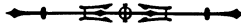


Instructor's Manual
to accompany
The Longman Anthology
of World Literature

SECOND EDITION



VOLUME II

VOLUME D: THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

VOLUME E: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

VOLUME F: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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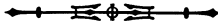
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General Editors' Preface



The tremendous wealth of world literature available today is also a kind of embarrassment of riches: How can we best present this great range of works in class? We've designed the second edition of *The Longman Anthology of World Literature* with this issue constantly in mind, giving teachable groupings and illuminating juxtapositions throughout the *Anthology* and framing compelling texts with introductions and notes that give the context needed for an informed and pleasurable reading. Yet finally it comes down to individual class sessions and the detailed discussion of particular works, and here is where this teaching companion comes in. In this book we suggest fruitful modes of approach, presenting ways to engage students, to foster understanding, and to stimulate lively discussion of all our major texts and groupings of works.

We have set three ambitious goals for ourselves in creating this teaching companion. First, it has been written directly by the editors responsible for each section of the *Anthology*—the use of the *Anthology* in class isn't some afterthought; it's an integral part of our own work on the project. In seeking people to join us on the editorial board, we looked for coeditors who are dynamic and experienced teachers as well as deeply knowledgeable scholars and clear, lively writers. We've seen this teaching companion as the opportunity to share directly with you our best ideas on how to bring these texts alive in class.

To this end, our second goal has been to discuss every major author or combination of authors in the *Anthology*, opening up possible lines of approach, indicating good connections that can be made, and sketching important trends in scholarly debate. Third, we've tried to be suggestive rather than prescriptive, and we hope to inform instructors who are new to some of this material while also intriguing people interested in a fresh take on familiar works. This volume gives us a chance to expand on the reasons behind our choices and to indicate ways that we have found these materials to work best during many years of teaching them.

Teaching with and across Groupings

A distinctive feature of our *Anthology* is the grouping of works in Perspectives section and as Resonances between texts. Together, these groupings are intended both to set works in cultural context and to link them across time and space. These groupings have a strategic pedagogical function as well. We have observed that in other anthologies, brief author listings rarely seem to get taught. Added with the laudable goal of increasing an anthology's range and inclusiveness, the new materials

too often get lost in the shuffle. Our groupings of works cluster shorter selections in ways that make them more likely to be taught, creating a critical mass of readings around a compelling literary or social issue and economically providing cultural context for the major works around them.

We expect that our contextual groupings will be used variously by different people. A Perspectives section can be taught entirely as a freestanding unit, or it can share a week with an important work or major author.

While entire Perspectives sections can be assigned, individual works within them can also be paired with works elsewhere. For example, in Volume E, Walt Whitman can either be taught with the other writers next to him in “Perspectives: The National Poet” or he can be assigned instead with Emily Dickinson and Rubén Darío later in the volume. Darío’s poem “Walt Whitman,” indeed, makes a direct link to work from, whether the two poets are assigned together or in different weeks.

Particularly in the case of our fuller Perspectives sections, like the Enlightenment-era section on “Liberty and Libertines” (Volume D), it can be productive to assign different readings to different members of the class, with students working in teams to explore contrasting viewpoints; these can then be debated in class or presented as written projects. Students interested in exploring Perspectives section issues in greater depth should be alerted to the extensive bibliographies at the end of each volume; Perspectives sections, as well as individual author listings, have bibliographies that can lead students further into the primary sources.

Obviously, the various Perspectives sections and the juxtapositions of works and Resonances are only a few of the many groupings that could be created. We wouldn’t want any student to come away from the course with the misconception that these were the only issues that mattered in the period or culture in question. Rather, these groupings should be seen as exemplary of the *sorts* of literary and cultural debate that were current in a region or an era. Students can be encouraged—individually or in small groups—to research and develop their own perspectival clusters of materials, using as a point of departure some text or some issue that has particularly intrigued them. They could then present their own Perspectives section to the class as a whole or write it up and analyze it as a term project.

On a larger scale, we have followed custom in dividing the *Anthology* according to the broad period divisions that have become ubiquitous in modern literary study, with further division by region in the first three volumes, but there is no reason that a survey course should treat these divisions as sacrosanct. Even within a generally chronological presentation, it can be interesting to have some cross-cutting sessions or weeks, such as an overview of the sonnet, or a section on travel writing, or one on short prose narratives. Such groupings can bring together material from two, three, or more sections and even volumes of the *Anthology*. Courses organized by genre or by theme will mine the *Anthology* for entirely different groupings suited to individual needs. We hope and expect that teachers and students alike will use our tables of contents as a starting point for ongoing explorations and reconfigurations of their own.

Reading the Illustrations

Our hundred black-and-white illustrations and fifty color images are very much conceived as part of the *Anthology's* teachable material, and the extensive captions for the color images and for many of the black-and-white ones are intended to signal effective avenues of approach to them. Many of the images work directly with particular authors or works, but valuable points can be made with images of more general import, including our six cover illustrations. These are teachable images, not mere window dressing, and a detailed caption for each appears at the end of the list of illustrations that follows each volume's table of contents.

Inter-arts comparisons have to be made with care, respecting the differences embodied in different media—differences often of patronage and audience as well as of materials and method. We wouldn't want such comparisons to create simplistic images of "The Medieval Mind" or "Oriental Art." Yet to speak of a culture at all is to recognize that its participants share (and may struggle against) commonalities of history and of worldview, and the varied artistic productions of a given region or era will often show certain family resemblances. Visual art, architecture, and music can be particularly useful in a world literature classroom because they don't have to be experienced in translation (except in the significant but more limited translation of reproduction). Important aesthetic values have often been shared by poets and painters (who at times have even been one and the same person), and these values and strategies can often be seen most directly and vividly in visual arts, while they may be somewhat muted in translation. As we know, too, our students are growing up in a culture that is more visual than verbal, and seeing can help them to then read. For both these reasons, starting from visual art can help sensitize students to what to look for in the literary works of the region and period.

Reading and Listening

An important addition to our *Anthology's* resources is our pair of audio CDs, which can show students how literature has played out in the larger aural culture of its times. As with painting, music can illustrate aspects of a culture's aesthetics, from reconstructed ancient Egyptian and Greek music, to medieval Japanese court music, to Bach and Handel in the Enlightenment and Jelly Roll Morton and Igor Stravinsky in the twentieth century. Equally, our CDs allow students to hear poetry read—or sung—aloud, in the original and in translation, giving direct access to the sounds of a variety of the languages included in the *Anthology* and restoring the aural dimension that great poetry has always had. Our twentieth-century selections include several major poets reading their own work, including T. S. Eliot, Anna Akhmatova, and Pablo Neruda, as well as noted performers and poets reading earlier poetry: Dylan Thomas declaiming a speech by Milton's Satan with evident relish, Adrienne Rich reading a haunting poem by the great Urdu poet Ghalib. A number of our selections also show the kinds of cross-cultural connections found

in many of our *Anthology* texts, as with a gorgeous early Arab Christian hymn of the Byzantine era on the first CD and a Spanish Jewish lullaby recorded in Eastern Europe on the second CD.

Teaching with the Web

Our course Website is designed to enhance teaching in a variety of ways. It provides an interactive timeline, practice quizzes for major authors and periods, and annotated links for our major authors and groupings, giving students guidance in further exploration and research for projects and term papers. We include a glossary of literary and cultural terms and also an innovative audio glossary. This allows students to click on each author's name, and each name or term included in the pronunciation guides at the end of many of our introductions, so as to hear directly how each should be pronounced. Finally, we have a section of original texts and variant translations for each of the *Anthology's* six volumes. Each section includes several poems printed in the original and in two or three translations, giving an opportunity to explore the ways meaning shifts in translation. Finally, we have a supplementary component to the new Translations feature in the second edition. Each original text in these sections is also read aloud in a connected audio file, so that students can hear the original as they look at it in print and in translation. These selections can be downloaded for use in class or given as assignments for students to experience on their own.

Typo Alert!

As you and your students read the *Anthology*, we would be very grateful if you let us know of any typos you find in the *Anthology* (or indeed, in this volume too). Every page has been proofread with care, and we've fixed all the typos we've found, even though a few of them had a weird logic of their own. The enraged Achilles, for example, disputing Agamemnon's claim on his prize at the start of the *Iliad*, swears "a great oath," which in our page proofs became "a great bath"—an oddly appropriate highlighting of the childishness within his heroism, which we corrected with some regret. Some typos are no doubt still hiding in the 6,500 pages of the *Anthology* and in this companion volume as well. So please let us know of any lingering errors you encounter and also send us broader ideas and suggestions of all sorts.

An Evolving Collaboration

The scope and definition of world literature has been changing rapidly in recent years, and the second edition of *The Longman Anthology* has provided us with an opportunity to keep pace with these changes. We've designed the *Anthology* to be open and flexible in form, and it is sure to be used in a variety of ways: in courses with a historical, or a generic, or a thematic basis; in survey courses using the full *Anthology* and in upper-level courses using only one of its volumes; in quarter-

system as well as semester-based schools; in community colleges, in liberal arts colleges, and in universities. We have posted onto our course Website selected syllabi and other teaching materials reflecting actual practice as the *Anthology* is used in class. We invite contributions for this purpose. The print *Anthology* itself reflects a collaboration between the editorial board and the many reviewers we thank in our Acknowledgments; our reviewers often went far beyond the call of duty in helping us select texts and find the best ways to present them. The publication of the second edition of the *Anthology* is only the next stage in this ongoing collaboration with everyone who is using it in class and sharing their experiences with the rest of us who are working on and with the book.

Finally, we also welcome suggestions for continuing improvements to the *Anthology* itself. Our *Anthology* is meant as a resource for teachers in an evolving and growing field, and with your help future editions will allow the *Anthology* to continue to reflect these changes. So we would be delighted to hear what things you would most like to see added in the future and to learn what existing conjunctions and combinations work best for you, what others might better be rethought. We can be reached by e-mail at the addresses below or by letter at the Department of English and Comparative Literature, 602 Philosophy Hall, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027 (David Damrosch) and the Department of Literature, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016-8047 (David L. Pike).

Our coeditors and we hope that the entries in this teaching companion will assist you in teaching our *Anthology*. We hope too that you'll find *The Longman Anthology of World Literature* as enjoyable to use as it has been to create, and we look forward to hearing from you as you work with it in the coming years.

—David Damrosch, dnd2@columbia.edu

—David L. Pike, dpike18@gmail.com

Guide to myliteraturelab™



Where literature comes to life!

<http://www.myliteraturelab.com>

You may check the Instructor Resources section of MyLiteratureLab for a more extensive Faculty Teaching Guide.

MyLiteratureLab offers the best multimedia resources for literature. The site includes detailed online lectures, interactive readings, a glossary of literary and critical terms, extensive help with the writing and research processes, avoiding plagiarism tutorials, and Exchange (Longman's online peer and instructor review program).

Every Longman Lecture in MyLiteratureLab includes thoughtful questions to prompt discussion and/or to become a topic for an essay. As you have probably already found, the *Guide to MyLiterature Lab* is in the front of this supplement for your convenience.

MyLiteratureLab Browser Tune-up

To use all of the features of MyLiteratureLab, you will need to install the following plug-ins: **Shockwave and Adobe Acrobat Reader**. Use the Browser Tune-up to check if you have all of these plug-ins installed and to install them if you do not.

Register to use MyLiteratureLab Resources in your WebCT Course

You will need the access code that is beneath the pull tab of your access code card that either came with your purchase of a new textbook or that you purchased separately. **(If you do not have an access code you can purchase access online through the MyLiteratureLab site in your WebCT link.) You only have to register once.** Once you have created your own, unique log-in name and password, you will use them each time you link to MyLiteratureLab resources from your course. Whenever you link to the

MyLiteratureLab resources from your course for the first time during an on-line session, you will be asked for your log in name and password. Type the name and password that you created during registration. You will not be asked again for your log-in name and password to access other MyLiteratureLab resources. If you close your Internet browser, end your on-line session, or turn off your computer, you may have to enter them again.

Longman Lectures

Experience how listening to literature being read can bring it to life! Listen to these richly illustrated concise ten-minute audio “lectures” narrated by Longman’s textbook authors to help you connect with authors and works. Each lecture is divided into three segments, and each segment concludes with Questions for Thinking and Writing to help you analyze and reflect on what you have heard.

Interactive Readings

Read and explicate stories, poems, and scenes from plays through a series of interactive questions that guide you in the study of the literary elements. Select a Literary Element to view its Interactive Reading and Questions for Thinking and Writing.

Introduction

Welcome, instructors, to *MyLiteratureLab*. This brief guide highlights the main benefits and features of *MyLiteratureLab*. In this guide you will find an overview of the three main sections.

1. The Literary Elements: Testing Your Knowledge
2. Where Literature Comes to Life: The Longman Lectures
3. Writing and Research: Tools and Techniques

For more extensive information on these portions of *MyLiteratureLab*, including detailed descriptions of each of the Longman Lectures and teaching tips for using it in your classroom, please see the Instructor Resources section.

The Literary Elements: Testing Your Knowledge

This section of the site features *Diagnostics* (linked to the Glossary of Literary and Critical Terms) and *Interactive Readings*.

Diagnostics

The *Diagnostics*, including multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, enable students to assess their understanding of literary theory and criticism by quizzing them on terms such as imagery, archetype, point of view, and soliloquy. Upon completing each diagnostic, students are forwarded to the *Glossary of Literary and Critical Terms* to fill any gaps in their knowledge.

Interactive Readings

The *Interactive Readings* section is designed to help students understand how to use literary elements to interpret works of literature. Each reading focuses on a particular literary element, such as word choice, tone and style, and character analysis. As students read a particular selection, key passages are highlighted. When students click on the highlighted text, a box appears that contains explanations, analysis, and/or questions highlighting how the passage can be interpreted using the literary elements. These readings can be assigned as homework, and students may be required to submit their written responses to the questions.

Where Literature Comes to Life: The Longman Lectures

This section of *MyLiteratureLab* features a menu of nine-minute lectures. All of the *Longman Lectures* are given by Longman's authors—critically acclaimed writers, award-winning teachers, and performance poets. Longman's "guest lecturers" discuss some of the most commonly taught literary works and authors in depth. In the process, they encourage students to analyze stories, poems, and plays, and develop thoughtful essay ideas.

The lectures are richly illustrated with words and images to contextualize and enrich the content of each lecture. As you will hear, each lecture is divided into three parts—Reading, Interpreting, and Writing. Each part of each lecture is accompanied by a diverse selection of Critical Thinking and Writing Questions. Some questions provide feedback and suggestions for online research and essay development. Students' answers to the questions can be e-mailed to you or used to spark class discussion.

As a whole, the lectures are designed to complement in-class discussion of particular works and augment related assignments in your syllabus. Available to students around the clock, the three-part structure of the lectures encourages students to read and interpret works more thoughtfully and spark ideas for research and writing. The lectures may also be assigned as extra-credit work or be used as an emergency substitute instructor.

Below we discuss the primary purpose of each part of the lectures and provide examples.

Part 1: Reading

Students often are reluctant readers. The first part of each lecture, Reading, sparks student interest through the lecturer's interpretative reading. The reading of a key passage places the work within a context that appeals to students. Some readings are dramatic and performative; others provide analysis about how a work is structured. The lecturers' varying approaches to their subject matter help reach students with different learning styles. At the same time, related visuals help students see the work while reading it. Here are a few examples of opening statements in Part 1 of the lectures.

- From Shakespeare's sonnets lecture: *In Shakespeare's Sonnets (published in 1609 but probably written in the middle 1590s), love—whether for the fair youth or the dark lady—is only one of several themes. Some of these themes—for instance beauty and the tragic effect of time on beauty—are easily connected with love. Let's glimpse a few of the themes by looking at the opening line of some of the sonnets.*
- From the Flannery O'Connor "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" lecture: *What if I told you about a writer who included in her works a youth who, in baptizing his mentally defective nephew, manages to drown him, or a woman with a wooden leg and a Ph.D. in philosophy who . . . is robbed of her wooden leg and stripped of her self-confident belief in nothing . . . ? If I then told you that this author is a devout Catholic, would you be astonished? If so, you are not yet familiar with the works of Flannery O'Connor.*
- From the James Baldwin "Sonny's Blues" lecture: *From the opening scene . . . until the final scene in a darkened nightclub when Sonny, bathed in blue light, performs the magic of improvisational jazz on his piano, these two brothers move in and out of each others' lives, attempting to communicate but most often failing.*

Part 2: Interpreting

Many students lack confidence in their ability to analyze and interpret works of literature. Some students are impatient to find the "right" answer. Part 2 of each lecture provides provocative "keys" for understanding. The lecturers' comments humanize both the work and its author. For example:

- From the Seamus Heaney "Digging" lecture: *Not only is he [Heaney] honoring the work of his father and grandfather, he is using his own kind of digging—that is, writing poetry—to show us the worth of the work they did. And in this respect, he honors and carries on their tradition—but with a different tool. As such, it's a poem about writing poetry—with digging as its metaphor.*
- From the James Joyce "Araby" lecture: *Notice how the bright images of his love, Mangan's sister, always appear out of the dreary background that sur-*

rounds them. Compare the words and phrases that are used to describe Mangan's sister and the boy's feelings about her with the language that describes his neighborhood or his everyday activities. Let the words open your senses—visualize and feel the bright, warm image of Mangan's sister as her dress swings and the soft rope of her hair tosses from side to side and contrast it with the dark, cold image of the short days of winter and the acrid smell of ashpits and horse stables in the surrounding neighborhood.

- From the Billy Collins “The Names” lecture: A typical Collins poem begins in the morning. The poet walks around his empty house, thinks about last night's supper or tonight's bottle of wine, puts on some jazz, goes out and runs a few errands or takes a train into the city, comes home, looks out the window, and makes a poem. To say that Collins writes a low-pressure kind of poetry is like observing that a flat tire could stand a little air. It's the poetic equivalent of an episode of *Seinfeld*, “the show about nothing.” But . . . I sympathize. Indeed, I'm a little envious. Collins's saving grace is the wit that laces his observations of everyday matters. Poets, he says, “have enough to do / complaining about the price of tobacco, // passing the dripping ladle, / and singing songs to a bird in a cage. // We are busy doing nothing. . . .”
- From the Hawthorne “Young Goodman Brown” lecture: Let's consider two specific ways to better understand and enjoy this famous story. First, can you sum up its theme—what's its central message? In some stories, the theme is easy to find. You can just underline its general statements, those that appear to sum up some large truth. In a fable, the theme is often stated in a moral at the end, such as: “Be careful in choosing your friends.” In Stephen Crane's story of a shipwreck, “The Open Boat,” Crane tells us, among other things, that “it occurs to a man that Nature does not regard him as important.” But Hawthorne's story is trickier. If you underline its general statements and expect one of them to be its theme, you'll miss the whole point of the story. See paragraph 65: “Evil is the nature of mankind.” Does Hawthorne believe that? Do you? Those are the words of the Devil, always a bad guy to believe. No, after you finish reading the story, especially pondering its closing paragraph, you can sum its theme much better in your own words.

Part 3: Writing

In Part 3, Writing, the lectures further the discussions in Part 2 and help students form their own interpretations. The historical and cultural backdrop of the times, the writer's life experiences, and a close reading of the text all help students make connections. The lectures are peppered with ideas that students might pursue to write a critical essay or even a research paper. Here are a few examples:

- From the Seamus Heaney “Digging” lecture: While both use natural imagery, Yeats writes of nature in idealized terms that seem to transcend everyday

life. Images like “Dropping the veils of morning to where the cricket sings” and “midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow” remove us from the gritty world of toil. For Heaney, nature is anything but an escape. It is the here and now substance of everyday living—the harsh “rasping” of the spade—the “straining rump”—and the “heaving of sods.” No pun intended on the title “Digging,” but Heaney’s poetry is much earthier and grounded than that of Yeats. And much of this attitude toward nature can be attributed to his own background.

- From the Baldwin “Sonny’s Blues” lecture: Though the setting in Harlem in the mid twentieth century is in many ways crucial to an understanding of the problems faced by these two African American brothers, their story is universal. Therefore, an essay on the theme or themes in “Sonny’s Blues” can be especially informative. Ask yourself what major ideas Baldwin is suggesting in the story. One theme, the theme of learning wisdom through suffering, is as old as literature, and Baldwin shows us through the searching and suffering of the two brothers that literature can share with us the wisdom of the ages, that we can learn about the agony and the beauty and the creativity within ourselves by vicariously sharing theirs.
- From the Kate Chopin “The Story of an Hour” lecture: Kate Chopin published several of her stories in the magazines of her time. However, *Vogue* and *The Century* initially refused to publish “The Story of an Hour.” *The Century* regarded the story as “immoral” and *Vogue* only published it after Chopin’s *Bayou Folk* became a success. Discuss “The Story of an Hour” in terms of the artistic, moral, and intellectual sensibilities of Chopin’s time. Consider why Chopin’s story was branded as “immoral” and why literary perceptions have changed over the years.
- From the Sophocles *Oedipus the King* lecture: Over time, this play has drawn many conflicting interpretations. Here are a few long-debated questions for you to think about. Is Oedipus a helpless, passive tool of the gods? Who is responsible for his terrible downfall? Does he himself bring about his own misfortune? Is he an innocent victim? If the downfall of a person of high estate (as Aristotle thought tragedies generally show) is due to a tragic flaw or weakness in the person’s character, does Oedipus have any tragic flaw? If he does, how would you define it? Consider his speeches, his acts, his treatment of others. Does Oedipus seem justified in afflicting himself with blindness? Does his punishment fit, or fail to fit, his supposed crime?

Critical Thinking and Writing by Lecture

Each part of the three-part lectures is accompanied by Questions for Thinking and Writing. These questions help reinforce the content given in the lecture and provide helpful suggestions for research and writing. Students can respond to the questions directly on screen and have their responses e-mailed to you.

Writing and Research: Tools and Techniques

From formulating an original idea to citing sources, this section of *MyLiteratureLab* offers students step-by-step guidance for writing powerful critical essays and research papers. This section of the site can reinforce and augment the writing coverage in your text. Below is a brief description of what each section covers.

Overview

Writing and Research contains seven main sections. Five are discussed here, while we cover **Exchange** and **Avoiding Plagiarism** in more detail below. **Writing About Literature** facilitates effective writing by providing useful information on both the writing process and writing about literature, including such key topics as invention, planning, and strategies for organizing, drafting, and revising. **Writing the Research Paper** offers comprehensive instruction for writing research papers, including finding a topic, evaluating sources, taking notes, tips for summarizing, developing a thesis, suggestions for organizing the paper, choosing a pattern of development, guidance for writing introductions and conclusions, and comprehensive MLA documentation. A dozen **Student Papers** are integrated throughout, providing helpful models of a variety of critical essays and the research paper. Comprehensive coverage of **MLA Documentation** provides numerous models of all types for citing a range of sources, from interviews to periodicals to electronic sources. Access to our **Tutor Center** is provided free of charge with your subscription to *MyLiteratureLab*. The Tutor Center gives your students help with reviewing papers for organization, flow, argument, and consistent grammar errors. Students can contact tutors toll-free via phone, e-mail, Web access, or fax, often at times when your campus writing center is not available.

Using *Exchange*

Exchange, Pearson's powerful interactive tool, allows students to comment on each other's drafts and instructors to review and grade papers—all online. More information about *Exchange* can be found in the Instructor Resources section of *MyLiteratureLab*. Please visit the Instructor Resources area to learn about creating and administering *Exchange* as part of your teaching apparatus. Highlights of *Exchange* include the ability to:

- Quickly and easily add comments at the word, sentence, paragraph, or paper level.
- Save and re-use your favorite comments.

- Help students identify and overcome common grammar errors through links to practice exercises and an online handbook.
- Decide how many students are in each group.
- Assign students by name, or create random groups.
- Let all students see comments, or only the author and instructor.
- Allow students to post comments anonymously.
- And more!

Avoiding Plagiarism

Avoiding Plagiarism allows students to work through interactive tutorials to learn how to cite and document sources responsibly in MLA format. This section guides students through a step-by-step tutorial, complete with self-tests and items for extended analysis. The steps include:

- What is Plagiarism?
- When to Document
- Using Print & Electronic Sources
- Avoiding Plagiarism
 - ✧ Attribution
 - ✧ Quotation Marks
 - ✧ Citation
 - ✧ Paraphrase
 - ✧ Loyalty to Source
 - ✧ Works Cited
 - ✧ Citation for Images
- Extended Analysis
- Wrap-Up

Each step in the MLA tutorial guides students to read and click to navigate to the next step. Students do not need to complete the tutorial on one visit to the site; they can jump ahead to continue their work or return to previous steps to review an earlier discussion. The *Avoiding Plagiarism* tutorial contains many practice sets for students.

Extended Analysis

The extended analysis section allows students to apply what they have learned from the *Avoiding Plagiarism* tutorials. Here students can test how well they recognize plagiarism as they read a student research paper. Students must pay careful attention to the sources that are being quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in consideration of the seven rules of avoiding plagiarism discussed during the tutorial.

Tips for Instructors and Suggestions for Use

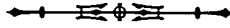
Student writers can benefit from their work in *Avoiding Plagiarism* throughout a composition course and at different stages in the research writing process. *Avoiding Plagiarism* helps students to correctly paraphrase, summarize, and quote source material, as well as cite and document sources in both MLA and APA style. Students can use the *Avoiding Plagiarism* tutorials on their own, working through the tutorials at their own pace and returning to them as needed throughout their research projects. Most pages or “steps” in each tutorial can also be printed for quick student reference.

We encourage you to explore the tutorial yourself so that you understand the tutorial’s content and can make connections to your own course, your students and their research projects, and to other areas of *MyLiteratureLab*. We encourage you to identify teaching opportunities, learn to navigate *MyLiteratureLab*, and view the additional resources and links.

Students should also be encouraged to review *Avoiding Plagiarism* before they submit both drafts and final versions of their research projects for review. With peer review of drafts, for example, students who have reviewed the appropriate tutorial will be better prepared to give informed feedback about documentation of sources in other student papers. And students who review the tutorial before submitting papers to instructors are more likely to correct their in-text and end-of-text citations during the final editing stage.

Volume D

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries



The World the Mughals Made

Babur's defeat of the Afghan Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat (near the capital Delhi) in 1526 C.E. inaugurated one of the most materially opulent, politically powerful, and culturally rich periods of imperial stability in South Asian history. Various dynasties of Indo-Muslim rulers had sat on the throne of Delhi from the thirteenth century onward, a period generally known as the Delhi Sultanate. Babur, however, saw himself as superior to these Delhi sultans, the last of whom he had defeated soundly in battle, and felt that he was carrying on the tradition of the great conquerors Mahmud of Ghazni, his illustrious great-grandfather Timur (Tamerlane), and his matrilineal ancestor Genghis Khan. But unlike these powerful predecessors, all of whom had at one time or another been lured by the wealth of Hindustan and quickly departed once they got it, Babur was forced by circumstance to stay in India after his victories. In doing so, he laid the foundations of a "dynamic, centralized, complex" empire (John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 1993, p. 1) that was to last for some three centuries. One scholar summarizes the Mughals' place in world history thus:

[Mughal] India far outstripped in sheer size and resources its two rival early modern Islamic empires—Safavid Persia and Ottoman Turkey. The Mughal emperor's lands and subjects were comparable only to those ruled by his contemporary, the Ming emperor in early modern China. . . . The "Great Mughal's" wealth and grandeur were proverbial. His coffers housed the plundered treasures of dozens of conquered dynasties; his regalia and throne displayed some of the most spectacular precious stones ever mounted. Nearly all observers were impressed by the opulence and sophistication of the Mughal empire. The ceremonies, etiquette, music, poetry, and exquisitely executed paintings and objects of the imperial court fused together to create a distinctive aristocratic high culture. (Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 1)

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur

When we think about premodern kings and emperors, especially the greatest among them, we often picture solely the imperial pomp and splendor: the courts, the poets, the dancing girls, the royal processions and regal festivals. How intriguing—and refreshing—therefore, to read Babur’s memoirs. The impression left by the excerpts provided here is much the same as that left by reading the entire work—that of a humble, meticulous, cultured, supple intellect.

