporary respite it provides). He has a clearer vision of man's isolation, in other words, and knows that to expect too much—more than what love can actually give—is adolescent and unrealistic. The limits of love in dealing with man's isolation he has accepted and so his sense of isolation is manageable, less problematic, and accommodated by this new adult awareness.

Finally, the maturing process ends in the integration of the protagonist into society. Louis Warren finds his own place in society, assumes an adult, responsible role, takes up or is well on the way to assuming the adult responsibilities of "work,

childbearing and death," as it were. Rather than renouncing society—going off into the wilderness alone like Huck Finn—or leaving his possible entry into society, adulthood uncertain or tentative like Holden Caulfield, he finds his own limited engagement with society, the adult world, adulthood. It remains a limited engagement because of the profound sense of isolation which he still possesses inside himself and because of his generally private nature. But he does assume a role in society, does breach his isolation with the new relationship with a new girl, and is far from heading away out of society. He is ready to face adult life from his new perspective, awareness, albeit with a clear vision, idea of the circumscribed nature of existence. He is integrated into society from the limited terms of engagement which he can bring to it and thus has found his own brand of confirmation in the world. There is hope that the relationship with the young girl may even extend his engagement, activity with the world. The relationship represents a positive step towards fuller confirmation into society. She draws him out of his loneliness and isolation at least sporadically and temporarily by effecting a link with the outside world, an attachment to another human being, to life. The integration of the protagonist into society implies a clearer idea of his own identity, especially in relation to society. This he has achieved through the new awareness of his relationship to other human beings—the awareness he achieves about the spiritual isolation that exists between all men from which he can then, from this new knowledge, enter into relationships with other human beings, humanity. Louis Warren in his initiation has found the viable

mode of confronting adult realities. In his painful maturing process he has gained valuable knowledge about himself and the nature of evil, and the world. The process has been accompanied by a sense of the loss of innocence and a profound sense of isolation. And the maturing process has ended in the integration of the protagonist into adult society. He has achieved decisive initiation.

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