Babur was of course a conqueror, and his memoirs do not shy away from topics such as kingly honor and the martial responsibilities of the ruling elite, as expressed in his letter to Humayun:

Through God’s grace you will defeat your enemies, take their territory, and make your friends happy by overthrowing the foe. God willing, this is your time to risk your life and wield your sword. Do not fail to make the most of an opportunity that presents itself. Indolence and luxury do not suit kingship. . . . Conquest tolerates not inaction; the world is his who hastens most. When one is master one may rest from everything—except being king. (Vol. D, p. 17)

But such sentiments do not set Babur apart from his time. Rather, one can look at Babur’s sense of urgency here as part of an overriding conviction, culled from his own experience of being forced from his homeland by the Uzbeks, that if you don’t seize the opportunity to rule and conquer, you will be ruled and conquered by someone else. War was simply part of the elite social landscape, and being good at it was nothing to be ashamed of.

Yet it is important to stress the sense of fear and danger with which men like Babur and his army constantly lived. We see a hint of this in Babur’s need to “encourage his troops,” among whom “manly words or courageous ideas were being heard from no one” (Vol. D, p. 16). Babur expresses this state of mind explicitly in another section of the memoirs, when some of his men, frustrated, hot, and tired, want to leave Hindustan and go back to Central Asia. He tells them:

For some years we have struggled, experienced difficulties, traversed long distances, led the army, and cast ourselves and our soldiers into the dangers of war and battle. . . . What compels us to throw away for no reason at all the realms we have taken at such cost? Shall we go back to Kabul and remain poverty-stricken? (Wheeler M. Thackston, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, 2002, p. 358)

This last question goes to the heart of Babur’s motivations for entering India. The economics of the drive to conquer India have rarely been emphasized as much as they should, and men like Babur (or Mahmud of Ghazni before him, c. 1000) have often been portrayed solely as Muslim holy warriors, intent on religious war against

peaceful Hindus. The rhetoric of *jihad* and iconoclasm were often employed, to be sure, having, as Babur blithely observes, “favorable propagandistic effect on friend and foe” (Vol. D, p. 16). But the reality was much more complex.

Babur rarely refers to the natives of India as “infidels.” One exception is during his discussion of India’s “wonderful weights and measures” and “excellent system of numbering”: “Most of the people of Hindustan are infidels, whom the people of India call Hindu. Most Hindus believe in reincarnation” (Thackston, *Baburnama*, p. 352). This is an observation, pure and simple, and can hardly be considered a call to *jihad*. His notorious dislike of the people whom he encounters in India—including the “rustic and insensitive” Afghan sultans of Delhi (*Baburnama*, p. 321)—had mostly to do with what he deemed to be their lack of refinement and gentility: “Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful social intercourse, no poetic talent or understanding, no etiquette, nobility, or manliness” (*Baburnama*, p. 352). Indeed, in the most explicit remarks on the nature of kingship cited above, he makes no mention of even Islam or the duties of a Muslim monarch, much less of iconoclasm, of the need to war with and convert infidels, or any such *jihad*-like motivations. Even his celebrated “pledge of temperance” (Vol. D, p. 17) can be read as a garden-variety *quid pro quo* with the Almighty (“I’ll stop drinking, you help me win”), coming as it does during a period of self-doubt immediately before Babur’s crucial battle with the intransigent Rajasthani king, Rana Sangha. Thus, outside of the martial context, Babur’s attitude toward the Indian population, Hindu and Muslim alike, could be characterized by indifference (or sometimes disdain), rather than vehement religious antagonism. Remember too that, in order to gain hold of this infidel land, Babur defeated a *Muslim* king at Panipat.

We need to temper this general attitude, however, with Babur’s clear desire to understand India. Page after page of Babur’s memoirs contain detailed remarks on the subcontinent’s flora and fauna, weights and measures, timekeeping methods, and monetary denominations. A good example of his desire to first comprehend and then improve upon the native Hindustani practices is found in his discussion of divisions of time. Babur claims to have recognized a flaw in the Hindustani method of sounding the watch and orders a slight change: “It was a great idea,” he explains. But Babur shows no interest in imposing his own system of timekeeping on the native Indians. Instead, he works with the existing method and establishes a system amenable to all concerned. This trivial example is suggestive of Babur’s entire approach to ruling north India and is representative of the many gestures of cultural accommodation made by all the Mughal emperors.

It is also fascinating to examine the family ties expressed in these excerpts. Modern historians have tended to treat the *Baburnama* and other such chronicles as sourcebooks for names and dates of political history; their uses for social and cultural history were, if not entirely overlooked, then certainly never tapped in the way they merit. In his letter to Humayun, Babur’s gentle chiding of Humayun’s poor penmanship and prose style (Vol. D, p. 18) shows a human, paternal side rarely acknowledged for conquerors of his stature. His remarks on the naming of

“al-Aman” (Vol. D, p. 17) reveal not only something about the sociolinguistic spectrum of northern India at the time and the fact that such an Arabicized name would seem out of place in Hindustan but also something about Babur’s personality and his sense of émigré pragmatism that people would simply have a tough time saying the boy’s name.

The scholarly literature has long characterized Mughal family life exclusively by intrigues and bloody wars of succession, but here we see a different, gentler, more loving side of the imperial family. Indeed, students will be fascinated to hear the story of Babur’s death. It is reported that Humayun had fallen seriously ill, and none of the imperial physicians could find a successful treatment. Desperate and fearing for his son’s life, Babur, on the instructions of a mystic, walked around Humayun’s sickbed three times and offered himself to God if only his son would get well. The offer apparently was accepted, for Humayun recovered, and Babur himself died soon thereafter, in December 1530.

Jahangir

We get more evidence of the intimate family atmosphere of the royal household from Jahangir, who informs us that his father always called him by the pet name Shaykhu Baba, rather than by his given name, Salim (the epithet “Sultan” is simply an honorific, which by Mughal times referred not, as in previous eras, to the reigning monarch but to his heirs, the equivalent of “prince”) (Vol. D, p. 20). Salim’s relationship with Akbar was notoriously fractious, so bad that at one point, feeling that his father would pass him over and nominate Salim’s own son as successor instead of him, he had his father’s closest confidante and advisor Abu’l Fazl assassinated and sought to rebel, albeit unsuccessfully. (For a popular, if historically inaccurate, depiction of Akbar and Salim’s relationship, you might consider screening the epic Bollywood film *Mughale Azam*—“The Exalted Mughal”—which is available on DVD, in Urdu with English subtitles.) We needn’t deny the contentiousness of Mughal court politics, especially around the issue of succession, to appreciate that the royal family was capable of great intimacy and expressions of love, as Babur’s writings also show. Indeed, whatever their disagreements might have been, Jahangir refers to his father with utmost humility and respect throughout the *Jahangirnama*.

A subtly revealing moment in his memoirs is Jahangir’s choice of name for himself, as recounted in “Designation of Name and Honorific” (p. 20). In addition to demonstrating the coalescence of religious inspiration (“an inspiration from the beyond suggested to me”), political ambition (“the labor of emperors is world domination”), and astrological coincidence (“my accession occurred at the time of the rising of the majestic greater luminary”) that went into such a decision, we get an important insight here into the Mughals’ sense of their global significance, as well as the global audience for whom Jahangir is writing. It is unlikely that anyone in Hindustan would have confused Jahangir (Sultan Salim) with the Ottoman Sultans Selim I and Selim II; the fact that he is worried about such mistaken identity (“I should change my name lest it be confused with the caesars of Anatolia,” p. 20)

indicates the cosmopolitan reach of Persian literature at the time and its vast, quasi-global audience. Jahangir knows—or at least hopes—that literati and intellectuals far from the subcontinent will be reading his book, as is also evident by his gesture of converting Hindustani measurements to their globally better-known Iranian equivalents (“By weight that much is six Hindustani seers, which is equivalent to one and a half Iranian maunds,” p. 21).

But writing for a global audience is not the same as pandering to it. Unlike the era of Babur and Humayun, by the time Jahangir acceded to the throne the Mughal Empire was firmly established as a global power. The sense of political, territorial, and cultural competition with the Ottomans of Turkey, and especially the Safavids of Iran (who had helped Jahangir’s grandfather Humayun regain Hindustan after he lost it to the Afghan Sher Shah Suri) becomes more and more pronounced during Jahangir’s reign. Jahangir notes this explicitly, and it is especially significant that he does so in terms of India’s capacity for religious tolerance during his father’s reign:

Followers of various religions had a place in the broad scope of his [Akbar’s] peerless empire—unlike other countries of the world, like Iran, where there is room for only Shiites, and Rum [Anatolia], Turan [Central Asia], and Hindustan [the North India of the Delhi Sultanate, or that controlled by the Afghans], where there is room only for Sunnis. Just as all groups and the practitioners of all religions have a place within the spacious circle of God’s mercy, in accordance with the dictum that a shadow must follow its source, in my father’s realm, which ended at the salty sea, there was room for practitioners of various sects and beliefs, both true and imperfect, and strife and altercation were not allowed. Sunni and Shiite worshipped in one mosque, and Frank and Jew in one congregation. Utter peaceableness was his established way. [This refers to Akbar’s famous policy of *sulh-i kull*, or “peace with all.”] He conversed with the good of every group, every religion, and gave his attentions to each in accordance with their station and ability to understand. (Wheeler M. Thackston, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, 1999, p. 40)

Of course, the Mughals were nominally Muslim emperors. But Akbar’s reign is justifiably famous for its consistent policy of reaching out to all groups: socio-politically, as in his marriage alliances with powerful Rajput families; culturally, by commissioning grand translation projects of the Sanskrit classics, as well as instituting Persian as the official, nonsectarian, cosmopolitan language of administration for the whole of his lands; and religiously, by holding special court assemblies for the exchange of theological principles, by giving generous land grants to pious groups of all faiths, and by abolishing many of the taxes generally levied exclusively on non-Muslims. Akbar had set the stage for an ecumenical approach with his imperial *Dini Ilahi*, a generalized “religion of God,” a major component of which was the policy of *sulh-i kull*. Thus Jahangir’s conversations with the hermit Jadrup

(Vol. D, pp. 21–23) can be seen in the context of this tolerant, inquisitive imperial sensibility. Moreover, in the wake of Akbar's *Din-i Ilahi*, it is significant that Jahangir has no difficulty in seeing the ascetic practices of the Hindu Jadrup as not simply parallel to, or a tolerable alternative to, but in fact as *the same as* Sufism, the Islamic mystical tradition—"He is not devoid of learning and has studied well the science of the Vedanta, which is the science of Sufism" (p. 22). Similar is Jahangir's use of quotations from Rumi's and Sana'i's Persian works to describe the Hindu hermit. Part of what had made Persian such an attractive choice to Akbar as a language of administration was its long poetic tradition of expressing nonspecific, almost secular mystical ideals (see Muzaffar Alam, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, 2003; and Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, 2004). Here we see that tradition—and its capacity for crossing communal boundaries—in action.

Much of Jahangir's personality comes through in these few selections, and much as with Babur, we hear the day-to-day voice of the emperor here: frank discussions of his bouts with alcoholism and substance abuse, as well as those of his friend Inayat Khan (Jahangir's brother Daniyal, too, waged an unsuccessful battle with alcoholism and died as a result); his tender reminiscences of his namesake, Shaykh Salim Chishti; his regret and his understanding of the frightening power of his own words as emperor, even when spoken in jest, at the death of the blacksmith Kalyan.

We also pick up hints of what it meant to live in the increasingly globalized world of the seventeenth century, specifically in the description of Muqarrab Khan's trip to Goa. The Portuguese had begun making forays into the Indian Ocean maritime routes as early as the late fifteenth century. By Jahangir's time, more and more Western trading companies were making their presence felt in India by establishing ports, trading outposts, and even full-fledged principalities (with permission of the Mughal emperor). In addition to more conventional trade in precious metals, spices, and textiles, there were cultural exchanges of "every sort of thing and object," including the "rarities" prized by a fascinated Jahangir (p. 23). Ironically, the same forces of globalization that made such wonders available at Jahangir's court would enrich and empower the Mughals' competitors—specifically, the British East India Company—enough to usher in the colonial era of Mughal decline and Western domination. But in the early seventeenth century, at the height of Mughal power, such an outcome was inconceivable.

Mirza Muhammad Rafi "Sauda" and Mir Muhammad Taqi "Mir"

During the eighteenth century, the landscape of power and dominance in Hindustan began to change dramatically. Following the death of Aurangzeb, Jahangir's grandson and the last of the so-called Great Mughals, a succession of less charismatic, less effective emperors followed who became ever more vulnerable to the plots and intrigues of ambitious cadres of nobles, as well as to the growing imperial preten-

sions of regional powers such as the Sikhs, Jats, Rohillas, and especially Marathas, who had previously been more or less willing to accept Mughal sovereignty (see Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab 1707–1748*, 1986). Meanwhile, Delhi began to suffer brutal raids from outsiders—most notably those of the Iranian Nadir Shah in 1739 and the Afghan Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1748—and the British, for their part, were steadily consolidating their hold on the Gangetic plain.

This state of affairs resulted in a growing sense of anxiety and helplessness among the people of eighteenth-century Delhi, including the two illustrious poets excerpted in Volume D, Mirza Muhammad Rafi ' Sauda and Mir Muhammad Taqi "Mir". Common parlance began to note the irony in the fact that the emperor Shah Alam II controlled nothing beyond a nearby Delhi suburb (see C. M. Naim, introduction to *Zikr-i Mir: The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet Mir Muhammad Taqi Mir*, 1999—Naim's introduction and appendices are extremely insightful, informative, and well worth reading for anyone planning to teach Mir). The poet Mir bemoaned the regional uprisings and raids by outside plunderers much more explicitly: "Sikhs, Marathas, thieves, pickpockets, beggars, kings—all prey on us / Happy is he who has no wealth; this is the true wealth today" (cited in Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*, 1968, p. 221). When the Mughal emperor could not even safeguard his own capital, what indeed was the point of seeking financial security?

This undercurrent of sociopolitical instability and popular fatalism is the context for Sauda's scathing commentary in "How to Earn a Living in Hindustan" and has historically been viewed as the cause of the pathos evident in so much of Mir's poetry. Sauda's satires, however, are not always directed at society's ills. He was willing to go after everything under the sun, including specific people who might have piqued his ire, and even, on at least one occasion, the heat of the sun itself, as Russell and Islam note:

The atmosphere of his satires is the atmosphere of the open-air political meeting, where the speaker and heckler are all the time trying to score off each other, and the audience thoroughly enjoys every hit that goes home. . . . Not all of them are personal attacks. Some are sheer clowning, like modern slapstick comedy. One is a ferocious attack on the intolerable heat of the Indian summer. (*Three Mughal Poets*, p. 42)

Such caustic salvos, however, could have dangerous consequences, as one famous incident shows. One of his rival poets became so upset at Sauda's attacks that he sent a gang of his pupils (*shagirds*) to waylay the satirist, and it was only the intervention of Sauda's patron, the Nawab of Lucknow, that saved him from physical harm. All in all, however, there is no doubt that a sense of lost nobility in society at large underlies much of Sauda's critique. As Russell and Islam write:

In demanding, so to speak, that his social ideals be realized, he did not feel that he was demanding the impossible, for he believed that they had

already been realized once before—and only a generation or two before his time. Thus one of his satires contrasts the Delhi of former times with that of his own day. (*Three Mughal Poets*, p. 59)

But it is important also to emphasize that the picture of Mughal decline—which was put to much invidious use by the British, who sought thereby to legitimate their own imperial ambitions—is only one way to characterize Sauda and Mir's eighteenth-century milieu.

This narrative of a terminal decline is only too familiar. It, nevertheless, expresses a specific and narrow perspective: a Delhi or Mughal-centred point of view. The same years, looked at from Lucknow, Hyderabad or Murshidabad, or through the eyes of the Marathas, the Jats, and the Sikhs, were a time of empowerment and resurgence when those regional courts and cultures came into their own. The same holds true from the point of view of Urdu too. The eighteenth century marks the emergence of Urdu—more accurately Rekhta, Hindi or Hindui, as it was then variously called—as the preferred literary language of the elite of Delhi and the Gangetic plain, instead of Persian. (C. M. Naim, introduction to *Zikri Mir: The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet, Mir Muhammad Taqi 'Mir', 1723–1810*, 1999, pp. 1–2)

Both of these trends, the rise of regional courts and the shift to Urdu, had effects on and were in turn affected by the careers of Sauda and Mir. Both poets were forced to leave turbulent Mughal Delhi in search of patronage and wound up finding financial security and lending their prestige and cultured aura to the newly wealthy court of the Nawabs of Awadh in Lucknow—a crucial development in the emergence of Lucknow as a center of culture to rival Delhi in the late eighteenth century. Of course, poets were often ambivalent about their reciprocal obligations to the patron, as evidenced by Sauda's gripe: "But perhaps you have thought of becoming a poet . . . he is trying all the time to compose an ode to his patron" (Vol. D, p. 27). Mir, too, had some famous squabbles with his various benefactors. The fact remains, however, that poets depended on patrons for money (perhaps a source of their proud bitterness), and patrons needed poets to establish their reputations as worldly, cultured men.

More generally speaking, one could argue that the success of Urdu literary culture itself was made possible in part by the legitimacy provided by the success of Mir, Sauda, and a handful of others in the first generation or so after the shift away from Persian. They showed that Urdu could be just as expressive, cultured, and refined as Persian—in their eyes, perhaps even more so—and was an equally viable literary language, suitable to all poetic genres. It should be pointed out, though, that even while Urdu gained currency as the literary lingua franca of eighteenth-century North India, Persian remained the language of all serious prose (including Mir's autobiography) and continued to be used for poetry as well, by luminaries

such as Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib and Muhammad Iqbal, throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries.

The centrality of the *ghazal* in Urdu literary culture, and Mir's place as one of the most nimble practitioners of this lyric genre, cannot really be overstated. Part of the difficulty of accessing this wealth of poetic output, from the instructor's perspective, is the conventionality of the genre itself. The *ghazal* world is populated with certain stock characters and references, and the poet could use, associate, and contrast these freely, with the expectation that his or her audience would see the connections, the "nets of awareness" at which any given couplet hinted. (The phrase comes from Frances W. Pritchett's excellent study, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics*, 1994; especially recommended is Part Two, "Flowers on the Branch of Invention.")

Many of these conventional figures are represented in our selection of Mir's couplets. For example, we see in the first few couplets the pangs of one of the most popular *ghazal* protagonists: the overwrought lover, burning with anticipation, driven to madness and social scorn by devotion to an inaccessible or cruel beloved. Mir's description of his father in the autobiography could just as easily apply to the *ghazal* protagonist: "He possessed a suffering heart but was ever eager for more suffering" (Vol. D, p. 32). The paradigmatic example of such a hero-lover, willing and eager to endure all hardships, is the legendary Majnun, who lost his sanity pining for his beloved Laila and wound up wandering the desert talking to plants and animals, desperate for any news of her whereabouts. The poet has only to use the word *majnun* in his couplet, and a whole host of associations will flash before the minds of connoisseurs: deserts, dust, madness, the inaccessible beloved, various plants and animals, and so on. The *ghazal* protagonist himself knows that true love is dangerous—hence, Mir's warnings against it in the first few couplets—because in this poetic universe the true lover will do anything, will renounce all propriety for that amorous intoxication, and will eventually wind up suffering both social excommunication and loss of self, loss of "strength, and faith, and fortitude, and will and heart and soul" (p. 30) until "at the last nothing but ash remains" (p. 29).

The cause of all this agitation is, of course, the beloved, in comparison to whom other standard-bearers of beauty and radiance such as the sun, moon, and nightingale's song will pale. And if at times it seems as if this beloved is too impossible, too perfect, this is because one cannot always say in any given couplet (*she'r*) whether the beloved is divine or earthly. Indeed, we see here part of the incalculable influence on Indo-Persian poetry of the "mystical dimensions of Islam," i.e., Sufism. (For details and basic background material on Sufism, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 1975.) In keeping with the Sufi path to mystical union with the Divine, the poetics of the *ghazal* recognize two possible types of love: symbolic love (*'ishq-i majazi*), and true love (*'ishq-i haqiqi*). But, in contrast to the Western conception of this binary, Sufis and Indo-Persian poets tended to view human love, however heartfelt, as the unreal, metaphorical, symbolic love; only love of the Almighty qualifies as the true, *haqiqi* love. Most good *ghazals*, of course, take advantage of this opposition, and the best of them can usually be read both ways: as

expressions of earthly longing for an inaccessible human beloved and as cosmic longings for reunion with the Divine, who created us, gave us free will, and then left us alone to our existential angst—like the heavens, in Mir’s father’s exquisite discourse on love in the autobiography, “going round in circles and never reaching their desired one” (p. 32).

Concomitant with this belief that true love can only be divine love is the sense among Sufis and poets that true religious sensibility is the inward, personal path (*tariqa*) to *rapprochement* with God. Thus the *shaiikh* (the promulgator of the external practices of worship such as regular prayers, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and adherence to socioreligious norms such as abstention from intoxicants) is viewed in the *ghazal* as one of the chief disturbers of the protagonist’s encounter with the Divine Beloved. The *shaiikh* is the enemy of love, the scourge of those who would drink the wine of mystical intoxication, and is therefore reviled, as Mir does in the excerpt in Volume D, as an antagonist to true lovers and mystics everywhere. Of course, as with beloveds, wine too can be earthly or divine, and playing with the ambiguity of this trope of earthly versus mystical inebriation is one of the most useful tools in the poet’s kit. In either case, there is no ambiguity about the scorn heaped on the representative of hypocritical normalcy, the intolerant *shaiikh* with his dogmatic, heartless “gear of piety” (p. 30).

Banarasidas

With the *Ardhakathanaka*, Banarasidas’s “Half a Tale,” we engage with yet another style of early modern self-presentation which, in the words of one scholar, “illustrates important changes in medieval Indian society and culture, of which the most important were a growing interest in personality, in the development of individual aspects of literature and culture, and the individualization of creative activities and culture itself” (Eugenia Vanina, “The *Ardhakathanaka* by Banarasi Das: A Socio-Cultural Study,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, vol. 5, no. 2 [1995], pp. 211–224). Unlike most historical chronicles and hagiographical accounts from the period, and more so even than the more “personal” royal memoirs of Babur and Jahangir, Banarasidas offers a vision of culture, society, and political events almost exclusively as they are relevant to his own life and spiritual journey, indeed literally to his own person.

Nothing illustrates this frame of reference more clearly than his response to Akbar’s death: “. . . I heard the news, which came as a sharp and sudden blow. It made me shake with violent, uncontrollable agitation. I reeled, and losing my balance, fell down the stairs in a faint” (Vol. D, p. 38). There is something new, jarring in an almost Sartrean way, in this hyperbolic, psychosomatic transmutation of sociopolitical trauma onto Banarasidas’s own body. For both the North Indian *sant* tradition and the militant Shaiva devotees (see Vol. C of this *Anthology*), the worshiper’s body had become a temple, an earthly, material replacement for the false gods in the temple. For Banarasidas, this relatively new emphasis on the materiality of the body remains—as does the critique of external forms of worship—but with a significant twist: for Banarasidas, the body is the material intersection of cosmic

forces both present and past, and the effect of these forces is consistently, for perhaps the first time in South Asian literature, depicted as a violent eruption of physical ill ease. Over and over again, throughout his *Tale* Banarasidas suffers such “eruptions,” beginning in his infancy:

I kept good health for the first few years of my life, but in Vikram 1648 [1591 C.E.], the evil karma of my past erupted unawares and I fell sick with *sangrahani*, an acute and chronic form of dysentery. The doctors tried many cures but the disease persisted for a whole year. Then, suddenly, it disappeared on its own. (Mukund Lath, trans., *Half a Tale*, Rajasthan Prakrit Bharati Sansthan, 1981, p. 14)

Autobiography, here, is not just one’s life story but the story of an early modern man’s struggle to negotiate “the quirks of destiny” (Vol. D, p. 38), the effects of historical events on everyday people, and the search for spiritual equanimity in the face of his own religious skepticism. With regard to the latter, we see Banarasidas inhabit successive religious personae, even in the course of our short excerpt. His display of tormented passion as the lover-cum-Sufi vividly demonstrates his familiarity, even as a provincial Jain merchant, with Indo-Persian mystical and literary traditions and echoes what we have already encountered in Mir’s work. Meanwhile, he dabbles in the panoply of scholarly traditions, from lexicography, poetics, and erotics to Sanskrit grammar and literary theory. (The mention of *rasas* refers to the eight, sometimes nine, generalized emotional sentiments accepted by Sanskrit literary theory; see “What Is Literature” in Vol. A.) When Banarasidas finally renounces this erotic and scholarly “state of abandon” (Vol. D, p. 38) it is telling that within a month he falls gravely, almost nauseatingly ill—once more described as “innumerable eruptions” appearing all over his body—and rationalizes the ailment as “my sins . . . bearing fruit once again” (p. 38). Later, he tries out life as a devotee of Shiva only to abandon that calling too, as a direct result of Shiva not coming to his aid when he falls down the stairs upon hearing of Akbar’s death. Thus yet again, he creates a narrative chain that links historical events, his own physical well-being, and his quest for “faith and belief” (p. 39). A thoroughly modern man.

Beyond this heightened sense of being-in-the-world, Banarasidas provides a wealth of insight into social life under the Mughals. His accounts of the idiosyncrasies of trading communities, the prevalence of travel in spite of the many described difficulties, and many other features of day-to-day life have all been very useful to social historians in the sixty years or so since the text was unearthed in 1943. For our purposes, it might be most beneficial to focus on the light shed on some of the issues raised by the other selections represented in Volume D. For example, we have already noted the echo of Mir’s mysticism. Precolonial South Asia is often characterized as a world of fixed identities and fixed roles, timeless and unchanging. How striking, then, and how refreshing to reflect on the nonchalance with which Banarasidas, the Jain trader, appropriates Sufi themes and tropes to make an aesthetic point about the fervor of his passion. It tells us a lot about the dif-

fusion, availability, and exchange of religious ideas across lines of community, language, and class. There is no mention here of religious exclusivism of any sort, and throughout his *Tale* Banarasidas is free to experiment with religious truth in virtually any way he deems fit—indeed, to take advantage of this religious freedom when and as he pleases, as the story of his encounter with the robbers demonstrates. The story is revealing in many ways and serves Banarasidas well by highlighting a beautiful contradiction: On the one hand, the story reinforces with a wink his growing sense of the superficiality of the external trappings of organized religion (such as sacred Sanskrit mantras, the Brahman's thread and *tilak*-mark on the forehead); and on the other, it almost tenderly exemplifies the earnest reverence that even the most dangerous elements of the social landscape maintained for true men of religion.

Consider, too, the vehemence of the reaction to Akbar's death, not only by the author himself but also by the community at large. Once again, the fear and panic engendered by the emperor's death prefigures the kind of desolation that Mir and Sauda saw a century later in Delhi. The ruler's role was to ensure social stability, and his passing could be a time of great turmoil, especially if a war of succession were to ensue. But it cannot be stressed enough that the emperor's religious affiliation is conspicuous by its absence in Banarasidas's account. He and his Jain community specifically, and the majority Hindu populace of Jaunpur generally, seem much more concerned with social stability in a time of transition than with any repression they might suffer under a Muslim monarch. Indeed, the fact that from Banarasidas's point of view the news of Jahangir's accession "came as a great relief and the people heartily hailed the new king" (p. 39) shows clearly that the emperor's religion was simply not an issue for everyday people.

Indeed, along with the wonderful and entertaining account of his spiritual quest, his *Half a Tale* tells us a great deal about how ordinary South Asians lived and made their way in the world the Mughals made.



Chikamatsu Mon'saemon

Chikamatsu's *Love Suicides at Amijima* (*Shinju Ten no Amijima*, 1721) is a play about commoners (as opposed to the samurai, who were the social elite at the time), specifically about a small paper merchant (Jihe) and a middle-level prostitute (Koharu), who fall in love and decide to commit suicide together. The play belongs to a genre called "love suicides" (*shinju mono*), in which the protagonists decide to commit suicide rather than be separated and because they cannot survive either socially or economically in their present circumstances. The love suicide genre thus combines romance, which falls outside of marriage (marriage, at the time, was a social arrangement between families rather than between individuals), and social tragedy (resulting in the demise of the protagonist and his family network on which he depended for a living). Chikamatsu's *Love Suicides at Amijima* is generally considered his best love suicide and his best play about the lives of commoners. Chikamatsu himself

came from a samurai or warrior family, and his plays reveal the prominence of samurai values (fidelity, obligation) that commoners also assumed at this time.

There are three acts, each of which represents an important social space. The first act is at Sonezaki (a licensed pleasure quarter in Osaka, where money is spent), the second act is Jihei's house and his paper shop (the world of the merchant, where money is earned), and the third act returns to Sonezaki. Jihei is torn between these two worlds.

The following has occurred before Act 1 opens. Koharu (a prostitute in Sonezaki) and Jihei (a paper merchant) have been seeing each other for over two years, and as a result the customers have stopped seeing Koharu. The owner of the brothel has forbidden the two from seeing each other. Koharu and Jihei have vowed to commit double suicide so they can be together forever. Jihei, who goes to Sonezaki each night to see Koharu, is resigned to die. Osan, Jihei's devoted wife, secretly sends a letter to Koharu, asking her to save Jihei's life.

In Act 1, worried about his brother's fate, Magoemon (Jihei's brother) disguises himself as a samurai. He pretends to be a customer and goes to see Koharu, who tells the samurai that she has no intention of dying and that she wants to break off relations with Jihei. (We learn later that she says this out of obligation to Osan, who had earlier asked her to save Jihei's life.) Jihei overhears this conversation and becomes angry. Thinking he has been betrayed, he tries to stab Koharu. Jihei is tied to the door by Magoemon, who reprimands Jihei for his reckless behavior. Jihei promises to break off his relationship with Koharu. Magoemon then discovers a letter from Osan to Koharu and realizes that Koharu has been pretending out of obligation to Osan, but that Jihei does not know this.

In Act 2, Osan's mother (Jihei's aunt) visits Jihei, as does Magoemon. The aunt criticizes Jihei for breaking his promise to leave Koharu. She has heard that Jihei is still seeing Koharu and is about to ransom her. Jihei realizes that the rumors actually concern Tahei, a wealthy rival. Jihei vows once more, this time in writing, that he will not see Koharu. But it becomes obvious to Osan that Jihei is still in love with Koharu and resents the fact that Koharu will be ransomed by Tahei. Jihei reveals that Koharu had promised Jihei that she would kill herself rather than be bought by Tahei. Jihei thinks that Koharu has betrayed him, but Osan realizes that Koharu is about to kill herself. Osan confesses that she asked Koharu to reject Jihei in order to save his life and urges him to ransom Koharu before it is too late. She gives him money and her clothes to pawn. But Gozaemon, Osan's father, arrives, discovers the clothes are gone, and takes Osan away. By the end of Act 2, the marriage and family have dissolved, and Koharu is about to be ransomed by Tahei, in whom she has no interest.

In Act 3, Koharu and Jihei meet in secret and prepare to commit double suicide. They elude Magoemon, who has come in search of them, and travel to Amijima (in Osaka), where they nominally become priest and nun (by cutting off their hair), and then commit double suicide.

The Love Suicides at Amijima differs from other love double-suicide plays in that the suicide is already decided at the beginning. The suspense is not whether the

two will commit suicide but how and when it will happen. The suicide, which is finally carried out in Act 3, is delayed by attempts of those around Jihei (first the brother Magoemon, then Osan's parents) to dissuade him from committing suicide with Koharu, thereby ruining his family.

The central tragic figure is not Jihei or Koharu so much as Osan, Jihei's wife, who sacrifices herself both for her husband and for Koharu and whose agony in Act 2 forms one of the central climaxes. Osan sacrifices her money, her possessions, and her dignity (telling Jihei to ransom Koharu and assert his honor before Tahei). Osan is the embodiment of absolute devotion and self-sacrifice, the ideal feudal wife (despite her husband's infidelity, she looks after family business and sacrifices for him), but as a consequence, she is left with nothing. She is determined to help Jihei and Koharu, and yet she realizes that by doing so, she is destroying her family and losing her husband. Under the weight of all the sacrifice, Osan collapses.

One of the central conflicts in Chikamatsu's plays is the tension between *giri*, social obligation and duty, and *ninjō*, natural instincts and human feelings, particularly love. Samurai ideology stressed *giri*, which included the sense of debt that must be repaid for earlier favors, because it was the foundation of social hierarchy and family order, while spokesmen for urban commoner values (such as Itō Jinsai) stressed the value of human feelings (*ninjō*). Confucian culture emphasized place and role in society over individual desire, believing *ninjō* must be suppressed or controlled by society in order to preserve order and hierarchy. Chikamatsu was a samurai who depicted townsmen and conflicts that arose between different types of obligations or between duty and human emotions, especially love.

What are the examples of obligation and duty in *The Love Suicides at Amijima*? How do they conflict with each other or with deep human emotions? First, there is Koharu's sense of obligation toward Osan. Koharu is moved by Osan's letter and complies with her request to give up Jihei and thereby save his life. Koharu is thus torn between love (*ninjō*) for Jihei and her obligation toward Osan. Second, there is Osan's obligation toward Koharu. Osan respects Koharu because Koharu responded to her request and maintained her promise to save Jihei's life. Out of a feeling of duty to Koharu, Osan urges Jihei to ransom Koharu (rather than have her bought out by Tahei and commit suicide). In short, Osan is torn between love for Jihei and obligation toward Koharu. In Act 3, Koharu and Jihei feel a strong sense of obligation toward Osan. As they prepare to die at Amijima, they make elaborate arrangements to take holy vows, become nun and priest, and die in separate places, so that they "can honor to the end our duty to Osan" (p. 66).

Giri and *ninjō* are usually thought to be opposing forces, but Chikamatsu regarded them as an ideal pair, like water in a pipe. Human feelings should be expressed through the channels established by social obligation. The hierarchical relationships valued by Confucianism—parent/child, husband/wife, older brother/younger brother, ruler/subject—should be regarded not simply in terms of

a sense of duty of one to the other (e.g., child to parent, wife to husband) but also as something infused with human emotion. The tragedy occurs when *giri* and *ninjō* are at odds, or when different obligations come into conflict (e.g., when a wife's duty toward her husband conflicts with the duty toward her parents). The resulting conflict arouses deep human emotions. Osan can be seen as caught between two obligations: one toward Koharu (whom she cannot let die) and one toward Jihei. If she ransoms Koharu (to fulfill her obligation toward Koharu), she will betray her obligation toward Jihei as a devoted wife.

For the modern reader, there is something forced about this display of *giri* between the two women, who have never met. They are in fact rivals, yet they are moved by each other's plight to the degree that they decide to sacrifice themselves to fulfill their sense of obligation. Ultimately, Chikamatsu is not interested in the obligations per se but in the terrible cost that obligation can have on the individual and on his or her emotions. In traditional Japanese society, one of the highest virtues has been the sacrifice of the individual desires for the sake of a larger cause. This has led to a series of linked virtues: dedication, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and perseverance. Osan embodies these traditional Japanese virtues, but as a consequence, she becomes a victim, losing not only Jihei but also her family.

Last but not least, a word needs to be said about the significance of the path to death. Buddhist thought implied that this world is a world of birth, suffering, and death, but one that can lead to a higher stage of spiritual awareness, if not salvation. The fundamental assumption here is that awakening does not come naturally; it is usually caused by some crisis or profound suffering. In love suicide plays, the journey to death is both a downward movement, through hell and intense suffering, as a result of the transgressions committed by the two lovers, and also an upward movement, in which the protagonists, through deeper awareness, have a chance at possible salvation.

This process is embodied in the second scene in the third act, the noted farewell journey of many bridges. The two lovers come to Tenma Bridge, literally, "Bridge of the Demon of Hell," which is followed by the River of Three Fords, which had to be crossed in the Buddhist underworld to reach the land of the dead. This represents the journey of the lovers through hell. But then they cross Sutra Bridge and reach the opposite shore, a metaphor for enlightenment and salvation, and pass over Onari Bridge, "To Become a Buddha Bridge." Having gone through a kind of purgatory and having paid for their transgressions, they implicitly enter the world of the Buddha when they enter the grounds of the temple at Amijima. This double movement is symbolized by the full title of the play, *The Love Suicides at the Amijima of Heaven*, which implies the Net of Heaven (*ami*), the "net" of the Amida Buddha, who saves all who call upon his name. The lovers cannot escape from the process of karmic causality and retribution, yet they are implicitly shown mercy by the Amida Buddha. This paradox lies at the heart of the play: the lovers must be punished for their acts, which cause so much suffering for those around them, but they will implicitly be saved in the next world.



Cao Xueqin

No other traditional novel has captured the hearts of Chinese readers more than *The Story of the Stone*, also known in the West as *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which took shape over a period of four decades during the second half of the eighteenth century. It stands unchallenged as the most comprehensive Chinese novel, encompassing a three-thousand-year span of Chinese culture and embracing all major literary genres and philosophical traditions.

As the first significant fictional narrative not based primarily on legend or historical figures and events, its account of the glory and decline of a rich and powerful family has proved compelling enough to inspire serialized versions for television in late-twentieth-century China. Stories about its obsessive fascination for early readers resemble those about the lethal, suicidal influence of Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*: "A young man who read the novel seven times in a month was so profoundly affected that he died of melancholy shortly thereafter. Similarly, a girl died vomiting blood after a single perusal!" (Anthony C. Yu, *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber*, 1997, p. 219, n. 3). A Chinese family is still likely to refer to its coddled young scion as their little "Jia Bao-yu," after the protagonist in *Stone*, and animated debate can ensue in contemporary classrooms about the relative merits of the two young women in his life, Lin Dai-yu and Xue Bao-chai.

That *The Story of the Stone* bore an intimate connection to the personal and family history of its author was assumed from the start. An early manuscript version circulated among friends and family of Cao Xueqin with annotations by an anonymous reader who referred to himself as "Red Inkstone," and, in its comments, suggested both his familiarity with the author's background and the many correspondences he recognized between the characters in the novel and those from Cao's life. Generations of scholars since that time have created a cottage industry known as "Redology" in their efforts to identify every possible link between events in the novel and the actual history of the Cao family. In the Chinese critical tradition, the long-standing impulse to read a literary work as autobiography can be traced back to the commentary tradition on the first anthology of poetry, the *Book of Songs*, and its presumption that the anonymous poems in that collection constituted a critique of their times, with the primary critical task therefore being one of contextualizing each work. When extended to poems by known authors, the exercise followed two circular courses: reading the biography into the poems and reconstructing the biography from them. Small wonder, then, that a novel whose protagonist so resembles its author should inspire similar interpretations. Still, as Yingshih Yu has written, "We certainly have here a strange, paradoxical situation: in the eyes of the general reader, [*Story of the Stone*] is entirely a work of fiction, but within the main currents of Redological research of the last century, it has never truly assumed the place of fiction. On the contrary, it has always been treated as an historical document" (cited by Yu in *Rereading the Stone*, p. 19).

Adding further grist to the scholarly mill is the fact that Cao Xueqin wrote only the first eighty chapters of *The Story of the Stone*. The questions of who completed the work and how faithful the last forty chapters are to Cao's intentions have been much debated. Complicating the picture is the amount of time that elapsed between the initial circulation of the eighty-chapter manuscript in 1754 (which existed in as many as ten versions) and the publication of the novel with the additional forty chapters almost forty years later (1791–1792). Whoever wrote the last third of the book dutifully recapitulates the events of the unfinished manuscript, and, in the opinion of many readers, takes a less nuanced and more melodramatic, sentimental, and moralizing perspective on the story while wrapping it up. There is no question that the pace of the action also picks up measurably, with one crisis or death following another and all loose ends tied up, but it is also true, as Andrew Plaks has noted, that whoever was writing had a clear task at hand, that of “finishing the book” (*Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, 1976, p. 217). And that he (or they) did accomplish.

Keep in mind that the necessary excision of some eighty percent of *The Story of the Stone* for our *Anthology* has, not surprisingly, created a drastically tighter, narrower narrative focus and an illusion of linear progression that a reader of the first eighty chapters in the original would not be likely to experience. This selection focuses on the relationship between Jia Bao-yu and his cousin Lin Dai-yu and its tragically foreordained unhappy end. There is little sense of the leisurely and encyclopedic panorama of the people and events within a wealthy Chinese household, with intrigues unfolding both upstairs and downstairs, as well as in between, whose gradual and inevitable decline is being staved off by the meticulous recounting of its daily activities. Endless feasts, festivities, dramatic performances, domestic gatherings, and visitors of all sorts are interspersed with breathtaking descriptions of extravagance, greed, corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of power and provide the backdrop for the unfolding and unraveling of relationships among the young male protagonist, his elders, and the several young women of his generation. The multigenerational perspective that makes this one of the world's great family novels, like Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* or Junichiro Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters*, is also necessarily foreshortened but clearly lies at the heart of its significance and impact.

The end of *Story of the Stone* is in its beginning, and it is extremely important to spend some time with the first chapter, much of which is included in the *Anthology*. As is the case with other traditional Chinese novels, the first chapter functions largely as a prologue and is set in a temporal and spatial context removed from that of the main action. Here, however, this function is more complicated than most. As Anthony Yu notes, the novel's opening constructs “a triple frame (mythic, realistic, narrativistic) wherein to introduce the setting and characters of the tale and to lay much of the groundwork for subsequent development of its immense plot” (*Rereading the Stone*, p. 122). It solves Cao Xueqin's problem of accounting for the origin of his story, about whose unusual nature he is clearly and self-consciously aware, as the comparison to other types of narratives suggests,

and it also alerts us to what will happen at the novel's end, the stone's renunciation of the world. Note that there is a story enclosed within the story of the novel's mythic frame. Students should be reminded not to forget about the discarded stone, its recovery, and the lesson it teaches to the monk Vanitas/Brother Amor (the work's first reader), as well as the episode recounted from its experience as the Divine Luminescent Stone-in-Waiting, in which the Crimson Flower incurs a debt of tears to him. Keep in mind, too, that a monk and Daoist priest reappear at various crucial intervals, sustaining throughout the novel the overlap between the mythic and the everyday.

Two entries into this human narrative are provided at the beginning as well: (1) the dream of Zhen Shi-yin (whose name is homophonic with "true things concealed" and whose daughter suffers an unhappy fate later in the story), which includes an encounter with the goddess Disenchantment, who reappears in Jia Bao-yu's dream in Chapter 5, and (2) the conversation between Jia Yu-cun ("false words preserved") and Leng Zi-xing. Such discussions and introductions on the part of outsiders to the main characters constitute a familiar technique of conveying background information efficiently, and they provide as well a foreshadowing of the Jia family's weaknesses and incipient decline. Incidentally, Zhen Shi-yin and Jia Yu-cun themselves serve as mirrors to the fates of the family. Zhen, whose daughter disappears in the confusion of a fire that breaks out when he wakes up from this dream, ends up abandoning his wife to become a Buddhist monk. Jia experiences a rise and fall in his career that parallels the family's fortunes.

We are introduced to the Jia household through the eyes of another outsider, the young granddaughter Lin Dai-yu, who is being escorted by Jia Yu-cun, her tutor, from another city to join the family because of the deaths of her parents. Her first encounter with the young hero of the story is telling, for his sense of having met her before reinforces the reality of the underlying myth. The debt of tears owed by the Crimson Flower will be repaid generously throughout the novel. With the introduction of Xue Bao-chai the eternal triangle is in place, and its dynamics play themselves out to their prescribed conclusion. Comparisons and contrasts between the two girls run throughout the novel: Dai-yu is frail, hypersensitive, consumptive, brilliant, and unrealistic, whereas Bao-chai is relatively sturdy, even-tempered, healthy, and less talented but more responsible. Bao-chai's golden locket links her with Bao-yu's jade, but Bao-yu's emotional affinities are clearly more powerful with Dai-yu. Each girl is not without appeal to Bao-yu, however, and it is no accident that his name consists of one character from each of theirs.

In *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, Andrew Plaks discusses at some length the use of a number of such devices to structure *The Story of the Stone*. Plaks argues that principles of what he calls "complementary bipolarity" and "multiple periodicity" organize both the characters and events in the novel. The former is based on the complementary relationship between the forces of yin and yang, whose influence in any given situation was believed to alternate cyclically, and the latter on phases of the dominance of the five elements (earth, fire, metal, water, and wood), whose sequential movement has similarly been seen to explain

courses of events. (The same argument has been made for *Journey to the West* as well.) Plaks analyzes both how the novel's characters correspond to these phases and how the cyclical alternation between joy and sorrow, union and separation, often within a single chapter, is patterned on yin-yang alternations as well. While it is interesting to note the role played by these structures, the novel is likely to seem more mechanical from this analysis than it deserves. Plaks's discussion of the function of the garden in *The Story of the Stone*, as well as his comparison of it to other Western literary gardens, however, is extremely useful and worth consulting. You may wish to consider in particular his argument concerning the typical structure and function of allegory in Chinese literature—as exemplified in *The Story of the Stone*—and its difference from Western prototypes: whereas the former works horizontally, through synecdoche, containing on one plane the entire ground of being, the latter works vertically, structured on a metaphorical relationship between figure and transcendent truth.

Constructed to honor the visit home of Bao-yu's sister, who has become one of the emperor's concubines, the garden is the main locus of activity from Chapter 23, when the family's children are allowed to move into its buildings, until Chapter 78, when the scandalous discovery of a pornographic object forces an exodus from its grounds. While it creates an ideal world within the world, despite its isolation and enclosure, the garden does not prove impervious to human weakness and the passage of time. To what extent, you might ask, does it exemplify the realm of fiction itself? As Wai-ye Li observes, "With vistas named by Bao-yu and the girls, and with abodes fashioned as extensions of their personalities, the Garden seems an ideal, pure world of youth and innocence, games and literary gatherings, love and poetry. Yet the Garden, like its symbolic counterpart, the Illusory Realm, is a precarious dream" ("Full-length Vernacular Fiction," in *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor Mair, 2000, p. 650). Note the similarity between the arch in the Land of Disenchantment traversed by Bao-yu in his dream in Chapter 5 and the one within the garden itself described in Chapter 17. That episode, in which Bao-yu is asked to name the various structures in the garden, is important for other reasons as well. In addition to indicating the important cultural associations of gardens with literature and including an interesting discussion of what it means to be natural, it offers Bao-yu an opportunity to demonstrate his poetic talents and also provides illuminating insights into the nature of his relationship with his father.

Students may well be shocked by this interchange between Bao-yu and Jia Zheng, whose public disapproval of his son is only partially for the benefit of the toadies who are touring the garden with him. Chinese fathers in general were not likely to praise their children in front of others, but Jia Zheng's single-minded focus on Bao-yu's eventual success on the civil service examination, from which excessive indulgence in the wrong kind of literature might possibly distract him, moves over the course of the novel from the obsessive to the downright abusive. (At one point only the intervention of Jia Zheng's mother, Grandmother Jia, prevents him from literally beating Bao-yu to death when displeased with his son's behavior.)

Still, it is the relationship between Bao-yu and Dai-yu that breaks most readers' hearts. Chapters 23–34 illuminate the basis of their relationship, bringing to the fore the nostalgic sentimentality they share (as in the flower-burying scene), their common intimation of doom, and their shared love of reading. Note that it is the drama *Romance of the Western Chamber*, which is based on the Tang dynasty tale about Ying-ying (both of which are included in Vol. B of the *Anthology*, translated as *Story of the Western Wing* and “The Story of Ying-ying,” respectively) that binds the two cousins together. Both works center on the sexual awakening of a young woman, and Bao-yu's introduction of the dramatic text to Dai-yu may be compared to the shared experience of Paolo and Francesca in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Although they do not literally read the literary work together, it is a text that awakens their passion. As Anthony Yu argues, “The human Bao-yu and Dai-yu in the garden, to be sure, are not the wailing inmates of hell. But like Paolo and Francesca, . . . this Chinese couple can also trace the first root of their human love (‘la prima radice / del nostro amor’) to the experience of reading—and hearing—literary fiction” (*Rereading the Stone*, p. 211).

The sustained process of self-dramatization that follows can only end unhappily, however, thanks to the primacy of the family's interests that dictate the novel's cruelest drama, in which—much later in the novel—Bao-chai is asked by her elders to pose as Dai-yu to delude Bao-yu into marriage. Meanwhile, Dai-yu, who alone had challenged the hegemony of the family's interests, manifested in their insistence on Bao-yu's dedication to study in preparation for the examinations, dies, virtually abandoned, of tuberculosis. “The profound and perduring appeal of Dai-yu's story perhaps may be explained by the way it draws upon the fears and frustrations of the women of an entire culture,” notes Yu (*Rereading the Stone*, p. 253). As Mark van Doren wrote in an introduction to an earlier translation of the novel:

The whole society is doubtless what seems most interesting in the end. It is a human organization that must obey the laws of its own survival; and it does so no matter what individual gets in its way. To certain of its members it now and then seems heartless. But to say this is to suggest how far *Dream of the Red Chamber* transcends the ordinary novel of manners. It transcends it, indeed, to the point of tragedy. (“Introduction” to *Dream of the Red Chamber*, trans. C. C. Wang, 1958, p. viii)

As Yu writes, Dai-yu is “the fateful victim of ill health, human deceit, mythic beliefs” (*Rereading the Stone*, p. 253) and, we should also remember, of the story's structure. Yu's discussion of *The Story of the Stone* begins with the premise that its “merit as verbal art lies in its insistence that it is a work of fiction,” and that “its own fictionality is the subject of sustained exploration and dramatization” in the narrative (p. xi). He also traces the way mirrors, dreams, and jade chart the theme of Buddhist enlightenment that mandates Bao-yu's departure from the world. After the marriage to Bao-chai with which this selection concludes, the protagonist regains enough of his wits to pass the civil service examination

and impregnate his wife. Having bequeathed to his family the distinction of his performance and an heir (though whether male or female, we do not know), he disappears in the company of a monk, as the return of the Stone to the Land of Greensickness Peak had foretold. Has he achieved enlightenment by abandoning what Buddhism would regard as the illusory world of human desire and its resulting attachments?

A more sophisticated position might maintain that drawing such a distinction between illusion and reality is itself an illusion; perhaps the jade must renounce the world of desire, but the words *jade* and *desire* remain in fact homophonous in Chinese. It is also the case that however insistent the novel has been on its own nature as illusory fiction, its success in drawing readers into its reality has been extraordinary. In this sense, then, as Yu writes, “the medium subverts the message”: “if life is illusory like a dream or fiction, what are we to do with so engaging an illusion as fiction?” (*Rereading the Stone*, p. 149). *The Story of the Stone* never loses sight of the paradox it sustains from the start, encapsulated in the couplet about the permeable relationship between truth and fiction that appears above the archway to the Land of Illusion. Dusting off familiar homilies about appearance and reality is not without purpose here, though in the end the meticulous attention to detail, lingering and often loving, provides more than enough to take seriously and critically. As Wai-yee Li concludes:

In its encyclopedic inclusiveness, *Stone* in a sense sums up Chinese culture, but the greatness of the book lies more in the ways it asks difficult questions of that culture. It poses as problems the ways systems of order (whether sociopolitical, moral, philosophical, or religious) accommodate or define the self; the meanings of roles and displacement; the claims of emotions, desire, imagination, and artistic creation to coherence, autonomy, and responsibility; reconciliation of contradictions in the name of order and harmony. The nostalgia for and idealization of a lost world in *Stone* capture the modern Chinese reader’s feelings about the entire traditional Chinese culture; at the same time its ironic, critical self-reflexivity intimates the burden of modernity.” (“Full-length Vernacular Fiction,” in *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor Mair, 2001, p. 655)



RESONANCE

Shen Fu

This memoir (of which only two-thirds survives) dates from a generation or so after *The Story of the Stone* and is clearly indebted to the earlier work. Shen Fu’s family, however, occupied a lower rung on the social ladder. While he appears to have aspired to bureaucratic office, his family’s financial straits made it impossible for

him to prepare himself successfully for the civil service examination, and he became a part-time clerk in a government office. His business efforts were unimpressive as well, with his real interests focused on writing and painting.

There is no real precedent for this extended autobiography; earlier precedents were typically much shorter (as in Tao Qian's [365–427] "Biography of the Master of Five Willows" in Vol. B of the *Anthology*) and also much less intimate. Scholar-officials writing about their lives usually focused on their public careers rather than details of their personal lives. *Six Records of a Floating Life* owes something to a genre dating from the Song dynasty known as *biji*, or "random jottings," which consisted of miscellaneous, unsystematic notes on topics of interest to the writer, such as travels to interesting sites, flower arrangement, or architecture. Much of the *Six Records* (though largely in sections not included here) includes discussions of such traditional *biji* subject matter, but what is distinctive and new is Shen Fu's willingness to reveal aspects of his personality, sentiments, and relationships that earlier writers would not have been inclined to share.

As with any confessional work, of course, one can question the extent to which an apparent frankness is to be believed, and it would be worth discussing how the *Six Records* compare on this account with examples from other traditions, as well as what rhetorical indices make the revelations seem more or less genuine. Shen Fu's willingness to disclose less than admirable traits of his own throughout the narrative certainly helps to earn our trust. So, too, do his disarmingly brief and direct comments on the nature of his feelings for his wife, Yün.

Shen's depiction of Yün as a virtually fully fleshed individual, a creature of desire and an object of love, owes something both to the relationship of Bao-yu and Dai-yu in *The Story of the Stone* and to an evolving ideal in the late imperial period of the "companionate marriage." This was made possible by the increasing literacy and literary activity among elite women at the time and was also linked to a growing interest in the centrality of emotion to human existence. More permissive models of appropriate sentiments to be expressed between spouses, for example, could be tolerated, without challenging the family's right to determine who that spouse should be. Note, however, the risks that sexual attraction and intimacy would inevitably present to the vertical loyalties owed to the husband's parents, and the displeasure that our couple constantly fears incurring is reminiscent of the disapproval at the heart of the early folk song, "Southeast the Peacock Flies" (see Vol. B). As was the case in *The Story of the Stone*, a fundamental tension between cultural norms and individual aspirations is brought to the fore here. Both works, as Anthony Yu observes, are "preoccupied in one way or another with the issues of desire (*qing*) and vocational choice, and the role of women in the effort of upholding family values and success" (*Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber*, 1997, p. 178). Small wonder, then, that the "floating life" of Shen Fu's title emerges as a stream of hardship, sadness, and death, on which joy is allowed to bob in only brief, intermittent, and fragile moments.





The Ottoman Empire

If the seventeenth century was a century of transition and change in Europe and the Far East, it was also marked by the same traits in the Muslim world. The previous two centuries witnessed the rise and growth of the Ottoman Empire, which by the mid-sixteenth century claimed control over most of the Muslim Arab lands around the Mediterranean and consolidated its power over a large sway of land in Europe. Like Louis XIV and the Mughals, the Ottomans ruled with absolute central power and a vision for change. This power was underpinned and driven by religious belief in the superiority of Islam. The rule over a large land and the stability that ensued facilitated trade and created prosperity.

The selections in this section can be taught in conjunction with similar works that emerged from Europe, the Far East, and India.

Mihri Khatun

Court culture and affluence do not manifest themselves clearly without women playing an increasing role, and this is demonstrated in the Ottoman Empire by the emergence of female writers, without whom no literary salon or cultural life could be maintained. You can teach the first woman poet of the Empire, Mihri Khatun, as a fine example of feminine writing in Elaine Showalter's typology, which distinguishes fully feminist writing from "feminine writing" in which women put gaining access to the symbolic order of writing before any need to challenge patriarchy. The women who had access to education were generally from the upper crust of the society and wallowed in privileges, pampered and provided with servants. In Khatun's case, the spirituality of Sufism ameliorated any patriarchal injustices and directed her attention away from the mundane to the more lofty and spiritual. In addition, the genre of *naza'ir* (parallel poems) gave women parity with men and enabled a dialogue of equals to emerge in the poetic field. This is one of the reasons for its popularity among women, who saw in *naza'ir* an indirect means for equality with men or even, in Khatun's case, supremacy over them.

The fact that some of Khatun's parallel poems were superior to those of the men whose work she challenged confirmed her equal status and tinged her feminine discourse with elements of feminism. In the three poems included in the *Anthology*, we find elements of transgressing social and religious boundaries in the first, intense longing in the second, and a clear expression of the sensual in the third. The prevalence of the imagery of light indicates the poet's longing for liberation from the shackles of tradition, which she succeeds in shaking off.

Fuzuli

You can contrast the poems of Fuzuli with those of Khatun to demonstrate to students the difference between male and female approaches to writing. The woman

in this case is inversely central to the culture by upbringing and literary concerns, while the man is peripheral and is trying hard to be central.

Fuzuli lived all his life in Iraq, but he wrote his most important work in Turkish, the language of the dominant power. He was a Shi'ite in a predominantly Sunni empire, which drove him to be more of a conformist aspiring to excel in three different traditions: Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. He created works in constant intertextual dialogue with the traditional *ghazal* and particularly with the celebrated story of Layla and the Majnun, but he was also concerned with the traditional themes of mystic love, wisdom, and Sufism, and with ancient traditions of the tragic events of Karbala, the story of the martyrdom of Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet and the son of 'Ali.

A comparison of Fuzuli's first poem in the *Anthology* with Khatun's ethereal love poems demonstrates the tragic impact of the Shi'ite sense of guilt in his poetry. While she delights in transgressing borders, he dwells in suffering and pain like a truly Shi'ite Muslim who nourishes his burden of guilt and redemption. In his third and fourth poems, the theme of tragic suffering mingles with political pride in the Sultan's achievements. We see through his selection of imagery the binary opposition at work between the soldiers of the Sultan and those of his enemies. On the surface they are still love poems, but beneath this ostensible love there are different layers of political meaning and intertextual dialogue with *The Arabian Nights* and its famous Qaf Mountain. The valor that the soldiers demonstrate is akin to the devotion and madness of the love of the Majnun. Here we have an example of the interaction between love and politics that Fuzuli mastered, showing how the very form of *ghazal* could be flexibly used to treat many different themes.

Nedîm

Unlike Fuzuli, who had to tread a fine line because of his complex background of beliefs, Nedîm is a more confident and relaxed writer, for he is the product of the peak period of Ottoman literature. He was secure in his intellectual class of '*ulama*' and his dominant views of the Empire. His class led the call for reform, when reform had the upper hand, and he was one of the leading reformists of his time who enjoyed power and influence. His poetry can be read as a fine example of Ottoman literature, for it reflects Ottoman literary modes in its tone, imagery, nuance, and tenor.

The opening words of his first poem in the *Anthology*, "At the gathering of desire," express the nature of the dialogue between sensuality and power, which is reflected in the constant dynamics in the poem between the empty half and the full half of the wine cup. The empty half becomes full of meaning and allusions to hidden desires and other taboo topics, but beneath this ostensible sensuality the poem is also about the politics of reform. Every image in the poem has its double entendre, and this enriches the sensual aspect. The same double meaning runs in the second poem, "When the east wind leaves that curl," which invokes the traditional opposi-

tion between the word and the sword in Arabic and Islamic literatures, and in the third, “As the morning wind blows,” which posits love as the twin of poetry. In his fourth and fifth poems, “Take yourself to the rose-garden” and “Delicacy was drawn out like the finest wine,” we see the analogy between the transformations of nature and the various manifestations and changes of the beloved. They also provide further examples of the analogy between love and poetry and how both are sensual, verging on sexual, an early example of what Roland Barthes called “the pleasure of the text.”

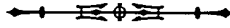
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

When teaching this section on the Ottoman Empire, you need to link Lady Montagu to Mihri Khatun and compare their stances vis-à-vis their freedom and their awareness of the limitations of their positions as women. Lady Montagu, a cousin of Henry Fielding, was also eager to free herself from the shackles of conventional society in Britain, and the trip to Constantinople provided her with this freedom and a golden opportunity to practice it away from her strict society. She basked in her newfound freedom and enjoyed it to the full, as her letters clearly demonstrate.

The letter form, of which these are fine examples of the period, provided her with a unique mixture of revelatory private discourse, contemplative remarks, and abstract ideas, thus enabling her to express her views and desires without being scandalized. The contrasts between her letters are essential for revealing their significance in the classroom. The marked differences in tone, structure, and content between her letter to a male, Alexander Pope, and the two letters to her women friends are laden with implications. Her position as a writer and her approach to her data change from the androgynous to the feminine, and she also treats her topics differently and pays attention to different types of details. The changes are related not only to the addressee and his or her interests and status but also to the very structure of the discourse and the position from which it emanates. The politics of the two types of letters is rather revealing, for while she speaks as an ungendered intellectual in her letter to Alexander Pope, she is more of an Orientalist and more specifically a woman Orientalist in her letters to Sarah Chiswell and Lady Mar. In these letters to women, she narrates the events of her invitation to Turkish houses as if she had entered into the world of *The Arabian Nights*, a world of eunuchs and singing girls. The description of the rituals of perfuming the women and preparing for a night of singing and dancing is also tinged with this sense of “orientalizing” the Orient, in the sense emphasized in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*: creating an Orient that is really a venue for her own self-awareness and even self-display. This culminates in the last letter, when she sees herself and describes her image as reflected in the eyes of her hosts.

Her letters can also be read as a product of the cosmopolitan culture of Constantinople and as testimony to its highly developed culture. Although she sees herself as a “Christian,” she still appreciates the different Turkish others and is fascinated by their culture, sophistication, and great civility.

The Age of the Enlightenment



Jean-Baptiste Poquelin [Molière]

The vexed product of many years of battling and negotiation by its author simply to be allowed to perform the play, *Tartuffe*'s combination of farce and realism always makes for an enjoyable read for students. The greatest challenge, as so often with the best comedies, is in persuading students to take *Tartuffe* seriously, and to do so without dulling the pure pleasure of the comic moments.

Historical Background and Reception

The controversial and complicated history of the production of *Tartuffe* is outlined in the introduction to the play in Volume D. It can be extremely helpful for students to be reminded of this history, of the fluid relationship between composition and production, and the volatile atmosphere in which both took place in the court of Louis XIV and in Paris. Emanuel Chill summarizes the historical circumstances in his article “*Tartuffe*, Religion, and Courtly Culture” (*French Historical Studies* 3.2 [1963]: 151–83) and details the persecution of Molière by the Company of the Holy Sacrament, a secret society also known as the *cabale des dévôts*. It is possible to attribute a number of changes in the play to this persecution, in particular Molière's introducing the rational mouthpiece Cléante and making Tartuffe an impostor layman rather than a clergyman. The argument shifts from a direct attack on religion per se to a social critique of hypocrisy, gullibility, and authority; however, plenty of ambiguity remains. After all, much of the power of the play still comes from the way it shows the intertwining of sacred and secular modes of power. As Stephen Bold observes in “Molière and Authority: From the *Querelle de l'Ecole des femmes* to the *Affaire Tartuffe*” (*Romance Quarterly* 44.2 [Spring 1997]: 80–93), the very first attack on Molière's work at his first theater derived from the fact that the local ecclesiastical authority also ran the local police.

The fabulous success of Molière's innovative, modern approach to theater when he was able to have his plays performed was an important aspect of the threat he represented. It guaranteed that the critique of contemporary social mores delivered by his combination of conventional comic plot devices with characters recognizable from contemporary life rather than classical literature would have all the greater impact by reaching a large audience. One contemporary called Molière “a constant threat. He takes his eyes and ears everywhere with

him!” Wisely, however, Molière never mocked the monarchy—indeed, *Tartuffe* concludes with the family’s surprise salvation by an officer from the palace. A paradox of his career as a popularizer of literary theater is that the protection of the king and his brother was crucial to Molière’s professional survival. The king was so fond of Molière that sometimes, violating court protocol, he liked to enjoy a simple lunch alone with the middle-class playwright. Molière knew better than to bring his eyes and ears along on those occasions. That he became a threat within only five years on the Parisian theater scene demonstrates how important was the enthusiastic public response to his new brand of comedy. Crucial as was the king’s support to Molière’s ability to continue producing plays in Paris in the face of scandal, it never would have been sufficient, alone, to make them survive the centuries.

Connections with Related Work

Molière was very familiar with Spanish literature and borrowed freely from it in his works. First produced in 1614, *Fuenteovejuna* (Volume C) makes a useful point of comparison, both in terms of its analysis of a corrupt authority (the Commander) and the young woman (Laurencia) who proves tougher and more resourceful than her male elders. The differences are also instructive, since *Fuenteovejuna* places its characters in a historical peasant uprising, while *Tartuffe* takes place among the contemporary gentry.

The first four authors in the Perspectives section on “Court Culture and Female Authorship” give a much closer context to Molière’s own milieu. This was the domain of the *précieuses* whose feathers he had ruffled in 1659 in *Les Précieuses ridicules* (although he claimed he was only targeting pretenders in the provinces) and whose wealth and status were indirect targets of *The School of Wives*. In his satires of the *précieuses*, Molière mocked aristocrats and the *bourgeoises* who emulated them, while in *The School of Wives* he directed his audience’s sympathies toward characters possessing neither wealth nor status. We can see this pattern reflected in *Tartuffe* by contrasting the negative portrayal of Orgon’s mother, Madame Pernelle, who begins the play with an attack on her son’s family and refuses in Act 4 to accept the evidence of Tartuffe’s perfidy, with the positive characterizations of the second wife, Elmire, and the maid Dorine. Reading *Tartuffe* in the context of court culture and female authorship not only elucidates the context in which the middle-class Molière needed to maneuver himself to produce his theater but also helps bring out the class context of the gender and familial issues at the heart of the play’s conflicts.

A different approach would place *Tartuffe* in dialogue with the later satirical texts, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* and Voltaire’s *Candide*. Here, rather than representing urban society directly, the satire finds its target through journeying around the world. Comparing the genres of satirical fiction with satirical theater is another way to emphasize the specifically theatrical structure of Molière’s critique, in particular his use of the comic structure and the tradition of the *commedia del-*

l'arte and the music and dance in the context of which the play was originally performed. Placing *Tartuffe* within a satirical context also helps to throw into relief its didactic content, which may be more readily obvious to students in the work of Swift or Voltaire.

Classroom Strategies

Although Molière challenged the predominant neoclassical theatrical decorum of his age, he nevertheless followed the Horatian injunction to instruct while delighting. His comedies are so entertaining that their didactic function can sometimes be lost on students, and the lessons Molière offers are of course much more ambiguous and polyvalent than those propounded by his characters. As Larry Riggs puts it in his essay “Pedagogy, Power, and Pluralism in Molière” (in *Approaches to Teaching Molière’s Tartuffe and Other Plays*, eds. James F. Gaines and Michael S. Koppisch, 1995, pp. 74–82), “Texts tend to be antialogic; Molière’s comedy is relentlessly dialogic, or pluralist.”

In the classroom, then, a pedagogical style that gives the students as active a role as possible and acknowledges and respects their voices and views best helps them grasp the meaning of this play. Such a method could begin with as basic an exercise as performing dramatic readings in class, with students assuming different roles. This should help the students begin to experience, first of all, the delightfulness of the language and the theatrical event, while the simple experience of hearing their own voices in the class may help them better grasp and articulate its dialogic lessons.

Images of the play illustrate how it was staged and costumed in the period. They also give examples of how conventional stage gestures could convey as much of the meaning as the dialogue itself. Two good sources are Sylvie Chevalley, *Molière en son temps: 1622–1673* (1973) and Madeleine Jurgens and Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière* (1963). There is a good 1978 TV adaptation of a Circle in the Square Theater production of Richard Wilbur’s translation, with Donald Moffat as Tartuffe, available on DVD; the 1984 French production with Gerard Depardieu in the title role may be in your library on VHS, although it has not yet been released on DVD. The other version currently available on DVD is a loose silent adaptation by the great German writer/director team of Carl Mayer and F. W. Murnau, with Emil Jannings unctuously brilliant in the title role.

There was a long tradition of portraying Tartuffe as old, ugly, and ridiculous (Murnau’s 1928 film also belongs to this tradition), but other possibilities have been tried, as in the suave and seductive hypocrite in the late 1960s production analyzed by Albert Bermel in *Molière’s Theatrical Bounty* (1990). It is worth discussing with students the consequences of different ways of playing this character, since one of the great mysteries of the play is how to account for Orgon’s blinding obsession with Tartuffe. What information do the characters’ reactions give us about the nature of his power?

PERSPECTIVES

Court Culture and Female Authorship

This collection of works in various genres documents the unprecedented degree to which women were becoming educated, literate, published authors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, despite the traditional prejudices against female literacy and education. The excerpt from Madeleine de Scudéry's *Clélie* provides an example of literature by, about, and for the *précieuses*, those learned ladies who in Molière's time were controlling language, decorum, and relations between the sexes in unprecedented ways. Madame de Lafayette's brief novella *The Countess of Tende* (complete in the *Anthology*) is another seventeenth-century story about cuckoldry, but with a very different tone and a much more ambiguous moral than those of either Molière or Zayas. The letters of the Duchess of Orléans, the royal patron to whom Molière dedicated *The School for Wives*, wittily display the irreverence and vulgarity with which even ladies of the highest rank could sometimes poke fun at the social and sexual mores of the age of the Sun King. The English poets—Mary, Lady Chudleigh; Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea; and Ann Yearsley—all comment in different ways on the real and continuing barriers to education faced by women of various classes.

Historical Background

The strongest secular Western European women writers emerged in periods when a national literature, in each of the three strongest and most centralized nation-states, reached a high point during the seventeenth century: Lady Mary Wroth in the Elizabethan/Jacobean period, Maria de Zayas in the Spanish Golden Age, Lafayette and others in the French *grand siècle* or “great century,” and Aphra Behn in the English Restoration. Court society, with its courtly values and traditional literary conventions of chivalric and pastoral romance, was at the center of each of these four periods of flowering of national literary cultures, even as they produced works marked by the tension of resisting or modifying these older, medieval or aristocratic codes.

Elizabethan England is discussed in Volume C of the *Anthology*, and with very few exceptions the writings that women who acquired literacy through the new classical humanism and Protestantism of that period did contribute to its literature were religious in nature, in part because the medieval ideals predominating in imaginative literature glorified women as passive, unattainable objects of courtly love, while Protestantism saw them as sinful daughters of fallen Eve, who should correct themselves by learning the precepts of religion in silence. Spain was acknowledged as the most powerful nation in Europe during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and was also famed for its fiercely traditional and aristocratic courtly modes of conduct and culture.

Women's writing in Europe initially flourished especially in court circles, as it had in Heian Japan (see Vol. B). While aristocratic culture placed exceptionally

severe restrictions on women's conduct, aristocratic privilege could also allow individual women exceptional power and freedoms of other kinds—including freedom to learn, think, and write. In France, women's writing flourished in the context of the first literary salons, established by aristocratic women as a kind of alternative court: one dominated by women instead of men, and by the aristocracy (and later by the bourgeoisie) instead of the monarchy. The Marquise de Rambouillet opened her famous "Blue Room" around 1608 (the birth year of Scudéry, and approximately that of Zayas). One of her great social innovations was to raise women and bourgeois intellectuals to the level of male aristocrats, who subjected themselves increasingly to its prestige until, during the period of its greatest influence (1630–1648), it was frequented even by the *grands seigneurs*, or peers of the realm. Indeed the aristocracy gathered there to oppose the increasingly absolutist power of the monarchy during the first half of the seventeenth century. During the Fronde (1648–1653; see Vol. D, p. 253), princesses and duchesses led armies in battle against the forces of monarchy. When they were defeated, it was effectively the end of the world of the Blue Room.

Salon culture did not end with the Fronde, however. Indeed, the salons remained female-centered forums for powerful political opposition for two hundred years, from the opening of the Blue Room to Germaine de Staël's Napoleonic-era gatherings. The first salons' valuation of restrained conduct, refined wit, and aesthetic taste over the older aristocratic values of military valor and masculine honor was both so radical and so influential as to become a cultural movement that spread throughout France over the course of the entire seventeenth century, under the untranslatable name of *préciosité*, from which is derived the pejorative sense of the English word "precious," as in overly refined, mannered, and effeminate. *Préciosité* was a complex and long-lived movement, not only a linguistic and aesthetic one but also a protofeminist and increasingly middle-class social movement. The *précieuses*, as its female exponents were called—women like Rambouillet, Scudéry, and Lafayette—capitalized on the older courtly ideals of women as unattainable, idealized beings to be served and courted through a lifetime of deference rather than subjugated by tyrannical husbands, but they translated these ideals into a realm where men proved their worthiness by demonstrating their wit and sensitivity rather than their military prowess. Thus "ladies made gentlemen," as Carolyn Laugee has put it.

The real work, however, was in the women's task of first making themselves ladies. The fact that Marie de Lafayette, born into the lower echelons of aristocracy, was described as "a *précieuse* of the highest rank," shows how salon culture created an alternative hierarchy to the class system. Another minor aristocrat also introduced to the Blue Room during its heyday, Madeleine de Scudéry, was the one primarily responsible for the literary codification of *préciosité's* translation of aristocratic (chivalric and pastoral) ideals into the new classless register of intellect and feeling, and for its dissemination throughout bourgeois culture. Already a star of the Blue Room despite her paucity, by aristocratic standards, of rank, wealth, youth, or beauty, she was forced to follow her brother Georges in 1644 to his

appointment as governor of a fortress in Marseille—and into exile from Paris, the center of this world. There she conceived and wrote her first great *roman à clef*, using the refined language and decorum of *préciosité* that had been developed in the Blue Room to combine elements of chivalric and pastoral romance with ancient history, spin out endless subplots that emphasized the worship of heroines through interminable courtships, and create idealized portraits of the real leaders of the Fronde rebellion whom she knew well from the Blue Room. She began publishing this novel (entitled *The Great Cyrus*, after the ancient Persian king who thinly masked the identity of the Duc de Condé, chief of the “Frondeurs”) in 1649, shortly after the beginning of the Fronde in 1648. It was read like a newspaper commenting on the actual events of the uprising.

Once Scudéry returned to Paris, after the Fronde had put an end to the Blue Room, she took over as the new queen of the *précieuse* movement by beginning her *Samedis du Marais* in 1653, carrying them on into the 1660s. With the aristocracy now disgraced or currying royal favor at the Louvre and Versailles, Scudéry’s new salon, hosted by a much less exalted personage than the Marquise de Rambouillet, was also much more dominated by bourgeois women. Scudéry was thus perhaps most responsible for the spread of the culture of *préciosité* in the second half of the century through the middle class and beyond Paris. Sévigné and Lafayette also kept the movement vigorous; Lafayette opened her “Chambre du Sublime” in 1659 but admitted only aristocrats. She was a social climber and knew everyone who was anyone, even becoming the intimate friend of Queen Henrietta of England, the French wife of the executed King Charles I who had fled to a convent outside Paris.

This culture of *préciosité* combined the cultivation of rarefied wit and sensibility with a resistance to marriage. Julie d’Angennes, the daughter of the Marquise de Rambouillet, married her lover only after seventeen years of courtship, while Madeleine de Scudéry never married her lifelong lover (or anyone else). It was Scudéry who, in her novel *Clélie*, coined the phrase “platonic love” still current today, to designate such emotionally and spiritually, even erotically intense, but sexually unconsummated relationships between members of either sex. The greater freedom to be had in such love relationships appealed to many women in an era when, aristocrats or bourgeois, they were married off very young to promote their families’ interests in wealth or status and expected to produce heirs through multiple, life-threatening childbirths. Moreover, the attitude of Arnolphe, protagonist of Molière’s *School for Wives*, lends fittingly crude expression to a bald social truth about marriage in his culture: “*Votre sexe n’est là que pour la dépendance; / Du côté de la barbe est la toute-puissance.*” (“Your sex exists only to be dependent; / All the power is on the side of the beard”) The *précieuses*’ critique of marriage appealed to so many that women of the upper and middle classes came to lead, as Georges Mongrédien has put it, a “veritable crusade against marriage.”

In their efforts to think their way around the problem of inequality in marriage, the *précieuses* proposed many radical alternatives to the celibacy of platonic love: temporary or trial marriage, renewable each year; divorce (illegal at the time); limitation or spacing of pregnancies; termination of a marriage with the birth of

the first child; free love; and the right of vengeance against unfaithful husbands (husbands had the right to kill wives caught *in flagrante delicto*, but not vice versa). Samuel Richardson's famously devilish rake, Lovelace, shocked English sensibilities by proposing many of these same solutions (all except the last) to the problem of monogamous marriage in his novel *Clarissa* (1747–1748). The fact that French women first proposed them a century earlier has remained unremarked, evidence of the success of Richardson's bid to revise his culture's conventions of femininity. The cult of platonic love, which constituted a kind of walkout or strike against the institution of marriage led by Mademoiselle de Scudéry herself, predominated amid this list of forward-looking ideas. In addition to the salon gatherings, prominent *précieuses* held weekly audiences in their bedrooms, in which, decked out like goddesses enthroned on beds of brocade, they would receive specially favored visitors (called "alcovists" from the alcoves in which beds were placed) to their *ruelles*—literally, the narrow space between the bed and the wall. Like their principle of resistance to marriage, the literature of the *précieuses* is devoted to pleasure, beauty, love, and play.

Intense female friendships were an equally important part of *préciosité*, and it was more often in this sense that platonic love was adopted in seventeenth-century England, where Katherine Philips was the first to promote it both in her circle of literary friends and in her poetry. Scudéry, who benefited from the kind of education available to girls only from exceptionally sympathetic and open-minded male relatives, learned at the same time that while women were not encouraged to be stupid (ladies were expected, for example, to be moderately accomplished in such social graces as dancing, lute playing, and drawing, and to have the economic and management skills to run a large household), they could also shock society by appearing learned—just as much as a man wearing skirts and makeup in public nowadays might offend many. (Such women were lampooned by Molière in *The Learned Ladies*, as were the *précieuses* themselves in a separate play.) So *préciosité* fostered wit, feeling, and culture—not scholarly learning. It was an aesthetic and social rather than an intellectual movement. It also fostered community and collaborative authorship.

Until quite recently some critics have tried to use the communal aspect of salon authorship to detract from the achievements of women writers, asserting, for example, that the novels of Scudéry and Lafayette were primarily written by male collaborators (i.e., Georges de Scudéry and the Duc de La Rochefoucauld). When Scudéry authored her first great novel apart from the salon, her brother almost certainly did contribute something to it, although contemporaries knew he took too much credit. More importantly, it was all about the people she knew in the Blue Room and about their group activities. Not only did reading it become one of those group activities; the novel itself featured the kind of games that characterized the salons, allowing their members to engage creatively with one another while showing off their individual wit and sensibility, all the while denying that they were engaged in anything more than a game or trifle—for anything more admittedly serious might smack too much of ungentle labor or unfeminine learning. The game from

Scudéry's *Clélie*, the *Carte de Tendre*, really was played like a board game in her salon. It is of a piece with the toy "Chambre du Sublime" presented to the king by one of Lafayette's habitués, as well as with language games such as competing to come up with witty maxims or amusing tales, which resulted in works like the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld (developed in the salon of Madame de Sablé), or the collections of fairy tales published, most famously, by Charles Perrault (see Vol. E), but earlier and in greater numbers by women such as Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, the Comtesse de Murat, l'Heritier de Villandon, and Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont.

Another "unserious" or informal literary genre that flourished in connection with *préciosité* and salon culture, the familiar letter, is in some ways the most easily attributed to a single author, although it too reflects the dialogic nature of salon authorship. One topic for class discussion might be to compare and contrast the dialogic character of Molière's drama about pedagogy and gender relations with that of contemporary feminized salon genres such as the letter and the literary game. The Marquise de Sévigné brought the epistolary form to new heights of artifice and linguistic *préciosité*. The contrast between her style and that of Elisabeth Charlotte von der Pfalz, a German princess who became duchesse d'Orléans on her marriage to the brother of Louis XIV, is highly instructive. A member of the royal family and most emphatically not a *précieuse*, the duchess's letters are as frank, earthy, and uncompromisingly direct about the body, sex, age, social hypocrisies, war, and death as those of Madame de Sévigné are exquisite in their refined elaborations of indirect expression. Even the longer and less obviously personal or ephemeral literary works that emerged from salon society, such as the novels of Scudéry and Lafayette, were first circulated and first created a stir within the salons, where they were commented on by other members.

The influence of *préciosité* preceded, coincided with, and continued on after the great age of French classical literature (c. 1650–1680), and the most influential literary men helped promote the *précieuses'* often anonymously published works. They also provided the learned commentary that helped raise these modestly presented "trifles" to the level of serious literature: Bishop Huet's important *Letter on the Origin of Romances* was appended to Lafayette's romance, *Zayde*, while the Sieur Du Plaisir's *Sentiments on History* originally appeared as a commentary attached to her novella, *The Princess of Clèves*. The great literary men in turn were influenced by the society and aesthetics of the *précieuses*, above all the tragedian Pierre Corneille, who was all his life a star of salon society.

In 1659, when Lafayette opened her exclusive Chambre du Sublime, the Blue Room was long vanished and the Marais Saturdays were dying away. Yet *préciosité* was becoming more widespread and popular than ever. Molière had just returned to Paris after more than a decade as a provincial actor and was looking for a topical subject that would help make his name as an original playwright. Everybody was talking about *préciosité*, so Molière presented his first great original comedy, *The Ridiculous Précieuses* (1659). Nonetheless, he took the precaution of spreading it about that his target was strictly the vulgar middle-class *précieuses* of the provinces rather than the admirable (and powerful) Parisian ones. He mocks not only the

female *précieuses* but also their male associates, the *précieux* or alcovists, which he ridicules as extravagantly silly fops in shoes with heels, hats covered with plumes, and coats covered with ribbons and lace. Molière describes both *précieuses* and *précieux* as snobs trying to distinguish themselves from the vulgar crowd through their highly artificial language, which he represents as stylized and periphrastic to the point of becoming hermetic and incomprehensible to the uninitiated. In fact, their efforts to distance themselves from the earlier Renaissance tradition known as *gauloiserie*—which made use of much earthier language and frankly sexual (and frequently misogynist) subject matter—through a purification of both language and feeling contributed significantly to the modern French language and to modern attitudes about it. The French Academy, which to this day preserves the purity of the French language, was originally a splinter group formed by men associated with the Blue Room who wanted to create their own male-only literary society. Many current French idioms were invented by the *précieuses*, of which platonic love is only one example that penetrated the English language as well. None of their works, however, were written entirely in such idioms—such excessively elaborate language is actually the invention of the satirists. Thanks to the satires of Molière and others, the word “precious” in this sense developed pejorative connotations in French as well as English by the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, besides enriching the language, the *précieuses* brought to prominence in modern literature numerous literary genres, including the “character” or “moral portrait,” the literary maxim, literary letters and the epistolary form in fiction, and the psychological novel.

Just after Lafayette had opened the *Chambre du Sublime* and Molière had published *The Ridiculous Précieuses* in Paris, the English monarchy was restored (1660) in the person of King Charles II, after more than a decade of Puritan rule. Charles brought home from his French exile a taste for much of what the *précieuses* stood for and the Puritans abhorred: pleasure, beauty, wit, frivolity, and foppery. In England, the French models for these were transposed into a cultural milieu that was more mercantile and commercialized, as well as less extremely politically centralized. These differences allowed for a greater professionalization in literary pursuits and for the idealization of rural “retirement,” as opposed to urban salons, as the perfect locale for both the feelings and the literary creativity celebrated by the French *précieuses*. In England as in France, it was considered degrading for aristocrats to sell anything, especially the products of their own labor; for not doing so was precisely what set them above the classes who had to work for a living. For women even of the upper bourgeoisie to show themselves or circulate their works publicly for money smacked of prostitution, and actresses and authors who displayed their persons and talents to a paying public were assumed to make their sexual services just as publicly available. The rarefied and exclusive salons of the *précieuses*, which were not exactly public, their collaborative modes of writing, and their tendency to circulate their works unpublished among friends, and only then, occasionally and anonymously, publish them—all this allowed French women of the period greater freedom to write for an audience without incurring censure (although there was no such outlet for actresses, who were considered the equiva-

lent of prostitutes and buried, like actors, in unhallowed ground). In England by the time of the Restoration, however, there was neither the unbroken, unchallenged privilege of the French aristocracy nor its antimonarchical impulses, which had given birth to the first salons. In the absence of a strong salon culture, along with a much stronger sense in England of the connection between commerce and national strength, it was possible for a middle-class woman like Aphra Behn, associated with the theater, to become a successful professional writer, in part by translating and elaborating upon French models—even though she was frequently charged with indecency in both her life and works.

It may seem odd to modern readers that most of the early professional women writers in England (such as Behn and the slightly later Mary Delarivier Manley and Jane Barker), although not aristocrats, passionately held to Tory or monarchist politics, which today seems a conservative stance potentially at odds with their struggle for greater freedom of expression as women. It must be remembered, however, that in the Restoration context loyalty to the monarchy was associated with relative artistic and sexual freedom, whereas the more politically democratic or leveling forces of Puritanism were accompanied by severe repression of such freedoms, as well as of the aristocratic privileges that could allow certain individual women greater freedom of conduct and expression.

French salon literature included a strong element of the pastoral—the idealization of the simple life of shepherds in the countryside as antidote to the pressures and hypocrisies of urban court life—inherited from classical literature, in particular Roman poetry and the Hellenistic novel. Given that salon culture was so Paris-centered, this idealization of rural simplicity was actually the height of urban artifice and refinement. This pastoral aspect was also adopted by the Englishwomen who were inspired by the *précieuses*. Nearly every Englishwoman who wrote poetry in the later seventeenth or earlier eighteenth centuries adopted a pen name in the pastoral style, beginning with Katherine Philips, “the Matchless Orinda,” poet and translator of Corneille. Aphra Behn called herself “Astraea” after the title character of a popular French pastoral romance by Honoré d’Urfé. Anne Finch was “Ardelia”; Jane Barker was “Galesia”; even Ann Yearsley, a laboring-class woman writing at the end of the eighteenth century when the pastoral vogue was all but ended, was dubbed “Lactilla” by her bourgeois and aristocratic patrons. In England, however, in the absence either of Louis XIV’s extreme efforts to uproot the aristocracy from their provincial and rural power centers or of prestigious urban salons that could provide a compelling alternative to the royal court, the life, and not just the idiom, of pastoral literature was more widely adopted, especially by women poets. Professional writers like Behn, Manley, and Haywood had to stay in London to earn their livings; but those from the landed classes, more able to imitate that aspect of *préciosité* that celebrated leisure, the pleasures of society, intimate friendships outside marriage, and whose wealth allowed them the privilege of adopting the posture of writing for a cabal of like-minded friends rather than for public consumption, established coteries that were very much like the salons, with the important exception of being nearly always centered in a rural estate. The

poetry that emerged from these literary coterie celebrated the pleasures of “retirement” from the whirl of urban and courtly distractions, consumption, and display, alongside Scudéry’s ideal of platonic love, especially (though not exclusively) between female friends. Katherine Philips was the first to do this, establishing her “Society of Friendship” in remote Wales. Lady Mary Chudleigh sought consolation for what seems to have been an unhappy marriage in the rural solitude that allowed her to read, write, and sustain literary friendships—without which, she wrote, “perhaps I should have been as unhappy as any of my Sex.” “Life,” she wrote in her later years, “is what I have for many Years had no reason to be fond of, and a grave has appeared to me the happiest and best Asylum.”

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, a Stuart loyalist like most other women writers of this era, first retired from court life in response to the exile of James II. Her husband refused to swear allegiance to the new king, William III; thus condemned as a “nonjuror,” he was stripped of office and exiled from court. In 1690 he was arrested for Jacobitism (plotting to reinstate James II), and upon his eventual release the couple permanently retired to a family estate. Extraordinarily happy in her marriage, she was nevertheless subject to that fashionable eighteenth-century ailment known as “the spleen,” a combination of depression, anxiety, boredom, malaise, and fatigue akin to the disproportionately female maladies known in other times as “vapors,” “ennui,” or “hysteria,” and which, like them, was in part a symptom of a feeling of oppressive social restrictions. Like other English women writers of her time, she complains quite openly in her verses about the limitations on women’s learning and writing, despite her exceptional personal happiness and freedom. She also makes clear the importance of rural retirement to her ability to write, quite in contrast to the situation of the French *salonnières*: “I was not so far abandoned by my prudence as, out of mistaken vanity, to let any attempts of mine in poetry show themselves while I lived in such a public place as the court, where everyone would have made their remarks upon a versifying maid of honor, and far the greater number with prejudice, if not contempt.”

Like Behn, Chudleigh, Barker, Yearsley, and the majority of women writing during the Enlightenment era, Anne Finch complains of the obstacles to women’s education as well as the criticism heaped upon those who attempted to put themselves forward in print in spite of it. Women of all classes were “unlettered poets,” to borrow from Ann Yearsley’s title, in the sense that none received a formal, classical literary education, and the Countess of Winchilsea was admired for the same naivete of style as the Bristol milkwoman. Thus William Wordsworth praises the Countess’s poetry in the very same terms used for his contemporary, the poor, uneducated Yearsley: “her style in rhyme is often admirable, chaste, tender, and vigorous; and entirely free from sparkle, antithesis and . . . over-culture.” Despite their success and recognition, all these women still saw themselves as exceptions, as swimming upstream. This remained true even by the end of the period, with writers like Barbauld, Yearsley, and Wollstonecraft; in fact, in important ways more conservative attitudes about women’s proper role and restriction to the domestic sphere predominated in the later eighteenth and nineteenth cen-

turies than in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—in part because of the demise of courtly culture, and with it of the prerogatives and permissions it had lent certain privileged women.

Classroom Strategies

Classroom strategies involving connections to works in the *Anthology* beyond this Perspectives section might be organized, for example, around several related major themes. One of these would be the “Woman Question,” the historical debate about female education and women’s nature and proper place in marriage and society. A second theme might be the way women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used coterie and salon culture to form alternative communities, outside of marriage or public life, that supported their ability to write and to create public, literary voices. Third, their works can be analyzed in terms of the generic and stylistic choices made in order to construct such voices. A fourth theme connecting many works in this *Anthology* is that of feminine gender (in particular) as a fabrication and a performance, an idea that is fairly overt in much literature of the period, centuries before Judith Butler theorized it (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1989).

It can be especially useful to help students understand the reality, the seriousness, the profound inscription in both custom and law of severe restrictions on women in this period. This can be done simply through emphasis and elucidation of attitudes and references included within many of the texts excerpted in this Perspectives section, as well as others in Volume D, such as Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication*, Barbauld’s “Rights of Woman,” Kant’s “What Is Enlightenment?,” or Diderot’s *Supplement*. Without historical knowledge, however, students may have trouble picking up on the cues in these texts themselves and may react with impatience to what might look like whining, playing the victim, or worse still, collaborating incomprehensibly in their own oppression, on the part of women writers of the time. Pierre Choderlos de Laclos wrote in his 1784 essay on the education of women that women, who deserved equal access to education, should not rely on men to defend their interests and needed to seize independence on their own. Nevertheless, “You go, girl” was just not so easily said, let alone done, back then, and students may need help to understand why and how that was so. Lady Chudleigh’s lines, “Wife and servant are the same, / But only differ in the name” (*To the Ladies*, lines 1–2) can hardly be said to involve metaphor, when in both law and custom there were similarities between the two states that many modern students would find shocking. We still speak today, for example, of a “rule of thumb,” which was originally a custom followed by male heads of households when deciding how stout a rod to use when beating a wife, child, or servant: if it was no thicker than his thumb, it was less likely to cause actionable injury. In fact, many writers of the era pushed the analogy of servitude further than Lady Chudleigh did and likened marriage, for women, to slavery. Examples of the widespread trope in women’s writing of marriage as servitude or oppression can be found in some of

the poems by the Countess of Winchelsea and Katherine Philips, as well as of Lady Chudleigh. Even one of the most privileged women of the time, the duchesse d'Orléans, writes in letters included in this *Anthology* of her silver and ornaments being seized and sold by her husband to pay his personal debts, while her ancestral lands were being seized and despoiled by his brother, Louis XIV. By the end of the period, the growth of the abolitionist movement owed much to the conflation of the two social groups, women and slaves. During the nineteenth century, as a result, the identification of abolitionist discourse with that of women's emancipation and suffrage was notoriously strong.

One of the main ways in which the status of women resembled that of slaves was in their being debarred (albeit to differing degrees) from education and literacy. So true was this that Samuel Johnson was moved to make his famous quip about the fact of a woman writing at all being a remarkable performance in itself, regardless of quality, like that of a dog dancing on its hind legs. The writers included in this Perspectives section were all exceptional in their access to education and in daring to write for an audience, and all were very markedly self-conscious of their status as exceptions. All of the women writers included in Volume D, whether published during their lifetimes or not, were well known in literary circles, gaining male as well as female admirers, including powerful male patrons among the contemporary literati. Many of them, including Lady Mary Chudleigh, Madeleine de Scudéry, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Anna Letitia Barbauld, were known for their erudition in areas specifically off-limits to women, including classical languages, history, science, and philosophy. The self-consciousness of all these writers as exceptions who, by learning and writing at all, were violating principles of feminine decorum found in every conduct book, in countless polemics and sermons, and in many works of literature—even those written by women—led to a consistent pose of gendered modesty in their claims as authors. Anne Finch, dreading the censorship of public opinion that had hurled the epithets of “whore” and “punk” at Aphra Behn, meekly conceded, “a little too loosely she writ.” Finch's own poem, “The Introduction,” for example, makes the by then standard gesture of humbly ceding the laurel of literary supremacy to another. This rhetorical move, much like the invocation of the muse in epic, can be followed through many works to trace the growth of a feminine literary tradition. Writers as early as Chudleigh in the seventeenth century through Jane Austen in the nineteenth lay claim to an authorial voice by acknowledging the genius of others—particularly other women, who, by preceding them, both in time and, so the rhetoric goes, in excellence, have made way, in all senses, for the speaker's new and bold attempts.

Such strategies for establishing an authorial voice are related to those typically used by early women writers to establish or invoke an audience for their works. The Countess of Winchelsea's opening line to “The Introduction,” “Did I my lines intend for public view—,” perfectly exemplifies the ambiguous status of female authorship and the importance of the private audiences they constructed in coterie or salons. Point out to students how this authorial “I” quickly slips into a conspiratorial, feminine “we” subject to the masculine proscription dominating the

culture at large. Lady Chudleigh similarly, although, like Finch, not participating in an established coterie such as that of Katherine Philips, imagines herself through print addressing a virtual coterie of ladies who would join with her to “make it our whole business to be wise.” It is the communal strength of this “we” that allows the speaker in Finch’s “The Introduction” to go on to rewrite history, as Mary Astell had advocated earlier and Jane Austen would perform later, and as Aphra Behn, Madeleine de Scudéry, and Marie de Lafayette all did in very different modes—from a perspective that allows for a recognition of women’s contributions both as heroines and as historians.

A discussion of literary form should be linked to the theme of the coterie or salon and the construction of the authorial voice that addresses such an audience. The conspiratorially private “we” of Anne Finch’s “The Introduction” leads to the dialogic structure of her “Friendship Between Ephelia and Ardelia,” which, like the two poems by Katherine Philips included in the *Anthology* on female friendship and marriage, constructs female platonic friendship as the ideal context for both literature and life. The dialogic form and the invocation of a private audience of female friends and male sympathizers in these poems is closely related to the choice of the letter form by so many prose writers of the time, whether in fiction or nonfiction. Compare the tone of Anne Finch’s, Mary Chudleigh’s, or Katherine Philips’s coterie poetry, or even Ann Yearsley’s open confidence to a fellow “unlettered poet,” with that of the letters of Madame de Sévigné or the duchesse d’Orléans. Read these in the context of Madeleine de Scudéry’s sketch of the superior “we” of the salon community and its contempt for the hoi polloi whose vulgar sensibilities could not possibly appreciate the refinements of its imaginative productions. Scudéry’s “The Map of Tender” from *Clélie*, like the poems of Katherine Philips, can help illuminate the seriousness of courtly games and the importance of a sense of social bonding based on superior understanding and sensitivity exclusive to the literary coterie. Contrast them with Graffigny’s use of the classical epistolary tradition of the heroides as in Ovid, for example: Graffigny’s heroine, instead of addressing an audience of female friends, sends love letters to an absent male who never responds, leaving her speaking alone into the void—an exercise which, nevertheless, allows room for her own voice to develop. Such juxtapositions can help students see how early women writers’ quest for a female authorial voice and for poetic fame is linked to the culture of salons and coteries, whose female communities and courtly games enabled them to construct the pastoral, epistolary, and other gendered masks from behind which these authors could make themselves heard.

Aphra Behn as poet, for example, equates (in terms perhaps less retiring than those adopted by Mary Chudleigh or Ann Finch) a pastoral, coterie community with a trans-historical female literary tradition. Having adopted a pastoral persona already in the context of a youthful love affair, as a mature poet she begs her muse for poetic fame by invoking the achievements of her predecessors, albeit without the modesty of some of them: “Let me with Sappho and Orinda be / Oh ever sacred nymph, adorned by thee; / And give my verses immortality.” “Orinda” is unquestionably the pastoral poetic identity of Katherine Philips, and whether

“Sappho” is Madeleine de Scudéry or the ancient Greek poet whose name Scudéry had adopted as a poetic persona in her own bid for literary immortality, surely both are invoked in a move that, with a single name, establishes a tradition of female poetic fame stretching from Behn’s own time back to archaic Greece. This strategy can be contrasted, however, with the entirely different, more overtly theatrical mask Behn dons as narrator of *Oroonoko*. At different points near the end of the narrative she takes apparently contradictory stances, making the standard feminine move in one place of apologizing for having “only a female pen to celebrate his fame” (p. 321), yet in the closing sentence, having already established her relationship to the London theater world, she dares to hope that “the reputation of my pen is considerable enough to make his glorious name to survive to all ages” (p. 341). This appropriation of the dramatist’s and historian’s voice stands in bold contrast to the more standard apology for the “female pen” made commonly by Behn’s contemporaries and successors.

The pastoral masks that allowed seventeenth-century women writers to ventriloquize their own authorial voices are not far removed from the widespread theme in literature through the eighteenth century of the female toilette, a theatrical ritual that allowed for the performance of feminine gender, or “female character.” A number of texts in this *Anthology* deal with various aspects of this theme. The most obvious place to begin is with a comparison of satires on the female toilette, that mysterious operation by which, with the aid of “puffs, powders, and patches,” imperfect bodies of flesh and blood were transformed into dazzling objects of desire. *The Rape of the Lock* (p. 523) is a good place to start any discussion of the theatrical staging of eighteenth-century femininity. Swift’s “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (p. 289) takes us from the realm of Pope’s airy sylphs back to Rochester’s world—never left far behind—where the “most divine pleasures of love remain always disturbingly close to less romanticized bodily functions. The discovery of Swift’s Strephon in this poem—“Oh! Celia, Celia, Celia shits!” implies one of Swift’s many unreliable, simple-minded narrators, for this bodily fact could come as a shock only to one who buys into his culture’s representations of upper-class women not as mortal human subjects, but as fantastic creatures somewhere between goddesses and dolls. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s retort to it (p. 292) is swift to retaliate with equal indelicacy on behalf of her sex. Compare these texts’ staging of femininity in domestic settings to the emphasis on the theater itself as social space in other works of the time. The theater is the site of initial erotic encounter, and the theatrics of dressing and sex remains a central theme throughout Eliza Haywood’s “Fantomina” (p. 569). The letters of Elisabeth Charlotte von der Pfalz, duchesse d’Orléans (p. 271), besides bringing alive the importance of the theater as a social space, describe her strategies for getting around the time-wasting but necessary social requirements of dressing and cards at court. The frivolous significance—and economic ruinousness—of dress as a marker of nationality, gender, and class are an important subject in Montesquieu (p. 426). Even the colonies become both a source for extravagant costume and a site for the theatrical performance of gender when, in Behn’s

Oroonoko, the narrator describes her encounter with the Caribs, who marvel at her elaborate dress (pp. 297–298).

The themes of domestic life, courtly ritual, and sexual mores can also form a good basis of comparison between any of the European texts just mentioned and contemporary works from more distant cultural contexts. From Volume D of this *Anthology*, these might include Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone* or Shen Fu's *Six Records of a Floating Life*. In Volume B, *The Tale of Genji* in particular provides an excellent comparative example of courtly, vernacular literature in which the status of women and the performance of gender and social status through elaborate dress and ritual are of central importance. What details become important in each of these descriptions of aristocratic daily life, dressing, or courtship rituals? Are such rituals viewed with similar or different attitudes of satire or seriousness? Against what moral standards are characters of different sexes and their actions measured in each? What can we learn from these texts about traditional gender roles in each culture and about how they are being reinforced or questioned in their respective literatures?

Aphra Behn

Oroonoko is the perfect teaching text. It is short, the story gripping, the description vivid, and it occupies a central place in just about all possible significant discussions relating to its era. Whether an instructor wishes to focus on literary form; generic conventions and the rise of the novel; issues of gender, race, and/or class; colonialism; slavery; or Stuart politics touching on issues of revolution and reform, this work reliably gives rise to fascinating classroom discussions.

Historical Background and Reception

Aphra Behn achieved so much recognition in her lifetime that a contemporary dubbed her “sole Empress of the Land of Wit.” Yet her reception, while she lived and until quite recently, reflected the extreme ambivalence of her culture toward such a glaring exception to gender norms. Like her elder contemporary Molière, Behn was charged with plagiarism for following the well-established practice of using other works as sources (particularly Thomas Killigrew's play *Thomaso*)—but in her case the envious rivals had in their arsenal the established assumption that women were incapable of original creation. She retorted that “the only stolen object is the sign of Angellica” (the prostitute in Killigrew's play). Indeed the accusation most persistently leveled at her, not only throughout her career but for centuries after its end, was that of indecency—merely for having kept up with the bawdy fashion of Restoration comedy generally. In this mode of attack her detractors had at their disposal the prevailing association of both publication and the theater with the prostitution of “public women.”

Women had always been forbidden to display themselves publicly on stage until, less than a decade before the production of Behn's first play, Charles II had

decreed (1662) that female roles should be played by women, arguing that this would make plays more realistic and thus capable of providing moral lessons more usefully applied to real life. The old assumptions that any woman who displayed herself publicly for pay, like any woman who sold her own work to the public for money, was a prostitute actually or virtually, did not suddenly vanish, however, at the king's decree. Nearly all Behn's contemporaries, even those who befriended and praised her, got in easy jabs on this score. When, like them, she included prostitutes as characters in her plays, Matthew Prior snarled that it takes one to know one. She portrayed them so well, he wrote, because she could "describe the cunning of a Jilting Whore" from direct experience; while Robert Gould succinctly summed up the common sense of his age: "For Punk and Poetess agree so Pat, / You cannot be This and not be That." John Dryden, one of Behn's strongest and most influential literary supporters, well expressed his own and society's ambivalence about women writers in his instructions to Elizabeth Thomas: "you, who write only for your Diversion . . . always avoiding (as I know you will) the Licenses which Mrs. Behn allowed herself, of writing loosely, and giving, (if I may have leave to say so) some Scandal to the Modesty of her Sex." He goes on to call himself "too much a libertine" in his own poems; but then his sex was not required to be modest. It might be all right for women to write in the seclusion of their own closets, for the pleasure of their intimate circle; but to expose the productions of their minds for public sale, and to endeavor to please the public by including the racy bits for which it clamored, was crossing a line. Even Anne Finch had to concede, "a little too loosely she writ."

Notwithstanding the taunts and criticisms of some of her male colleagues, Behn was most outraged by the charge of indecency when leveled against her by other women, calling it "the most unjust and silly aspersion, Woman could invent to cast on Woman; and which only my being a Woman has procured me; *That it was bawdy, the least and most Excusable fault in the Men writers, . . . but from a Woman it was unnaturall.*" Behn's response to the challenge of rigid gender norms was to develop a fluid, ambiguously gendered authorial persona, or rather a series of ever-shifting personae. "Personae" were connected with the theater since ancient times, and in Behn's day also with its associated sexual intrigue and prostitution (as is beautifully illustrated in Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina*, 1724, Vol. D, p. 569). Like an actress, Behn adopted and changed personae as suited her needs. "All I ask," she retorted to those who accused her of unfeminine immodesty, "is the Priviledge for my Masculine Part the Poet in me (if any such you will allow me), to tread in those successful Paths my Predecessors have so long thriv'd in. . . . I value Fame as much as if I had been born a *Hero*. . . ." Yet elsewhere, still pursuing the same project of poetic fame, she prays to be classed with other women who had attained it previously: "Let me with Sappho and Orinda be / Oh ever sacred nymph, adorned by thee; / And give my verses immortality." "Orinda" is Katherine Philips (1632-1664); it is not clear whether "Sappho" is Madeleine de Scudéry (1608-1701) or the ancient Greek poet whose name Scudéry had adopted as a poetic persona in her own bid for literary immortality; surely both are invoked (and all three repre-

sented in this *Anthology*). Behn similarly had adopted her own pastoral moniker as one of her personae. She and her lover William Scot had early in their flirtation adopted the literary names “Astraea” and “Celadon,” from the popular French pastoral romance *L’Astrée*, by Honoré d’Urfé. There is evidence that this relationship began in Surinam, where Behn would have gone ordinarily by her father’s name—whatever that might have been. She continued to use alternately the names Astraea and Mrs. Behn, *both* of which may well have been invented, to the end of her life and literary career. This variety of names signals a plurality of identities—each of them governed by convention—which Behn manipulated and played off against one another as best she might in her struggle for poetic and erotic freedom. She was no feminist in the strict sense; her goal was not to improve the social status of women generally or change her culture’s perceptions of femininity, but simply to be allowed as an individual to do what she felt she needed to do, regardless of gender restrictions. Behn uses the strategy of shifting, ambiguously gendered authorial personae to dazzlingly complex effect in *Oroonoko* (discussed below) and other works. It was not unambiguously successful, however, as a means for effecting her goal of personal poetic fame and respect in despite of strictures on female character.

During Behn’s lifetime even her detractors were recognizing her success in having become an author important enough to merit their attention. Indeed, her immediate fame long outlived her; her best-known play, *The Rover*, was revived almost every year in London until the middle of the eighteenth century—well over half a century after her death. There followed more than two centuries, however, during which her works sank into obscurity. Western norms of femininity became more restrictive rather than less so during that time, and the kind of modesty Dryden enjoined upon Elizabeth Thomas became an absolute requirement for anything a woman might seek to publish, even as the eighteenth century saw an explosion, sustained thereafter, in publications by women authors. Behn’s bawdy plays were no longer acted, and her often erotic verses were excluded from the increasingly popular anthologies of women poets. In the early twentieth century some interest in her revived, but what discussion there was remained more historical and biographical than literary until the 1970s, since which time her works have been re-published, re-edited, and given the critical attention they deserve.

Although her biography was sometimes emphasized at the expense of serious attention to her works during the last century, it must be acknowledged that Behn’s life is of real historical significance, and her writings reflect important political issues of her time. She remained involved in politics as well as literature all her life, and she was briefly imprisoned in the summer of 1682 for too warmly defending Charles II against the pretensions of his illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth. At this time of increasing political unrest (as the death of Charles II approached without a legitimate heir), the London theaters began to fall on hard times, politically and financially. The two remaining London companies merged after the King’s folded, thus reducing the demand for new plays. During the last five years of her life, suffering from illness and poverty, Behn turned to other genres. She began publish-

ing a prodigious quantity of translations from the French as well as original poetry and prose fiction, the latter often inspired by contemporary French experiments with the novel form, including one of the earliest epistolary novels in English.

Classroom Strategies and Connections with Related Works

Oroonoko is typical of Behn's experimentation with fictional forms after playwriting ceased to be profitable. Like her other prose works, it is clearly influenced by the blurring of fiction and history with which the contemporary French women writers she translated had made a great noise in the salons, and also by the English interest in newspapers. Although the title character and the African episode clearly belong to the more aristocratic genres of romance, drama, and history, the section set in Surinam draws strikingly on the more journalistic strategies associated with the novel, claiming the authority of an eyewitness for the truth of the narrative, which is set in an English colony, distant and exotic, yet populated with recognizably real English people. The pamphlet by George Warren presented as a Resonance selection for Behn's work provides an important context for understanding the relationship of the early English novel to popular nonfiction prose forms (for further discussion of Warren's work, see p. 51).

Connections with Other Works in the *Anthology*

Numerous works in this *Anthology*, fictional or otherwise, take the form of travel narratives, and thus lend themselves perfectly to interesting comparisons with *Oroonoko*. These include, in the present volume, Voltaire's *Candide*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and all the works excerpted in "Perspectives: Journeys in Search of the Self" (Çelebi's *Book of Travels*, Matsuo Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, Graffigny's *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, Diderot's *Supplement*, and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*). The Chinese narrative *Journey to the West*, in Volume C, would also fit such a comparison. In any of these, the character and function of the narrator, or the lessons learned from the encounter with alien cultures and mores, make for good points of comparison with *Oroonoko*. Most of the works in "Perspectives: Journeys in Search of the Self," such as those by Equiano, Graffigny, or Montesquieu, feature first-person narrators. The role of these narrators might be contrasted with that of the unreliable narrator in *Oroonoko*, or in turn with the differently unreliable narrator of *Gulliver*. As in *Oroonoko*, the difference between the narrator's and author's voices in Swift's tale is difficult but important to untangle. What clues are we given as to the speaker's character in each work? The narrators of both *Gulliver* and *Oroonoko* protest too much about the truthfulness of their accounts. What does each work imply about the value of fictionalizing, even as it condemns lying and exalts truthfulness? In works that do not use first-person narrators, such as *Candide* or the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville*, how does the

change of narrative perspective affect a reader's response to what is narrated about worlds that the implied reader has not experienced directly?

Many of the works in this *Anthology*, like *Oroonoko*, play with the notion of the encounter between "civilized" and "savage" people. Montesquieu, Graffigny, Diderot, and Equiano all, following Behn, turn the assumptions underpinning European colonialism, Orientalism, and slavery on their heads, to illustrate how much more civilized, in Europe's own professed terms, are Europe's "others" in Latin America, Africa, Oceania, and the Middle East. Several of the larger selections in this volume could also be brought into such a discussion. A good passage in Swift to focus on in these terms is the beginning of the fourth paragraph of Chapter 1 ("In this desolate condition . . . on either side"), or his account of "civilized" life to his Houyhnhnm master in Chapters 3–7. What does it tell us that Gulliver fears being wounded by a savage arrow, or expects to appease the Houyhnhnms with trinkets? Aphra Behn's encounter with the Caribs of Surinam might be compared to this passage, or to *Candide's* philosophical musings in Chapter 16 on Dr. Pangloss's optimistic evaluation of the "pure state of human nature," as he and Cacambo await their preparation as dinner for the Biglugs. Similarly, the significance of the figure of the Portuguese captain in *Gulliver's Travels*—a truly civilized man by comparison to Gulliver—might be compared to that of Oroonoko in relation to Aphra Behn as narrator. Governor Byam, meanwhile, might be discussed in connection with Swift's Yahoos, both in his brutality and his penchant for saying "the thing which is not." Behn's Caribs, like her African hero and Swift's Houyhnhnms, have no conception of lying. Especially poignant for a discussion of this theme in Behn is the Caribs' response to the governor's failure to meet with them as promised, by mourning the death they conceive could alone have prevented him from keeping his word. Rousseau's theories about man in the state of nature, as outlined in the excerpt from *The Social Contract*, are also relevant here.

Sexuality in many travel narratives functions as one particularly visceral aspect of their engagement with the notion of the encounter between "civilized" and "savage" people. *Oroonoko* displays this centrality of sexual mores to the notion of civilization especially in the romance plot that begins in the African kingdom of Coramantien, concluding with Oroonoko's heroic Roman-style execution of his pregnant wife to save his honor from stain and his wife and unborn child from slavery. Warren's *An Impartial Description of Surinam* comments very tellingly on sexuality in his account of planters' encounters with Carib women. This *Anthology* provides many further excellent examples, fictional and nonfictional, that dwell on comparisons of sexual mores across cultures and their broader social and moral implications: in particular Diderot's *Supplement*, Graffigny's *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*. Students might be encouraged to explore the connections between the "Woman Question" and colonial encounters. To what extent, in what ways, to what ends, and with what implications are encounters with non-European cultures figured as sexual encounters? How do

Behn's and Equiano's versions of the "captivity narrative" compare to Graffigny's, for example, in this regard?

Slavery of course was of all the colonial trades the most brutal and crucial to European imperialism, and many of our texts address it directly or indirectly. From the dizzying complexities of the detailed portrayal of plantation slavery in *Oroonoko* to the simple, shocking directness of Voltaire's *Candide*, "This is the price you pay for the sugar you eat in Europe" (p. 485), the works in this volume confront the issue in almost every conceivable cultural context and textual register. Montesquieu's harem is enslaved, and then revolts—a comparison of this with the harem in *Oroonoko*'s African episode, or with the slave revolt in the Surinam episode, could give rise to interesting insights about the intersections between the discourse on sexuality and that on slavery, imperialism, and Orientalism in the period. In Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver, like the Yahoos, is enslaved by the Houhynhym; while hardly a real or realistic representation of slavery, the allegory encourages critical reflection on the practice. The representation of slavery in *Candide*, on the other hand, participates, as in *Oroonoko*, in a trenchant kind of realism in its depiction of the contemporary slave trade, while at the same time, again like *Oroonoko*, invoking the ancient romance literary topos of abduction and enslavement. A similar combination of registers can be seen in Graffigny's novel written from the point of view of a captive Peruvian woman who finds her captor is a gentle Prince Charming but rejects him anyway, and with good reason. Warren's *Impartial Description of Surinam* documents the businesslike English planter's acknowledgment of atrocity bizarrely combined with evasion of any sense of agency or even serious regret. Of course the key text in the section for a comparative discussion of the topic of slavery is Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*. This extremely complex text, like *Oroonoko*, artfully combines the conventions of Western literary genres familiar to its audience with the project of offering a genuine account of actual, contemporary, ongoing atrocity. In authoring a complex work in English for an English audience, Equiano adopts European literary conventions, following the narrative patterns of fiction writers like Behn and Graffigny in first describing an idyllic life untouched by corrupt Western customs or values, from which the narrator is violently wrested when he is taken captive by European invaders. A fascinating classroom exercise would be to compare the stakes in the scholarly debate over whether Behn ever actually made the voyage to Surinam with those in the more recent controversy over whether Equiano ever really experienced the Middle Passage, or was rather born into slavery in the Carolinas (for details on both these controversies, see under Warren and Equiano in this manual).

The most interesting and enduring of the imaginary travel accounts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took, like *Oroonoko* in comparison to Warren's account, a distinctly more anticolonial stance than their nonfictional sources, and can fruitfully be read together with Behn's work in this regard. Diderot's critique of the Bougainville expedition comes through in the ominous farewell speech of his fictional Tahitian elder, warning his people not to welcome the Europeans, who

will inevitably destroy and enslave them. Behn, along with Equiano, Graffigny, and Voltaire, exhibits similar attitudes by dwelling with excruciating vividness on the sufferings entailed in the globalization of European trade. Behn refuses to let us avert our eyes as the best person in the world is dismembered and burned alive. Graffigny describes with a vividness like Behn's, also in the manner of a first-person eyewitness, the violent destruction of a beautiful and humane civilization. Equiano spares us no details of the Middle Passage and other gruesome experiences in his firsthand account of slavery. And the naive European hero of Voltaire's *Candide*, witnessing the sufferings of plantation slaves during his imaginary voyage, learns that this is the cost of trivial luxuries like sugar, coffee, and tea. All share a similar rhetorical goal: to persuade Europeans to take a long, hard look at themselves and their actions. These and the other works in Volume D that feature Western travelers on a journey to little-known parts of the world, such as Wortley Montagu's and Swift's, can further be compared to the fictions about non-Western observers, such as Montesquieu's and Graffigny's, in that they combine their accounts of a Westerner's voyage out with an imagined turning of a non-Western perspective back upon the European self.

Behn's narrator in *Oroonoko*, one of the most complex voices in fiction, embodies the thematic interweaving of issues of gender and race as a European female figure that in many ways serves as a symbolic double of the African title character. As characters within the novel, the two are connected by sympathy, as well as being bound to one another as hero and historian. Both, in different ways and to different degrees, lack yet have power in their world. Oroonoko is a prince and a slave at the same time. Behn too at once possesses and lacks power, in both of her double roles as author/narrator and as character within the story. She goes to Surinam as the governor's daughter, but by the time she arrives has no father to protect or lend her authority. She is left with a vague, ambiguous social standing, nearly as abstract in Surinam as is Oroonoko's royal status, with no ability to enforce her will.

After calling herself a mere female historian, she nevertheless claims the supreme power for her pen of "making his glorious name to survive to all ages" (p. 341). Both Behn's narrator and Oroonoko claim to tell the truth in a world where no one else does, and both are portrayed as morally superior to the English colonists who surround them, but less powerful because of their gender or race. Female characters in many contemporary works figure the impossibility of keeping the other safely separate from the self. The Peruvian princess, for example, in emphatic contrast to Montesquieu's Persian visitor on whom she is modeled, is both woman and "savage," and her astonishment at Parisian customs has largely to do with what she sees as irrational French attitudes toward women.

Behn's handling of racial difference, discussed by many critics, is another aspect of the text that demonstrates the slipperiness of the distinction between European self and colonized other. Many have observed the fact that, aside from a peculiarly shiny blackness, Oroonoko and Imoinda are described in European terms, with Roman features appropriate to heroic romance. Point out to students

that in the illustration accompanying the text in the *Anthology* (p. 300), Imoinda is even depicted as white, which was commonly the case in many such illustrations as well as dramatic representations. A discussion of the physical descriptions of Oroonoko and Imoinda can lead in at least two directions: to the topic of the significance of the body throughout the work, or to one about the Western figure of the “noble savage.” The subject of the physicality of the body is important throughout the work, from the self-mutilation of the Carib warriors to the carvings on Imoinda’s face, to her decapitation and Oroonoko’s dismemberment. Dismemberment and disfigurement seem to be connected to some “savagery” in all the non-European characters for which Behn claims an extreme gentleness, innocence, and nobility. A comparison with Rousseau’s ideas about the nobility of man in a “state of nature” in *The Social Contract* might help students grasp the concept of the “noble savage” that began well before Behn, with Montaigne if not earlier, and continued long after Rousseau’s time.

Aphra Behn participates in a French female literary tradition as much as she does in that of Montaigne and Rousseau. In the absence of a comparable English salon culture, along with a much stronger sense in England of the connection between commerce and national strength, it was possible for a middle-class woman like Aphra Behn, associated with the theater, to become a successful professional writer, in part by translating and elaborating upon French models—even though she was frequently charged with indecency in both her life and works. French salon literature included a strong element of the pastoral, and this pastoral aspect was adopted by the Englishwomen who were inspired by the *précieuses*. Nearly every Englishwoman who wrote poetry in the later seventeenth or earlier eighteenth centuries adopted a pen name in the pastoral style, beginning with Katherine Philips, “the Matchless Orinda,” poet and translator of Corneille. Aphra Behn called herself “Astraea,” after the title character of a popular French pastoral romance by Honoré d’Urfé, as mentioned earlier. Anne Finch was “Ardelia”; Jane Barker was “Galesia”; even Ann Yearsley, a laboring-class woman writing at the end of the eighteenth century when the pastoral vogue was all but ended, was dubbed “Lactilla” by her bourgeois and aristocratic patrons. Aphra Behn as poet equates (in terms perhaps less retiring than those adopted by Mary Chudleigh or Ann Finch) a pastoral, coterie community with a transhistorical female literary tradition. In the verses quoted near the beginning of this essay, she begs her muse for poetic fame by invoking a feminine literary tradition that encompasses England (Philips), France (Scudéry), and ancient Greece (Sappho). This strategy can be contrasted, however, with the entirely different, more overtly theatrical mask Behn dons as narrator of *Oroonoko*, where at different points near the end of the narrative she takes apparently contradictory stances, making the standard feminine move in one place of apologizing for having “only a female pen to celebrate his fame” (p. 321), yet in the closing sentence, having already established her relationship to the London theater world, daring to hope that “the reputation of my pen is considerable enough to make his glorious name to survive to all ages” (p. 341). And

yet, almost surreptitiously, it is the name of the female heroine, Imoinda, that is left to reverberate through the ages as the last word of the piece. This appropriation of the dramatist's and historian's voice stands in bold contrast to the more standard apology for the "female pen" made commonly by Behn's contemporaries and successors.

In its bold seizing of poetic authority, Behn's rhetoric in *Oroonoko* might be compared to Pope's in *The Rape of the Lock* (Vol. D, p. 523). Both the opening and closing lines of that poem, as in many of Pope's other works ("Windsor-Forest," "Eloisa to Abelard," the "Epistle to Arbuthnot"), bring the power of the poet openly to the fore. Behn and Pope share a great deal as outsider, middle-class writers (a woman, a deformed Catholic) who very self-consciously fashioned for themselves a new kind of *professional* authorial persona. Why, or to what effect, for example, does *The Rape of the Lock* conclude, much like *Oroonoko*, by stressing the poet's ability to exalt and immortalize the hero(ine) and his/her history?

A further basis of comparison between *Oroonoko*, *The Rape of the Lock*, and many other works in the same volume of the *Anthology* involves the construction of a specifically gendered persona through the theatrics of dressing. The pastoral masks that allowed seventeenth-century women writers to ventriloquize their own authorial voices are not far removed from the widespread theme in literature through the eighteenth century of the female toilette, a theatrical ritual that allowed for the performance of feminine gender, or "female character." The colonies become both a source for extravagant yet realistic theatrical costume (p. 301) and a site for the theatrical performance of gender when, in Behn's *Oroonoko*, the narrator describes her encounter with the Caribs, who marvel at her elaborate dress (pp. 297–298). A number of other texts in this *Anthology* deal with various aspects of this theme, including several satires on the female toilette, that mysterious operation by which, with the aid of "puffs, powders, and patches," imperfect bodies of flesh and blood were transformed into dazzling objects of desire, as in *The Rape of the Lock*. Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" takes us from the realm of Pope's airy sylphs back to Rochester's world—never left far behind—where the divinest pleasures of love remain always disturbingly close to less romanticized bodily functions. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's retort to it (p. 292) is swift to retaliate with equal indelicacy on behalf of her sex. Compare these texts' staging of femininity in domestic settings to the emphasis on the theater itself as social space in other works of the time. The theater is the site of initial erotic encounter, and the theatrics of dressing and sex remains a central theme throughout Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* (p. 569). The letters of Elisabeth Charlotte von der Pfalz, duchesse d'Orléans (p. 271), besides bringing alive the importance of the theater as a social space, describe her strategies for getting around the time-wasting but necessary social requirements of dressing and cards at court (pp. 281–282). The frivolous significance—and economic ruinousness—of dress as a marker of nationality, gender, and class are an important subject in both Graffigny and Montesquieu.

Behn's construction of a persona that can lay claim to poetic and historical authority in *Oroonoko* can provide an illuminating contrast to the rhetorical gestures of some of the other women writers collected in this *Anthology*. Anne Finch's poem, "The Introduction," for example, makes the by then already standard gesture of humbly ceding the palm of literary excellence to another. This rhetorical move in fact, much like the invocation of the muse in epic, can be followed through many works to trace the growth of a feminine literary tradition. Writers as early as Chudleigh in the seventeenth century through Jane Austen in the nineteenth lay claim to authorial voice by acknowledging the genius of others—particularly other women, who, by preceding them, both in time and, so the rhetoric goes, in excellence, have made way, in all senses, for the speaker's new and bold attempts.

As a writer who rewrites history from a markedly feminine point of view, on the other hand, Behn and *Oroonoko* could be compared with the works of some of the French models that Behn read and translated. Like Madeleine de Scudéry in *Clélie* and Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette in *The Countess of Tende*, Behn offers her readers an account of history from a perspective that allows for a recognition of women's contribution to it both as heroines and as historians.



RESONANCE

George Warren

George Warren was a seventeenth-century English planter in the colony of Surinam. The title of his pamphlet, *An Impartial Description of Surinam upon the Continent of Guiana in America, With a History of several strange Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, Insects, and Customs of that Colony, &c., Worthy the Perusal of all, from the Experience of George Warren Gent.*, stresses his impartiality and accuracy in order to persuade prospective planters that his portrayal of conditions in the colony is objective rather than embellished. Ernest Bernbaum identified Warren's pamphlet in 1913 as a source for Behn's *Oroonoko*. Demonstrating a significant overlap between the two texts' accounts of Surinam, Bernbaum claimed he had proven that Behn was "lying" in her claim to have been there personally. Scholars still debate whether Behn really spent time in Surinam or only "stole" information from Warren's work, although a growing consensus credits her with historical accuracy. The larger stakes in this minor historical question lie not in the facts of Behn's itinerary, but rather in the implicit question of what evidence readers need in order to acknowledge the validity of a historical narrative that is doubly marginal, to the extent that it is overtly feminine-gendered and also trains that perspective upon events excluded from the experience of her English audience, those of racial oppression in the colonies.

It is far more interesting, therefore, to contrast how Behn and Warren treat shared details and approach the challenge of convincing their readers of their cred-

ibility as narrators. Questions for classroom discussion might include the following: What is at stake in the scholarly argument about the truth of Behn's claim that she really visited Surinam? Why does it matter whether she did or not? What is the difference between "lying" and fictionalizing? That's exactly the question Behn herself poses in *Oroonoko*, where the bad guys are distinguished by lying, while the hero always tells the truth. Behn's narrator, meanwhile, is in a much more ambiguous position with regard to the question of truth-telling or lying. Compare Behn's and Warren's accounts of tigers, the Indians, slavery, and the Lord Governor, William Byam (mentioned by Warren in his marvelous description of the camel-fly). The contrasts that emerge are extremely revealing about Behn's work. How does it reflect on Behn's construction of her narratorial persona that she tells a conventional story about Oroonoko's heroism in the face of the monstrous tiger, from which her narratorial persona, like all the other conventionally timid females, runs shrieking at the sight—whereas Warren, clearly no feminist, tells us about a woman who shot one from an outhouse, "with more courage than is usual in her sex," to save a man from mauling? Behn's narrator's emphasis on eros, pastoral romance, and costume in her encounter with the Caribs is brought out especially well by contrast with Warren's speculations on how the Caribs might learn the European practice of kissing. Finally, how does Warren's account of slavery in Surinam contextualize the scholarly debate about *Oroonoko*'s implications as a discourse on slavery?



Jonathan Swift

If your students are vexed upon reading Swift, you might do well to remind them that they are experiencing an appropriate response. Much satire—Pope's and Voltaire's are good examples—ridicules the foibles of particular historical figures, writers, or thinkers, allowing the reader to join with the author in enjoying a stance of mocking superiority toward the satiric object. Such satires delight, in this sense, while they instruct, thus exemplifying the predominant Horatian program of Enlightenment literature. A famous letter to Pope written during the period of *Gulliver's* composition (September 29, 1725), however, sums up the opposite spirit of Swift's satire: "I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities and all my love is towards individuals." Swift elsewhere announced, in a similar vein, his design to "vex the world rather than divert it." Vex and instruct, then—such would be the classroom strategy most conformable to the nature of this text.

Historical Approaches

Swift wanted to vex the world in part because he was so thoroughly vexed by it. More so than the other great satirists of the age, he made his services as a political pamphleteer available at different times to the powerful on both sides of the polit-

ical fence. He was not so much a turncoat or opportunist as someone who saw the unworthiness on both sides of any issue, and this view is also what contributes to make his works so vexing, so impossible to pin down as arguments for one side of any controversy in which they engage. Like most of Swift's works, *Gulliver's Travels* is a political satire; like the best of them, its condemnation of all-too-human weakness is broad and ambiguous enough to transcend its local historical context (criticism of Robert Walpole's administration, 1708–1717). Despite the universality of Swift's moral satire, it can be useful to give students some of the historical background that might enable them to perceive his political satire as well. For details on reading *Gulliver's Travels* as political allegory, see Bertrand Goldgar, *Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature* (1976); Phillip Harth, "The Problem of Political Allegory in Gulliver's Travels" (1976); Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967); Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (1968); or F. P. Lock, *The Politics of Gulliver's Travels* (1980).

Swift sought political influence all his life, and indeed originally turned to the Church partly as an avenue to political advancement. (As the official state religion, the Anglican Church was an arm of the state, and advancement within it directly connected to governmental politics.) It was because of his turn to the Church that Swift found himself exiled to Ireland, sent off at first to a remote, ill-paying outpost in the uncongenial Presbyterian North, where he was disappointed also in love, rejected when he proposed marriage to Jane Waring (whom he called "Varina," a daughter of another Anglican cleric). Ireland was the place where Swift found himself cast up like Gulliver among people of strange language and customs, and where he watched in daily increasing outrage as the English behaved like a "pernicious race of little odious vermin," as his King of Brobdingnag calls them.

The death of Queen Anne in 1714 put an abrupt end to the Tory party's power, and thus to all Swift's hopes of continuing a political career in England. In the words of Samuel Johnson, "Swift now, much against his will, commenced Irishman for life, and was to contrive how he might be best accommodated in a country where he considered himself as in a state of exile." Despite this determination, Swift never ceased corresponding with his friends Arbuthnot, Gay, Pope, and the other members of the Scriblerus club, which they had founded in London shortly before the death of Anne. A final visit to them in 1726 resulted in *Gulliver's Travels*, along with Pope's *The Dunciad* and Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.

One of Swift's—and his age's—favorite rhetorical devices, which many instructors find most effective when read aloud in class, is the list. It is amazing what rhetorical force Swift can lend to mere lists, apart from their resonance with the lists in classical epic. While reading his lists, for example, of the causes of war and the weapons that allow such weak animals as humans to make it fearsome, it can be useful to remind students that in the quarter century from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*, Europe from Spain to Poland had been rent by the War of the Spanish Succession, which originated in the succession of the French duke of Anjou to the Spanish throne in 1700 and did not end until 1713–1714—a long process that began with the Treaty of Utrecht, redistribut-

ing many North American colonies among the combatant nations. The very next year (1715), a Jacobite rebellion was firmly and brutally put down in England. The Near East was torn by war in the years immediately preceding *Gulliver's* publication, with the Ottoman Empire attacking the kingdom of Persia in 1723, leading to Persia's partition between the Ottoman and Russian empires the following year. In short, it was at least as violent a time as our own, but combat and casualties directly affected a larger percentage of the European population. Students might want to engage in the exercise of comparing the moving effect of Swift's lists, as indicative of the realities of eighteenth-century warfare, to their own apprehension of warfare, its weaponry, and its effects in the present.

The years leading up to the publication of *Gulliver* were also important for colonial exploration and trade, another aspect of the historical background that can help students connect its allegorical voyages to the realities of the time. Tripoli gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1714 (the same year as the Treaty of Utrecht, the death of Anne, and the founding of the Scriblerus Club), after which it became infamous as a nest of pirates continually harassing British shipping. The disastrous "South Sea Bubble" had just burst in 1720, while the collapse of John Law's investment schemes in New Orleans created a parallel crash of stocks in France. Yet colonial exploitations continued; by 1722 the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI had taken advantage of Britain's and France's new economic weakness to found the Dutch East India Company. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (p. 426), published the year after the "affaire Law" (1721), provided one of Swift's models in philosophical fiction describing the irrationality of familiar customs from a traveler's point of view. The scientific achievements of Swift's time are also significant, even though they are addressed more directly in some of the other books of *Gulliver*; for example, not until 1731 would John Hadley invent the sextant, improving the accuracy of navigation. Sharing small facts like these can lend a poignant realism to *Gulliver's* penchant for arriving at unexpected destinations.

Classroom Strategies

Many of the possible approaches to this text can be categorized either as analysis of how Swift's satire and humor works or as discussion of the themes and moral issues it raises. The latter can be done most fruitfully by using the method of "teaching through controversy" popularized by James Clifford's 1979 article, "Argument and Understanding: Teaching through Controversy," which made this a standard method for teaching Swift.

Analysis of Satire: The effectiveness of any satire relies upon humor, and the sense of humor is notoriously difficult to translate across cultures or historical periods. And yet one of the miracles of literature are those moments when one finds oneself laughing at a joke cracked two thousand years ago—or just three hundred. Encourage students to be guided in their approach to this remote giant of literature by their own sense of humor. Then ask them to analyze how it works: What is

the object of satire—meaning both what is the butt of ridicule, and what is the point of mocking it? By what methods is the fact that this text is satirical, ironic, and humorous, rather than straight and earnest, conveyed to readers? Perform a close reading in class, encouraging students to point out how the language of the passage achieves these ends. What kind of speaker is this? How are style and rhetoric used to satiric effect? Can students think of characters or situations from their own experience that are in any meaningful way reminiscent of Gulliver's? Such an exercise can help students become more aware of the work's ironies and how they operate textually.

Teaching through Controversy: It is now generally acknowledged that the best way to engage students with any of Swift's satires is to make use of the vexation they provoke to teach through controversy. The slipperiness of Swift's ironies and shifting voices guarantee that students will resemble more learned critics in disagreeing in their responses and interpretations. Readers of Book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels* for three centuries have found it perhaps the most controversial of Swift's works, the hardest to pin down. Two topics for such controversial discussion in the classroom include generic questions and moral questions. A more sophisticated approach is to get students to link the two kinds of questions. How might the question of whether *Gulliver's Travels* is a novel or not affect one's answers to the question of whether the Houyhnhnms represent a moral ideal, for example—or vice versa?

Generic Questions: Ask students to discuss whether *Gulliver's Travels* is a novel, or something else—and what it means to define it one way or the other. In what ways might it be important to understand Gulliver as a fictional character? The idea of parody might usefully be introduced in such a discussion—does *Gulliver's Travels* parody literary forms at the same time that it satirizes human conduct?

Moral Questions: *Gulliver's Travels* is an allegory not simply of eighteenth-century politics, of course, but also of one of the fundamental conceptual oppositions informing Enlightenment thought: reason versus passion. The most obvious topic for controversial student discussion is that of whether the text cues readers to view the passion-driven Yahoos as an allegory of the actual human condition, or the rational Houyhnhnms as a desirable or attainable ideal of civilized human behavior. Some points for such a discussion are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Are we Yahoos? Since we are given only the narrator's point of view, we must be guided by the narrator's attitude toward the Yahoos. Ask students to trace the development of that attitude, beginning with Gulliver's first encounter with them. Do students immediately recognize human beings in his initial description? Does Gulliver? Does he identify himself as a Yahoo? Compare the Houyhnhnm master's description of Yahoos to Gulliver's account of Europeans.

Should we strive to be Houyhnhnms? Are the Houyhnhnms being set up as an ideal in contrast to the Yahoos? What are their good and bad qualities or associations? Their society seems to replicate the utopian ideals of Plato's *Republic*.

Symbolically—as identifiably horses and therefore animals—they are equally allusive of another Platonic dialogue, the *Phaedrus*, where the soul is likened to a charioteer charged with the difficult task of driving two mismatched horses, one guided by reason (*logos*), the other driven by sexual appetites and controlled only with extreme difficulty. (Relevant passages from either of these dialogues might be taught together with *Gulliver*.) The class may wish to bring other literary or cultural associations with horses to bear in evaluating the Houyhnhnms. Does their pure rationality seem to be set up as an ideal for imitation? What do students make of the regularity of their existence and their favorite pastimes; their treatment of their offspring, of the Yahoos, and of Gulliver himself; their ability to dispense with argument, literature, and even conversation?

Identifying and Evaluating the Narrator: The debate about Yahoos versus Houyhnhnms soon makes it clear that readers also have to evaluate the narrator as part of any attempt to evaluate the relationship between either creature and humankind. As in Behn's *Oroonoko*, the difference between the narrator's and author's voices is difficult but important to untangle. What clues are we given as to the speaker's character? What are Gulliver's qualities at the beginning and at the end of the book? How is he changed by his life among the Houyhnhnms, and how should this change be evaluated? The final chapters are especially important evidence here. Is Gulliver a model for the reader—that is, either a model for behavior or a model for how to interpret or evaluate Yahoos and Houyhnhnms? If we take him as a figure for the reader, how are readers being guided to respond to the text? If as a moral exemplar, what are the consequences of identifying any class of human beings with animals, as utterly different from and belonging to a lower class of being than oneself?

Identifying and Evaluating the Implied Reader(s): Finally, where do we, as readers, stand in relation to Gulliver, as well as to Yahoos or Houyhnhnms? What cues does the text give as to the type of readers who are being addressed or invoked?

Connections with Related Works and Materials

Numerous works in this *Anthology*, fictional or otherwise, take the form of travel narratives, and lend themselves to interesting comparisons with *Gulliver* in that regard. These include, in Volume D, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Voltaire's *Candide*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, and all the works excerpted in "Perspectives: Journeys in Search of the Self" (Çelebi's *Book of Travels*, Matsuo Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, Graffigny's *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, Diderot's *Supplement*, and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*). The Chinese narrative *Journey to the West*, in Volume C, would also fit such a comparison. In any of these, the character and function of the narrator could be compared with that of Gulliver, or the lessons learned from the encounter with alien cultures and mores. Many of these feature first-person narrators like Gulliver. The

narrators of both *Gulliver* and *Oroonoko*, for example, protest too much about the truthfulness of their accounts. What does each work imply about the value of fictionalizing, even as it condemns lying and exalts truthfulness? In works that do not use first-person narrators, such as *Candide* or the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville*, how do irony and satire work differently, in comparison with Swift's?

Many of these works also play with the notion of the encounter between “civilized” and “savage” people. A good passage in Swift to focus on in such a discussion is the beginning of the fourth paragraph of Chapter 1 (“In this desolate condition . . . on either side”), or his account of “civilized” life to his Houyhnhnm master. What does it tell us that Gulliver fears being wounded by a savage arrow, or expects to appease the Houyhnhnms with trinkets? Aphra Behn's encounter with the Caribs of Surinam might be compared to this passage. Similarly, the significance of the figure of the Portuguese captain—a truly civilized man by comparison to Gulliver—might be compared to that of Oroonoko in relation to Aphra Behn as narrator. Rousseau's theories about man in the state of nature, as outlined in the excerpt from *The Social Contract*, may also be relevant here.

One aspect of Book 4 that is less often discussed in classrooms is the fact that the horses—of all beasts, however powerful and noble in their literary associations, those most widely forced to human uses in Swift's time—actually enslave the Yahoos and Gulliver himself. How does this practice reflect on them? Can attitudes about slavery in this book illuminate those in *Oroonoko* or Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*?

Another less discussed but significant aspect of Book 4 is its implied attitudes toward human sexuality. These might be compared with those found in Voltaire (especially the episode where Candide “rescues” two women from their ape lovers), Diderot, or Swift's own poem included in this volume, “The Lady's Dressing Room” (1732). This is the earliest of the scatological poems for which Swift is distinguished, but it recalls previous descriptions of female bodies in *Gulliver's Travels*. The discovery of Swift's Strephon in this poem—“Oh! Celia, Celia, Celia shits!”—implies a narrator as simple-minded as Gulliver can be, for this could come as a shock only to one who buys into his culture's representations of upper-class women not as mortal human subjects, but as fantastic creatures somewhere between goddesses and dolls.

As a basis for East-West comparison, Cao Xueqin's *Story of the Stone* is, like *Gulliver's Travels*, a philosophically framed satire of a late-aristocratic age. Appearing at the start of the same volume, the Chinese novel could be taught before or alongside Swift's narrative.

Audio Aids

Many teachers find reading aloud in the classroom a helpful strategy with Swift, and some recordings of professional readers are available. These include the following:

- Alec Guinness. *Alec Guinness Reads Jonathan Swift*. Prod. Jean Stein. Loews Arcady Ser. E3620 ARC, n.d.
- Michael Redgrave reading various episodes; available from Listening Library, Inc., 1 Park Ave., Old Greenwich, CT 06870.

Various recordings of scholars such as Angus Ross discussing *Gulliver's Travels* are available from Gould Media, 44 Parkway West, Mount Vernon, NY 10552.

The CD accompanying this *Anthology* includes a reading of Swift's verse, which can be discussed in connection with the topic of sexuality in *Gulliver's Travels*:

- Jonathan Swift: from "The Lady's Dressing Room" (3:38). Read by Patrick Deer. A lovelorn swain steals into his beloved's dressing room, where he encounters her Yahoo side.
- Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: from "The Reasons that Induced Dr. S to Write a Poem called *The Lady's Dressing Room*" (3:05). Read by Elizabeth Richmond-Garza. Lady Mary is swift to retaliate on behalf of her sex.

Any recording of Georg Philipp Telemann's *Gulliver-Suite* might also be played to highlight the interdisciplinary influence of Swift's work.

Visual Materials

The political cartoon accompanying the selection from *Gulliver* in the *Anthology* (p. 349) illustrates the flexibility of its political allegory, applied here to the political situation of the Napoleonic era in English history. *The Annotated Gulliver's Travels*, edited by Isaac Asimov, reproduces illustrations from various editions of the work.

PERSPECTIVES

Journeys in Search of the Self

There has of course been a vast amount of scholarship produced over the past decade or so investigating and analyzing Enlightenment Europe's intensification of the global exploration and colonization begun in the early modern period, together with increasing attention to non-Western travelers' accounts as well. This work has raised a whole series of compelling issues for classroom discussion.

"Perspectives: Journeys in Search of the Self" begins with two actual travel accounts by sophisticated non-European writers. First is the Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi, whose *Book of Travels* surveys the Ottoman Empire's far-flung territories—from eastern Europe to eastern Mesopotamia. While Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* later in the section openly ask, "How can one be Persian?", Çelebi implicitly asks himself and his readers just how one can be an Ottoman, once the Empire has grown to include so many and so varied peoples. In the readings that follow Çelebi's, the great Japanese poet and traveler Matsuo Bashō undertakes directly spiritual and poetic journeys in search of the self. Many of his most famous haiku were written on the road and fill the pages of his haunting travel memoir, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Bashō's works reflect the much older, Buddhist sense of the term "enlightenment." Yet Bashō is as self-consciously modern as Diderot and Voltaire, and his works, like theirs, are built on layers of earlier travel

narratives and poetic responses preceding his own. All the writers in this section travel through time as well as space, interior as well as exterior landscapes, testing themselves and their readers against the limits of the known world.

The travel narrative of Evliya Çelebi took place long before those of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, about half a century earlier (see Vol. D, p. 172). Unlike Lady Montagu's travel narrative, Çelebi's is not an act of exploration or venturing into new terrain but rather an act of consolidating the base of the Empire, giving it a written form, and demonstrating its continuity and glory. It also shows how the subjects of the Empire are content or discontent with the state of its affairs. In Muslim culture, the writer has always mediated the vision of the people upward to the rulers and the vision of authority downward to the people, and Çelebi is doing both in his narrative. It is a special genre of travel narrative in which history and historical data merge with description and episodic narrative of the journey. This is demonstrated in the episode of the assassination of Sultan Murad I and of the rebuilding of his desecrated mausoleum. It should be treated in the classroom as the ancestor of other reports on various parts of the Empire, which were later written back to its metropolis by various agents and administrators.

Çelebi's travel narrative is governed by the old ethos of travel in Muslim culture and its double aim of seeking knowledge and consolidating the *ummah* (nation). The extracts chosen for the *Anthology* from his enormous corps of travel narrative are concerned more with the second aim, yet they demonstrate that he was a follower of Ibn Battuta, whose medieval travel narrative is included in Volume B. It is interesting that more than three centuries later, the central locations of the narrative, Kosovo and Diyarbekir, are still areas of tension today. Çelebi was aware of the importance of dealing with them delicately, though from a position of superiority. His fascinating description of the security measures taken after the assassination of the Sultan echoes the frenzy of security measures all over the world after 9/11, except for the role reversal involved: the suspects, or to use the more fashionable current term, terrorists, are the Westerners, and the calm and prosperous objects of their attack are the Muslims.

In the second selection, which deals with the Kurdish area of Diyarbekir, we see clear evidence of the Muslims' respect for Moses and the divine position of Jerusalem in their religious culture. We also see the interest in nature and the beautiful description of the gardens on the river Tigris in Iraq and its unique houses made entirely of basil plants. This echoes the hanging gardens of Babylon, with the added dimension of love songs and music, and turns the Iraqi scene into a living paradise. Alas, this is now the locus of another horrific and bloody situation since the American invasion of this Arab country. In this selection it is also significant that Çelebi's observations are so contemporary and relevant, for he emphasizes the fact that the Kurdish area of Iraq is "deemed to belong to Mesopotamia," a sore issue even in today's politics.

From Çelebi, we turn to one of the greatest and most eloquent of all travelers, Matsuo Bashō. In the spring of 1689, Bashō and his companion Sora departed for the Deep North (Ōshū), the region north of present-day Tokyo. Bashō traveled

north to present-day Sendai, crossed west into Dewa, moved south along the Japan Sea coast, and arrived at Mino Province (Gifu), north of present-day Kyoto, around the twenty-first of the Eighth Month. While often praised as a work of confessional literature or regarded in a long tradition of travel accounts, *Narrow Road to the Deep North* is best regarded as a kind of fiction, loosely based on the actual journey. Bashō depicts an ideal poetic world in which practical matters—such as food, finances, business relations, etc.—have no place. The “I,” the first-person narrator, who remains unnamed and is never identified as Bashō, devotes himself to a poetic life, in a manner that Bashō himself probably aspired to but never found possible in the busy world of the haiku master.

Like linked verse, to which it has often been compared, *Narrow Road to the Deep North* has no absolute center, no single, overarching perspective. Instead, a focal point emerges, climaxes, and then is replaced by a new focal point. Bashō does, however, interweave the narrative with a series of interrelated journeys: a search for poetic places, especially the traces of ancient poets such as Saigyō (1118–1190); a journey to historical places such as the old battlefield at Hiraizumi; a spiritual pilgrimage to sacred places; and encounters with interesting individuals and poetic partners. The text moves from one main topic—a poetic place, a historical site, a sacred place, or an interesting individual—to another, shifting in such a way that the same topic rarely occurs twice in succession.

It is a good idea to ask students to discuss or write about time in *Narrow Road* and in the haiku that are found there. *Narrow Road* works against the traditional poetic association of travel: to long for the capital. The journey in classical poetry was an abnormal, transient, alien state, as opposed to life in the capital, which represented stability, comfort, and a permanent home. *Narrow Road* makes the road one’s home and establishes a new view for travel: one for which there is no center and no return. Consider the opening lines:

The months and days, the travelers of a hundred ages;
the years that come and go, voyagers too.
floating away their lives on boats,
growing old as they lead horses by the bit,
for them, each day a journey, travel their home.
Many, too, are the ancients who perished on the road.

As these lines suggest, to travel is to be at one with the ever-changing aspects of nature, as well as with the “ancients,” who also died on the road.

The first haiku suggests that dwellings, normally associated with a sense of home, are only temporary lodgings in life’s journey. “Time even for the grass hut / to change owners— / house of dolls.” Dolls referred to the Girl’s Festival on the third day of the Third Month, when families with daughters displayed dolls in their houses. The time has come for even the hut of the recluse, the least likely dwelling to change, to become a domestic, secular dwelling, a “house of dolls,” occupied by a new owner with a wife and daughter(s).

The seasons also become travelers in *Narrow Road*. The first travel poem in *Narrow Road* is “Spring going— / birds crying and tears / in the eyes of the fish.” Fish and birds mourn the passing of spring and by implication the departure of the traveler. Spring here personifies time, which must move on, thereby becoming a metaphor for life and for the journey. *Narrow Road* ends with a similar poem. “Autumn going— / parting for Futami / a clam pried from its shell.” The passing of the season becomes an implicit metaphor not only for the sorrow of parting, which lies at the heart of travel, but for the ceaseless passage of time, the traveler’s constant companion.

The sense of time passing and time past, of the journey in time and across time, is perhaps nowhere more dramatically expressed as in the passages on Hiraizumi and the Hall of Light at the Chōsonji Temple, near Hiraizumi. “Have the summer rains / come and gone, sparing / the Hall of Light?” Two landscapes co-exist: the summer rains falling immediately before the poet’s eyes *and* the years and centuries of summer rains, which, while rotting houses and other buildings, have somehow, miraculously, spared the Hall of Light.

Part of *Narrow Road* is also a spiritual journey, which is foreshadowed by a sequence of scenes toward the beginning. The passage on Black Hair Mountain describes Sora’s decision, on the eve of the journey, to shave his head, change into the black robe of a priest, and take on a Buddhist name. The next haiku in the same passage, at Back-View Falls, refers both to the beginning of summer and to the Buddhist austerities of summer. “Secluded for a while / in a waterfall— / beginning of summer austerities.” The traveler stands behind the waterfall, which gives him, at least for a while, the cool, pure feeling of being cleansed of the dirt of the world. In the next haiku, the traveler prays to the high clogs, a prayer for the foot strength of En no Gyōja, the founder of a mountain priest sect, an “austerity man” believed to have acquired super-human power from rigorous mountain training. The title of *Narrow Road* implies not only the narrow and difficult roads of Michinoku, the relatively unsettled area of northeastern Honshū, but also the difficulty of the spiritual journey “within.”

Pilgrimages to sacred places, to temples and shrines, were popular as early as the Heian period and formed an integral part of the travel account tradition, particularly those written by hermit priests. A typical passage begins with a description of the landscape, the history of the shrine or temple, usually giving some detail about the founder or the name. The climactic haiku, which may be a greeting to the divine spirit or to the head of the temple/shrine, usually conveys a sense of the sacred quality or efficacy of the place. In the passage on the Ryūshakuji Temple, or Mountain Temple, that quality is embodied in the word “stillness.” “Stillness— / sinking deep into the rocks / cries of the cicada.” In classical poetry, the cicada was associated with its cries, which were considered raucous and undesirable. In a paradoxical twist, the sharp, high-pitched cries of the cicada deepen the stillness by penetrating the rocks on top of the mountain. Here the stillness also passes deep into the poet, “purifying” his spirit.

Another climactic point in the spiritual journey is the difficult climb over Hagurosan, Gassan, and Yudono—the three holy mountains of Dewa Province.

The following haiku by Bashō is on Moon Mountain (Gassan): “Cloud peaks / crumbling one after another— / Moon Mountain.” The mountain-shaped clouds, which have gathered during midday at the peak of Gassan, crumble or collapse one after another until they are finally gone, leaving the moon shining over the mountain. Movement occurs from midday, when the clouds block the view, to night, when the mountain stands unobscured; from the heat of midday to the cool of evening; from the ephemerality of the clouds, which disappear one after another, to the sacred mountain, which stands firm and awesome; and from mental obscurity to enlightenment.

The traveler in *Narrow Road* is a wanderer who exposes himself to the elements. This wanderer is paradoxically fated to seek out the traces of the “ancients,” the spiritual and poetic figures of the past who implicitly become the deities of the road and summon the poet to embark on a journey through time.

The interest of travel literature, at least in the Anglo-European tradition, generally lies in the unknown, in new worlds, new knowledge, new perspectives, new experiences. But for medieval *waka* and *renga* poets, the object of travel was to confirm what already existed, to reinforce the roots of cultural memory. The classical models of travel literature—such as the *Tosa Diary* and *Tales of Ise*—were written by aristocrats who had been raised in the capital and for whom the provinces were a foreign sphere. Medieval travel journals likewise tended to assume the superiority of the capital, which embodied high culture, while the provinces or the country were associated with suffering and uncertainty. The journey into the dark Other, however, was modulated and guided by the visits to *utamakura*, or poetic places, which had become famous as a result of noted poems. By visiting poetic places, the medieval poet-traveler hoped to relive the experience of his or her literary predecessors, to be moved to compose poetry on the same landscape, thereby joining his or her cultural forebears.

As the passage on Shirakawa Barrier, one of the major poetic places in Michinoku, reveals, *Narrow Road* both follows and twists this medieval paradigm of travel. Shirakawa Barrier exists almost entirely in the traveler’s imagination, as a circle of poetic associations, following the traces of Saigyō and other earlier poets. Significantly, however, the passage ends with the haiku in which Bashō finds poetic refinement in the riceplanting songs sung by the laborers in the fields. In a haiku-esque twist, the Deep North, rather than the capital, becomes the beginnings of poetic and artistic sensibility. Shirakawa Barrier, which stood at the entrance to Michinoku, marks not a turning back toward the capital, as the earlier classical poems on Shirakawa had, but an entry into the provinces as a poetic wellspring.

Perhaps the most famous haiku in *Narrow Road* is “Summer grasses— / the traces of dreams / of ancient warriors.” The summer grasses are the site of a former battlefield and the aftermath of the dreams of glory of the many noted warriors who fought there in the distant past. The summer grasses are both the rich, thick, replenished grass of the present *and* the blood-stained grass of the past, both an image of nature’s constancy and of the impermanence of all things. The “dreams / of ancient warriors” are the dreams of the three generations of Fujiwara

who valiantly conquered the Ainu tribesmen and built a glorious civilization only to see it disappear, and of Yoshitsune's brave retainers, who died for their master. These dreams of glory have turned to grass, leaving only the site or traces of the dreams. The traveler here takes on the aura of the traveling priest in a Noh warrior play who visits the site of a former battlefield and then, as if in a dream, watches the ghost of the slain warrior re-enact his most tragic moments on the battlefield. The "dreams" in Bashō's haiku, in short, are also the dreams of the visitors, who have had a fleeting glimpse of the past, of the dreams of others.

Perhaps the best example of a poetic place that Bashō created rather than revisited is Sado Island, which appears on the Japan Sea side. The passage climaxes with "A wild sea— / stretching to Sado Isle / the River of Heaven." Sado Island had almost no traditional poetic associations. By drawing on Sado's historical associations, however, Bashō was able to infuse the landscape with a particular emotion or sentiment, to view the landscape through the eyes of the past, as he did at traditional poetic places and ancient battlefields. Sado, an island across the water from Izumo Point, was known for its long history of political exiles: Nichiren, Mongaku, Zeami, and others. The island, surrounded here by "wild seas" and standing under the vast River of Heaven or Milky Way, thus comes to embody the feeling of loneliness, both of the exiles at Sado and of the traveler himself. Bashō also associates the Milky Way with Tanabata (the seventh day of the Seventh Month), or Star Festival, when the legendary constellations, the Herdsboy and Weaver Girl, the separated lovers, were thought to cross over the Milky Way for their annual meeting. In this larger context, the island surrounded by "wild seas" also embodies the longing of the exiles (and implicitly that of the poet) for their distant loved ones.

The most famous passages in *Narrow Road*, like those in medieval travel diaries, tend to be on poetic places, historical sites, or sacred places; but *Narrow Road* dwells as much on unknown commoners. This is particularly true in the second half of the narrative, where the poet encounters a variety of people from different walks of provincial life: the prostitutes at Echigo (Niigata), the child owner at Yamanaka hot springs, the priest at Zenshō Temple, local poets such as Tōsai at Fukui. These mini-portraits provide a change of pace or comic relief from the high-toned passages on poetic or sacred places.

Narrow Road, in short, embodied the inherent tension between Bashō's pursuit of the past, especially the exploration of the traces of earlier spiritual and poetic figures such as Saigyō and Nōin, and his pursuit of the haiku spirit, with its oppositional, inversionary movement, its roots in popular, hybrid cultures, its humor, and its discovery of new vistas and new poetic partners. Travel, in other words, opened up the variegated cultural, linguistic, and social horizons that were the mark and life of haiku. At the same time, travel was a means, to use Bashō's own words, "of awakening to the high, returning to the low" (*kōgo kizoku*), of reaching the spiritual and poetic heights of the ancients, while returning to and facing the everyday realities of commoner, contemporary life that the ancients had left out. It was only through this multiple process of exploring the past, engaging in a spiritual journey, visiting poetic places, and seeking out the roots of haiku, in the

unbounded world of everyday, contemporary life, that the poet was ultimately able to envision the new in the old, to recuperate, revive, and refigure the cultural memory as embodied in the landscape.

Following Çelebi and Bashō, the section turns to a group of works written and circulated in the West. Eighteenth-century Europe's ambitious voyages of discovery were of a piece with other efforts to use improved technology and individual experience to gain new knowledge, just as in the realms of scientific experimentation, the questioning of civil and religious authority, and the reorientation of learning around the human rather than the divine. The competition among European nations to lay claim to newly "discovered" territories that could be exploited for their own economic advantage was not just equally important with the desire for knowledge; the two impulses were inextricably conceptually intertwined. The possibilities of colonial exploitation resulted in wild business speculation in both France and England. Unrestrained speculation in Louisiana plantations created a bubble that burst disastrously in 1720, ruining the French aristocracy and bourgeoisie. This "*affaire Law*" resulted from the schemes of a Scottish financier, John Law, who set up his Mississippi Company to develop the French colony in Louisiana by establishing New Orleans as a port for the trade in plantation products. It burst in exactly the same year as the British "South Sea Bubble," a similar crash in stock values caused by overinvestment in the South Sea Company, through which the British government hoped to profit by the exploitation of the Pacific.

Of the many accounts published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of the journeys of exploration that opened up new worlds to European trade, the most important were arguably the narratives of Cook's and Bougainville's voyages around the world, published within two years of each other in the 1770s (after their respective governments got over their fears of colonial speculation inspired by the bubbles of 1720). Both accounts focused on their explorations in the South Pacific, the least explored remaining frontier. The principal voyages of the renowned English explorer Captain James Cook (1728–1779) were publicized in three highly popular works. *An Account of a Voyage Round the World . . . 1768–71* (1773) was composed by J. Hawkesworth from the journals of Cook and his botanist Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820; president of the Royal Society, 1778–1820, and a member of Dr. Johnson's Literary Club during the same years). *A Voyage Towards the South Pole . . . 1772–3* (1777) inspired Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The posthumous *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean . . . 1776–1780* (1784) was completed by one Captain T. King, because Cook himself was killed by Hawaiians during the voyage. The nature and significance of the unfortunate intercultural misunderstanding that resulted in Cook's grisly death is still a subject of heated scholarly debate.

Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1729–1811), like Cook a professional military man, undertook, like his British counterpart, a three-year voyage around the world in 1766–1769. With only two years' head start, the last year of Bougainville's voyage coincided with the first of Cook's. It made Bougainville the first Frenchman to circumnavigate the globe, and in 1768, as Cook was just setting out, he became only

the second European to visit Tahiti. He was also the first to bring a Tahitian to the West. Aotourou, the first Polynesian to see Europe, became a human curiosity—much like Graffigny's fictional captive, the Peruvian princess. Like her, he caused a sensation in Parisian society. Above all he impressed Parisians with the lack of restraint with which he expressed his attraction to numerous women. The impression Aotourou created in France, along with his host's *Voyage around the World* (1771), helped popularize Bougainville's own impression of Tahiti and its people. The fruitfulness of the soil, the pleasantness of the climate, and the comparative sexual frankness he found among the Tahitians led Bougainville to believe he had found the true Eden. Indeed the French obsession with Tahiti as a world of prelapsarian sexuality extended from this time to that of the painter Paul Gauguin in the early twentieth century, and beyond. Convinced that Tahitian society was more in harmony with natural human impulses than European society because its sexual customs were so strikingly different, the French imagined it as a sexual utopia. Polynesian cultures in fact had (and have) very strict and elaborate sexual taboos, which the first European visitors were unable to observe or comprehend, largely because of their readings in French literature. The tendency to view newly "discovered," "primitive" peoples as "noble savages" originated not in the direct observations of explorers so much as in works like Montaigne's *Of Cannibals*, or Rousseau's *Social Contract* and other writings, in which he nostalgically evokes a "state of nature" preceding modern European society, when men were freer and happier.

The accounts of these and other voyages were read avidly, and many imaginative writers were inspired by, borrowed from, responded to, or critiqued them in creative ways. The most interesting and enduring of the imaginary travel accounts of the time took a distinctly more anticolonial stance than the nonfictional originals. Diderot's critique of the Bougainville expedition comes through in the ominous farewell speech of his fictional Tahitian elder, warning his people not to welcome the Europeans, who will inevitably destroy and enslave them. Behn, Equiano, and Voltaire all exhibit similar attitudes by dwelling with excruciating vividness on the sufferings entailed in the globalization of European trade. Behn refuses to let us avert our eyes as the best person in the world is dismembered and burned alive. Equiano spares us no details of the Middle Passage and other gruesome experiences in his firsthand account of slavery. And the naive European hero of Voltaire's *Candide*, witnessing the sufferings of plantation slaves during his imaginary voyage, is instructed, "This is the price at which you eat sugar in Europe."

Despite his sympathy for the Tahitians and his open criticism of European exploitation of the peoples encountered in explorations, Diderot shares Bougainville's view of Tahiti as a sexual utopia. Thus, like all the European travel accounts of the time, fictional or otherwise, Diderot's *Supplement* is much more a reflection upon his own culture than it is an accurate representation of the foreign world it purports to describe. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and the many other contemporary fictions of non-Western observers in Europe straightforwardly make such self-reflection their main point, although even they paint lively pictures of the worlds from which their fictional outsiders have traveled. Equiano is the only such

observer represented here who may really have come from another world—at least the world of American slave plantations. Recent research by the historian Vincent Carretta suggests that Equiano may have been born in South Carolina and never actually visited Africa. If so, then his “first-person” narrative is in fact an artful blending of personal experience with tales Equiano had heard from people actually brought over from Africa. (For further information on this possibility, see Carretta’s introduction and notes to his recent Penguin edition of Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*.) Whatever the mix of first- and second-hand reporting, in becoming an author of a complex work in English for an English audience, Equiano adopted European conventions, following the narrative patterns of fiction writers like Behn in first describing an idyllic life untouched by corrupt Western customs or values, from which the narrator is violently wrested when he is taken captive by European invaders. His rhetorical goal is the same as theirs: to persuade Europeans to take a long, hard look at themselves and their actions.

Other works feature Western travelers on a journey to little-known parts of the world, such as Wortley Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*, Behn’s *Oroonoko*, and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, as well as Diderot’s *Supplement*. Like the fictions of non-Western observers, however, these all combine their accounts of a Westerner’s voyage out with an imagined turning of a non-Western perspective back upon the European self. This is perhaps most obvious in a work like Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, in which the purely imaginary civilizations encountered are all obviously nothing but allegories for the author’s own. There is no meaningful advocacy possible on behalf of nonexistent peoples, but Swift shares with the other writers gathered here the critical stance toward his own culture, voiced perhaps most vehemently by the king of Brobdingnag, who judges from Gulliver’s account that the English must be “the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.” Critique of European civilization is ultimately the point of all these fictional travel accounts, whether they feature Western explorers on a voyage out, or foreign visitors casting a critical eye on European mores.

In this game of mirrors where self and other are so closely identified, it is significant that female figures and sexuality play an ambiguously central role in so many of them. Women in this period often served as emblems of the other within the self: from the perspective of the European male explorer, Woman is one who is a European like oneself and yet not quite identical with Man, the new center of the universe. When Diderot wrote his *Supplement* he was also writing his essay, “On Women,” in which he denounces the injustice of their legal status in France (and most of Europe) as the equivalent of children and other incompetents. He also pronounces on the difference between women and men—“they” and “we”: although “they appear more civilized than us on the outside, they have remained true savages within.” This may well be the highest of compliments coming from Diderot, but it illustrates the clear connection between the idea of women in Europe and that of the deeply alien peoples recently encountered elsewhere. Women writers like Behn imply similar connections. The Peruvian princess, in emphatic contrast to Montesquieu’s Persian visitor, is both woman and “savage,” and her astonish-

ment at Parisian customs has largely to do with what she sees as the irrationality of French attitudes toward women. Behn's narrator in *Oroonoko*, one of the most complex voices in fiction, is another European female figure that in many ways serves as a symbolic double of her African title character. Female characters in these and many contemporary works figure the impossibility of keeping the other safely separate from the self.

Enlightenment voyages of exploration, real and fictional, have to be understood as quests for knowledge—and thus of a piece with the era's fascination with scientific experimentation, its encyclopedic quest to unify all human knowledge, and even with libertinism, which can be understood, as some recent scholarship has viewed it, as a restless quest for a kind of knowledge. In each case the knowledge sought is knowledge of some external object seen as distinctly separate from the inquiring self—be that object Woman, Nature, or a non-European people—but in the end, the real object of knowledge is always primarily the self, or at least it inevitably and centrally includes the self.

As journeys in search of the self, travel writing, fictional and otherwise, had a profound influence on the development of the modern novel. Travel accounts in this era tested the limits of European common sense about probability and credibility, for what travelers reported having witnessed in worlds remote from European experience was often considered stranger than fiction by readers back home. Expressing his contempt for the irrational “passion of surprise and wonder” that made readers devour travel narratives, David Hume sputtered, “With what greediness are the miraculous accounts of travelers received, their descriptions of sea and land monsters, their relations of wonderful adventures, strange men, and uncouth manners?” (*An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1748). All the accounts gathered here testify to the reality of the miraculous, wonderful, strange, and uncouth with the aim of destabilizing European assumptions and norms. As the novel developed during this period into the genre of plausible fiction, the epic of everyday life, the Western sense of the plausible and quotidian, the familiar, the normal—the self—was redefined in fictions that challenged the unexamined assumptions of common sense by dislocating them to worlds, both real and imagined, where the self was made strange.

Classroom Strategies and Connections with Related Works

Numerous works in this *Anthology*, fictional or otherwise, take the form of travel narratives, and thus lend themselves perfectly to interesting comparisons with any of the works excerpted in this Perspectives section. These include, in Volume D, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Voltaire's *Candide*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The Chinese narrative *Journey to the West*, in Volume C, would also fit such a comparison. In any of these, the character and function of the narrator, or the lessons learned from the encounter with alien cultures and mores, make for good points of comparison with

the texts collected in “Perspectives: Journeys in Search of a Self.” Many of these, like Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* and Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*, feature first-person narrators. The role of these narrators might be contrasted with one another, or, for example, with the differing unreliable narrators either of *Gulliver* or *Oroonoko*. In works that do not use first-person narrators, such as *Candide* or the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville*, how does the change of narrative perspective affect a reader’s response to what is narrated about worlds that the implied reader has not experienced directly? The way the structure of the narrative and narratorial voice(s) work to produce ironic and satiric effects could also be fruitfully discussed in a comparison of these last two works especially.

Many of the works in this *Anthology* also, like most of those in this Perspectives section, play with the notion of the encounter between “civilized” and “savage” people. Montesquieu, Diderot, and Equiano all turn the assumptions underpinning European colonialism, Orientalism, and slavery on their heads, to illustrate how much more civilized, in Europe’s own professed terms, are Europe’s “others” in Latin America, Africa, the South Seas, and the Middle East. Several of the larger selections in this volume could also be brought into such a discussion. A good passage in Swift to focus on in these terms is the beginning of the fourth paragraph of Chapter 1 (“In this desolate condition . . . on either side.”), or his account of “civilized” life to his Houyhnhnm master. What does it tell us that Gulliver fears being wounded by a savage arrow, or expects to appease the Houyhnhnms with trinkets? Aphra Behn’s encounter with the Caribs of Surinam is another passage that might be compared to any of the colonial encounters in this section. Rousseau’s theories about man in the state of nature, as outlined in the excerpt from *The Social Contract*, are also relevant here, as are *Candide*’s philosophical musings (in Chapter 16 of Voltaire’s work) on Dr. Pangloss’s optimistic evaluation of the “pure state of human nature,” as he and Cacambo await their preparation as dinner for the Biglugs. Their release upon the Biglugs’ discovery that they are not Jesuits could be compared, for a historically ironic contrast, with the excerpt from the beginning of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, in which Equiano, after enduring months of slavery among fellow Africans, rightly fears what will become of him once he is delivered into the hands of the barbaric white traders.

Sexuality in many travel narratives functions as one particularly visceral aspect of their engagement with the notion of the encounter between “civilized” and “savage” people. This *Anthology* provides many excellent examples, fictional and nonfictional, that dwell on comparisons of sexual mores across cultures and their broader social and moral implications: especially Diderot’s *Supplement*, Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (in the romance section set in the African kingdom of Coramantien), George Warren’s *An Impartial Description of Surinam*, Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*. Students might be encouraged to explore the connections between the “Woman Question” and colonial encounters. To what extent, in what ways, to what ends, and with what implications are encounters with non-European cul-

tures figured as sexual encounters? Such conflation was notably achieved through two predominant rhetorical practices. The discourse of sympathy often focused a reader's pity on the sufferings of a female character (the Peruvian Woman is a good example, whose "captivity narrative" would make a provoking comparison with those of Behn and Equiano), complicating the argument for women's rights and education, and identifying them with slaves as suffering victims. The widespread trope in women's writing of marriage as slavery (observable in some of the poems by the Countess of Winchelsea, Lady Chudleigh, and others in "Perspectives: Court Culture and Female Authorship") underscores this conflation of the two social groups, resulting before the end of the period in the identification of abolitionist discourse with that of women's emancipation that characterized the nineteenth century.

Even some of the writers in this *Anthology* who, far from describing voyages to foreign parts, remain within the confines of the drawing room, tend to draw connections between sexual and colonial intercourse. Alexander Pope, probably the most striking such example in the volume, involves his commentary on sexual mores in *The Rape of the Lock* inextricably with a broader one on social, economic, and material culture. Female virginity is at least twice compared to a "china vessel" (2.106; 3.159), linking the idea of the fragility of female chastity to the economics of luxury, of global trade, and of the nascent European industry based on tastes whetted by such trade. China vessels also appear "On shining altars of japan" (3.107–110), mingling in miniature on the tea-tray the luxuries of exotic trade, just as India and Arabia, the elephant and the tortoise are brought together on Belinda's "altar" of "the sacred rites of pride" (1.127–137). In a similar metaphor combining images of sexuality and imperialist trade, "China's earth receives the smoking tide" (3.110). Have students work out the sexualized implications here of consuming imported stimulants such as tea, coffee, and chocolate, new luxuries in those days that have become so much a part of our own world as to be taken for granted, even though their production still involves illegal slavery in Africa, as well as poverty and oppression in Asia and Latin America.

Slavery of course was of all the colonial trades the most brutal and crucial to European imperialism, and many of our texts address it directly or indirectly. From the simple, shocking directness of Voltaire's *Candide*, "This is the price at which you eat sugar in Europe," to the dizzying complexities of the detailed portrayal of plantation slavery in Behn's *Oroonoko*, works in this volume confront the issue in almost every conceivable cultural context and textual register. Montesquieu's harem is enslaved, and then revolts—a comparison of this with the slave revolt in *Oroonoko* could give rise to interesting insights about the intersections between the discourse on sexuality and those on slavery, imperialism, and Orientalism in the period. Gulliver, like the Yahoos, is enslaved by the Houyhnhnms; while hardly a real or realistic representation of slavery, the allegory encourages critical reflection on the practice. The representation of slavery in *Candide* on the other hand participates, as in *Oroonoko*, in a trenchant kind of realism in its depiction of the contemporary slave trade, while at the same time invok-

ing the romance topos of abduction and enslavement. Warren's *Impartial Description of Surinam* documents the businesslike English planter's acknowledgment of atrocity bizarrely combined with evasion of any sense of agency or even serious regret. Of course the key text in the section for a discussion of slavery is Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*. This extremely complex text, like the others just mentioned but most centrally and forcefully of all, artfully combines the conventions of Western literary genres familiar to its audience with the project of offering a genuine account of actual, contemporary, ongoing atrocity.

A recent issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (vol. 34, no. 4, 2001) contains a very valuable collection of essays in a "Forum" on "Teaching Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*." In "History, Oratory, and God in Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*" (pp. 601–624), Adam Potkay argues that the importance of Equiano's Christianity and his "rhetorical performance of considerable skill" (p. 604) grounded in the tradition of Christian sermons, conversion narratives, biblical hermeneutics, and related persuasive and narrative modes has been underestimated. Srinivas Aravamudan replies in "Equiano Lite" (pp. 615–619) that the *Interesting Narrative's* clear status as a spiritual autobiography in the Western tradition does not exclude it from participating as well in distinctly African codes, or from representing the experience of slavery from a perspective genuinely unfamiliar to Europeans of his time. Aravamudan goes on to argue that the significant evidence, mentioned by Potkay, indicating that Equiano may actually have been born in South Carolina and never made his vividly described passage from Africa, far from reducing the work to a purely Western product, hints at its deeply subversive slipperiness as a rhetorical intervention into European discourses and institutions—those of Christianity as well as those of slavery. Lastly, Roxann Wheeler in "Domesticating Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*" (pp. 620–624) underscores the importance for teaching and scholarship on the eighteenth century of taking a global perspective suited to the activities of the period, and of approaching sophisticated works like Equiano's from an interdisciplinary standpoint that brings the study of social, cultural, political, and intellectual history, including "eighteenth-century conceptions of social mobility, masculinity, patriotism, and even racial ideology," to bear on literary texts, alongside the rhetorical analysis more traditional in literary studies.

All of the travel accounts in this *Anthology*—not just Equiano's—are in some sense philosophical and spiritual journeys as well as geographical ones. This is particularly true of Bashō's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, Voltaire's *Candide*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. In what differing manners and to what extent is the reader in each case led to identify with the protagonists on their philosophical journeys of discovery? What parallels are drawn between inner and outward voyages?

Besides being narratives of individual spiritual or philosophical journeys in search of the self, many also attempt to envision a social ideal by describing utopian and/or dystopian visions. In that regard, any of them could be set in contrast with predecessor texts in the utopian tradition, such as those by Plato (see Vol. A), Sir Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus, or François Rabelais (see Vol. C). Equiano's

Interesting Narrative, *Candide*, and Diderot's *Supplement*, all invoke in different ways the biblical topos of Paradise and the Fall, so that the list of utopian precursors could be expanded to include the more theological utopias in Genesis (see Vol. A), Dante (see Vol. B), or Milton (see Vol. C).

François-Marie Arouet [Voltaire]

Candide is taught so often because it presents in a short, entertaining form so many of the crucial philosophical and social issues of the Enlightenment. The fundamental ethical and epistemological questions it provokes remain among our pressing current concerns. Philosophical optimism may be dead, and related notions such as that of Providence may be important only to a minority of American readers today, but Voltaire's text offers an opportunity to teach students about the history of ideas and narrative fiction in a way that resonates with the continuing problem of how to come to terms with injustice and the uncertainty of the human condition in a modern, secularized world.

Historical and Intellectual Background

The main difficulty students normally face when initially encountering this text is their lack of historical knowledge about the events and ideas that form the subject of Voltaire's satire. It's necessary to provide at least some background to help them understand the comic effects.

A glance at the timeline included at the beginning of Volume D (pp. 6–11) should make it clear to students why Voltaire depicts the world as a place full of brutality, violence, and political upheaval. From the date of publication of Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1733–1734), Europe from Spain to Turkey had been rent by the War of the Polish Succession (1733–1738), followed immediately by the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748) and the simultaneous brutal final suppression of the Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in 1745–1746. Voltaire makes direct reference to these wars in Chapter 26, where *Candide* has supper with the deposed monarchs. The Latin American episodes reflect the fact that these European conflicts played themselves out around the world; Portugal and Spain divided their South American colonies by treaty in 1751. The Seven Years' War, the main historical setting for *Candide*—which was published in the middle of it—was immediately preceded by the earthquake that devastated Lisbon in 1755, and again involved all of western Europe and its colonies in fighting from 1756 to 1763.

The intellectual background to *Candide* is of course equally important. La Mettrie published *L'Homme machine*, his Cartesian-influenced revolutionary book denying the existence of the soul, in 1748. In the closing lines of his tale, Voltaire mocks this extreme secular and empirical view as much as he does the Christian metaphysics of Leibniz. Condillac's *Treaty on the senses* followed in 1754; *Candide*,

with its emphasis on the immediate reality of experience, owes much to the empiricism of such works, including those of Locke and Hume.

This *Anthology* provides brief excerpts from the main works of philosophical optimism, by Leibniz and Pope, to which *Candide* responds. Philosophical optimism developed out of many Enlightenment thinkers' struggles to reconcile modernity's increasing faith in human reason and observation with previous ages' belief in an unchallengeable and unfathomable divine order, or Providence, guiding human history. Optimism represented a rationalist response to the age-old attempt to square the human experience of suffering and evil with the idea of a good and just deity governing earthly affairs. It aimed at rationally proving the existence, perfection, and goodness of God in part by demonstrating the perfection of His creation.

Optimism's most influential proponents were Alexander Pope and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. Leibniz coined the term "theodicy"—a justification of God's ways—in his most famous work, *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (1710). The ideas of Leibniz and Pope are similar in the aspects mentioned above and in their invocation of the idea of the Great Chain of Being, which goes back as far as Plato and pervaded Enlightenment thought. The universe was conceived of as a hierarchical chain in which all entities, from the inanimate to the divine Creator—with all living beings ranged between—were linked one to the next by similarity. Human beings are created in God's image, and so on down the hierarchy of creation. The variety and perfect continuity of this chain was thought to necessitate the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent, and perfect Creator. Pope in particular used the Great Chain as a figure for social as well as physical and metaphysical hierarchies.

These two philosophical optimists differed mainly in that Pope's approach had more in common with British empiricism, demonstrating God's perfection from the observable perfection of His creation, while Leibniz made his argument *a priori*, from abstract rational axioms rather than from observation.

Voltaire and his companion Madame du Châtelet became interested in both versions of optimism in the mid-1730s. Voltaire had met Pope during his exile in England, and found his empiricist bent more congenial to his own thinking than the abstract reasoning of Leibniz, although he always had doubts and criticisms even of Pope's arguments. He was moved to attack Pope in particular by reports of the earthquake that struck Lisbon on November 1, 1755, killing thirty to forty thousand people. Random slaughter on such a massive scale shook the confidence of many Europeans in the necessary goodness and justice of God's creation.

Leibniz bears the brunt of Voltaire's satire of optimism in *Candide*, as can be seen in references to his *a priori* approach and phrases such as "pre-established harmony." During the Seven Years' War one of Voltaire's correspondents, the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, insisted on a crude version of Leibnizian optimism in the midst of the slaughter in Germany. The crucial phrase "all is for the best" (*tout est bien*), nevertheless, is closer to Pope's optimism in his *Essay on Man*. Leibniz, a more cautious and exact thinker than Pope, concludes that it is possible for evil to contribute to

the good, but avoids asserting that it always or necessarily does. Pope, in contrast, clearly states that whatever happens is divinely ordained, and should be accepted despite mere human perceptions of its apparent injustice.

Leibniz set out to solve the mind-body problem left open by Descartes' influential mechanistic philosophy: If all matter, including the human body, is mechanical, and yet human beings also have mind or spirit, what connects the two? Leibniz hypothesized that the smallest, indivisible units of matter—"monads," which Pierre Bayle, in the published dialogues with Leibniz that led to the publication of *Theodicy*, compared to the "atoms" of Epicurus—were themselves imbued with primitive mind, spirit, or consciousness. The monads were bound together as substance according to a "pre-established harmony" orchestrated by God, the ultimate mind/spirit in the Great Chain. Because this harmony of the universe, in which each single element reflects or represents all the others, is ultimately the effect of divine will, Leibniz calls it "the best of all possible worlds," even though he sees evil as a necessary element in it.

Pope's *An Essay on Man* is divided into four separate "epistles" contemplating humankind in relation to the universe, itself, society, and happiness. It was first published anonymously and, being out of Pope's usual satirical mode, passed off successfully as the work of an unknown poet. Pope had just made hordes of enemies with *The Dunciad*, and wanted his new effort to be received without prejudice. He even got his friends to encourage his enemies to rally to the support of the new imaginary "rival" to Pope's literary supremacy. His plan was to expand the *Essay on Man* into a larger sequence, to include also the four "Moral Essays" or "Epistles to Several Persons" (1731–1735). This grand plan to investigate human nature in all its aspects in what Pope hoped would be his masterwork of morally instructive verse was never completed. Nevertheless, the *Essay on Man* stands monumentally alone, its project nothing less than the elaboration of Pope's own system of ethics.

Voltaire was not the only contemporary writer to find fault with Pope's attempt to set himself up as a philosopher. Wortley Montagu mocked: "Poor Pope philosophy displays on / With so much rhyme and little reason, / And though he argues ne'er so long / That all is right, his head is wrong" ("The Reasons that Induced Doctor S. to write a Poem called *The Lady's Dressing Room*," pp. 293–294, lines 45–48). And Johnson concurred with her sentiment in perhaps the most backhanded compliment ever paid a poem: "Never was penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised."

Classroom Strategies

Many of the possible approaches to this text can be categorized either as analysis of how Voltaire's satire and humor works, or as discussion of the themes and moral issues they raise.

Voltaire's humor and irony are complex, and his satiric techniques pose the challenge of sophisticated analysis to students. Without a good understanding of how these function, real appreciation or even enjoyment of the work is impossible.

Encourage students to be guided in their approach to this remote giant of literature by their own sense of humor. Then ask them to analyze how it works: What is the object of satire—meaning both what is the butt of ridicule, and what is the point of mocking it? By what methods is the fact that this text is satirical, ironic, and humorous, rather than straight and earnest, conveyed to readers? Perform a close reading of some crucial passage in class, encouraging students to point out how the language of the passage achieves these ends. Cassandra Mabe has suggested that “Dr. Pangloss’s genealogy of the venereal disease that caused the horrible state in which Candide found his dear *Maître de Philosophie*” is “both relevant in meaning to the work as a whole and illustrative of the indirect style generally associated with satire” (R. Waldinger, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Voltaire’s Candide*, 1989, p. 83). Questions to raise in an analysis of any passage from the work might include: What jokes are contained in the names Voltaire gives his characters? What kind of speaker is the narrator? How are style, rhetoric, or figural language used to satiric effect? Can students think of characters or situations from their own experience that are in any meaningful way reminiscent of Candide’s?

In addition to such discussion questions, written exercises can help students understand how the narrative works and how its form helps convey its meaning. For example, after analyzing how it works in class, students might try their hands at writing a short piece in Voltaire’s satiric manner. In writing or in discussion, they could alternatively analyze the relationship of the satire as a whole to a particular comic effect, the function of a seemingly unimportant character, or the way the conclusion relates to the opening of the work (both mock-Edenic settings, which might also be contrasted with Eldorado at the center of the narrative). Such exercises can help students become more aware of the work’s ironies and how they operate textually.

Many of the techniques Voltaire uses to create satire and comedic effect could be described in broad terms as the simultaneous invocation and violation of shared assumptions. These include both moral assumptions, particularly assumptions about human nature and the way the world works, and literary or generic assumptions.

Indeed satire works only when it is possible for the reader to recognize some shared assumptions in the text. The instructor might point out some of the assumptions about morality and probability that we still readily share with Voltaire—despite the distance of 250 years, a language, and an ocean—and ask students to identify others. A discussion of shared assumptions can lead into one about the “realism” of this burlesque and pre-realist work of fiction. Realism, like satire, relies upon a “common sense” shared between text and audience, so that some of the narrator’s invocations of these shared assumptions, in generalizations about human nature, for example, may strike readers as moments of “realism.” Other levels on which the text anticipates realism are those of incident and description. Candide’s experience among the Bulgars, for example, is unrealistic in that his multiple escapes violate shared notions of probability, yet realistic in its refusal to romanticize the brutality of warfare. Throughout the work Voltaire exposes the

contradictions of human experience and representation by repeatedly violating shared literary expectations in reading about such actions as the exploits of heroes with the experiential realities that literature traditionally ennobles.

Any discussion of *Candide's* violation of literary expectations would naturally involve analyzing it in terms of the conventions of romance, which are of course very much alive in the popular culture with which students are apt to be familiar, even though they may not recognize it in literary historical terms as a genre of prose fiction preceding the novel and going back to late antiquity. It can be useful to mention the reliance of such Greek romances as *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, which experienced a revival in the eighteenth century, on feigned deaths and apparently miraculous resurrections. By putting his tale in romance form and deliberately alluding to the Greek romances, Voltaire took advantage of their popular revival, while at the same time exposing the irrationality of the form at the moment that the novel and its assumptions of verisimilitude were becoming established as the predominant literary genre. Incident in *Candide* does seem to be ordered by some logic resembling the Eros of Greek romance or the Providence of Christian narratives, yet the justness of Providence is called into question by the narrative. This question might be examined by looking at the narrative as a parody of Genesis, by comparing, as suggested earlier, the beginning and the end of the book as differently comic versions of Paradise, with Eldorado, another Paradise, set between them.

Voltaire's choice of generic parody is singularly appropriate to his parody of philosophical optimism: romance was the product of an aesthetic that held that art should represent the world as it should be, rather than as it is, and philosophical optimism argued that the world is exactly as it should be. Everything Dr. Pangloss tells Candide about the "best of all possible worlds" is of course belied by Candide's own experiences of the world he actually inhabits. The parody of romance in *Candide* helps Voltaire make a point shared by Cervantes and by the authors of many novels in their attacks on romance: that firsthand experience, rather than idealism, reading, or instruction, is the ultimate means to truth. Nevertheless the status of probability and verisimilitude seem very uncertain in this narrative. Is *Candide* a novel?

Although *Candide* historically precedes the era of the *Bildungsroman* by a few decades, it has been illuminated by examination in the light of that subgenre of the novel. Does Candide learn and develop in the course of his trials, and if so, what and how? As the hero of his own life journey, is he idealized or satirized, or something of both? In this respect it is useful to see this tale not just as a precursor of the *Bildungsroman*, but also as influenced by a long history of tales of simpleton protagonists whose misadventures expose the folly and vice of all they encounter, along with the absurdities of the philosophical systems they take to heart. Such, for example, are other eighteenth-century novels such as Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple* and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*. The type goes back much further, however, the most famous example being Cervantes' *Don Quixote*; even earlier, several of the tales in Boccaccio's *Decameron* relate the adventures of fools in order to poke fun at the corrupt clergy who take advantage of them.

If discussions of literary genres like the romance or the *Bildungsroman* are too technical for the students in your class, you can still hold a discussion of basic ways in which they may find their assumptions or expectations challenged by the form of the narrative. Various types of incongruity between the narration and what is narrated contribute to the satiric and comic effects. These include, for example, the shifting dominance of the narrator's voice and perspective or that of characters, and the narrator's control over the interpretation of incident. The pacing of the narrative is equally incongruous. Discuss the absurd swiftness with which the horrific and the marvelous follow one another, and the incongruity between the outrageousness of the events and the rapid matter-of-factness with which they are reported.

Just as Swift's satire is both political and moral, Voltaire's is both social and philosophical. Students may want to think about the relationship between *Candide's* satire of philosophical optimism and its exposure of social ills like the horrors perpetrated in the name of nationalism and religion.

James Clifford's 1979 article, "Argument and Understanding: Teaching through Controversy," made this a standard method for teaching Voltaire. Theodore E. D. Braun writes, "Clifford suggests a debate on the Eldorado passage in *Candide*. A large number of recent interpretations focus on whether Voltaire presented Eldorado as an 'ideal' or as a 'real' utopia to be sought or as a 'colossal bore.'" Braun himself proposes instead a debate on what might be called the moral of the story, the meaning of "we must cultivate our garden" (*Approaches to Teaching Voltaire's Candide*, p. 70). Alternatively, any of the above moral issues or questions could be formulated as pro and con positions for an in-class debate.

One way to begin discussing the moral implications of the work is to dwell upon the shocking horror of many of the events narrated in its rapid, naive manner. By what techniques does Voltaire render even these humorous, even though we know very well that all these horrors really, literally took place in much the manner, time, and place in which Voltaire describes them, and that similar ones continue in the world even now? How do we appropriately process and respond to this or any representations of real violence?

Another fundamental human reality that Voltaire handles in a manner that may well be disconcerting to younger readers is sexuality. The instructor might ask them to analyze the light(s) in which sexual urges and acts are represented in the work, and to interrogate the effect of its emphasis on them. Since sex is presented here in no very refined manner, this discussion might also extend naturally into one about another predominant theme in the narrative: the relationship between human and animal nature. An obvious place to begin such a discussion would be the passage in Chapter 16, where *Candide* misguidedly "rescues" two women from their ape lovers.

Connections with Related Works and Materials

In addition to the connections this *Anthology* allows students to trace between *Candide* and its sources in works of philosophical optimism by Leibniz and Pope—

as described earlier—many comparisons are possible with the other travel narratives or utopian fictions included in the same volume and elsewhere in the *Anthology*. These include, in Volume D, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, and all the works excerpted in "Perspectives: Journeys in Search of the Self" (Çelebi's *Book of Travels*, Matsuo Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, Diderot's *Supplement*, and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*). The Chinese narrative *Journey to the West*, in Volume C, would also fit such a comparison. In any of these, the character and function of the protagonist could be compared with that of *Candide*, or the lessons learned from the encounter with alien cultures and mores. In considering *Candide*'s double journey as dual—both a literal or geographic one as well as a philosophic one—Montesquieu provides a cogent comparison. In what differing manners and to what extent is the reader in each case led to identify with the protagonists on their philosophical journeys of discovery? The way the structure of the narrative and narratorial voice(s) work to produce ironic and satiric effects could be fruitfully discussed in a comparison between *Candide* and the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville*.

Like *Candide* and *Gulliver's Travels*, Cao Xueqin's *Story of the Stone* is a philosophically framed satire of a late-aristocratic age. Appearing at the start of Volume D, the Chinese novel could be taught before or alongside Voltaire's narrative.

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which of course is both utopian and a travel narrative, offers some of the most obvious links with *Candide* and beyond to related works of the period. The last themes for discussion in *Candide* mentioned earlier—the question of the proximity of human and animal nature and the related theme of sexuality—are obviously important in Swift's narrative as well, and not only there. His poem, "The Lady's Dressing Room" (1732), as well as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's riposte, "The Reasons that Induced Doctor S. to write a Poem called *The Lady's Dressing Room*," expand upon Swift's implied attitudes toward human sexuality in the *Travels*. How does *Candide*'s response to the aged and ugly Cunégonde compare to Gulliver's reaction to female sexual advances, or Strephon's to his unexpected discovery, "Oh! Celia, Celia, Celia shits!"?

Diderot's *Supplement* and George Warren's *An Impartial Description of Surinam* provide further examples of travel narratives, fictional and nonfictional, that dwell on a comparison of sexual mores across cultures and (in Diderot's case) their broader social and moral implications. Sexuality in all these narratives is but one particularly visceral aspect of their engagement with the notion of the encounter between "civilized" and "savage" people. *Candide*'s philosophical musings in Chapter 16 on Dr. Pangloss's optimistic evaluation of the "pure state of human nature," as he and Cacambo await their preparation as dinner for the Biglugs—and their release upon the Biglugs' discovery that they are not Jesuits—could be compared with Gulliver's fears of being wounded by a savage arrow, or his expectations of appeasing the Houyhnhnms with trinkets, in the beginning of Chapter 1 of *Gulliver's Travels*. Aphra Behn's encounter with the Caribs of Surinam might also be compared to this passage, or, for a historically ironic contrast, the excerpt from

the beginning of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* in which Equiano, after enduring months of slavery among fellow Africans, rightly fears what will become of him once he is delivered into the hands of the barbaric white traders. Finally, Rousseau's theories about man in the state of nature, as outlined in the excerpt from *The Social Contract*, are important here, and are clearly among the objects of Voltaire's satire, even though Rousseau's work was published three years later than *Candide*.

In a discussion about the extent to which *Candide* can be read as a utopian fiction, it could be set in contrast with predecessor texts in the utopian tradition, such as those by Plato (see Vol. A), Sir Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus, or François Rabelais (see Vol. C). Since *Candide* also invokes the topos of Paradise and the Fall (as described earlier), this list could be expanded to include the more theological utopias in Genesis (see Vol. A), Dante (see Vol. B), or Milton (see Vol. C).

Interdisciplinary Connections

In the twentieth century, *Candide* inspired two major artists in other media: Leonard Bernstein, whose opera of the same title is well known, and Paul Klee, who created a series of illustrations for the work. In addition to these cross-disciplinary connections, a wealth of academic audiovisual aids is available to aid instructors in enlivening and contextualizing the presentation of Voltaire's masterpiece.

Music, Readings, and Lectures

Leonard Bernstein's famous opera, *Candide*, is available in various versions, recordings, and formats:

Bernstein, Leonard. *Candide*. Book by Lillian Hellman. Lyrics by Richard Wilbur, John Latouche, and Dorothy Parker. Orch. Bernstein and Hershy Kay. With Max Adrian, Robert Rounseville, Barbara Cook, and Irra Pettina. Cond. Samuel Krachmalnick. Columbia, OS 2350, 1956.

———. *Candide*. Book by Hugh Wheeler. Lyrics by Richard Wilbur, Stephen Sondheim, and John Latouche. Orch. Hershy Kay. With Lewis J. Stadlen, Mark Baker, and Maureen Brennan. Cond. John Mauceri. Columbia, S2X 3293, 1974.

———. *Candide*. Book by Hugh Wheeler. Lyrics by Richard Wilbur, Stephen Sondheim, and John Latouche. Orch. Bernstein and Hershy Kay. With Erie Mills, David Eisler, John Lankston, and John Castle. Cond. John Mauceri. New York City Opera Chorus and Orch. New World, NY340-41, 1986.

———. *Candide*: Piano-Vocal Score. New York: Ambersen, 1955.

Hellman, Lillian. *Candide*. Comic operetta. Lyrics by Richard Wilbur, John Latouche, and Dorothy Parker. Illustrated libretto. New York: Random House, 1957.

Bishop, Thomas, ed. *From Versailles to the Bastille and The Spirit of Revolution*. Films for the Humanities 5, 6. Princeton, 08540, POB 2053.

Brombert, Victor H. *Candide*. Audiotape (in French). Everett/Edwards, 2504, 1973.

Comédie Française. *Les victoires de Voltaire*. Pathe Records, DTX 283, 1958.

Cranston, Maurice. *Liberty: Imaginary Conversation in 1762 between Rousseau and Voltaire*. Audiotape. British Open University. Course No. A303. Open University Educational Enterprises Ltd., 12 Cofferidge Close, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK11 1BY, England.

Weightman, J., et al. *Voltaire and Rousseau: Men of the Enlightenment*. Comp. and presented by John Pickford. BBC World Service.

Visual Materials

In a journal entry for January 1906, Paul Klee, then training to become a book illustrator, wrote that it was while reading *Candide* that his individual artistic style came to him. Voltaire's tale was the only complete set of book illustrations he executed before turning to painting. Klee's original drawings, exhibited at the Kunstmuseum Bern, were also published (ed. Kurt Wolff, Munich, 1920).

Images

Fontaine, Isabelle. "Paul Klee: Six études inédites pour *Candide*." *Revue de l'art* 12 (1971): 86–88.

The World of Voltaire. Exhibition catalog with introduction, "Voltaire and the Enlightenment," by Paul M. Spurlin. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1969.

Films

Bishop, Thomas, ed. *From Versailles to the Bastille*. Films for the Humanities 5 (filmstrips, cassettes, and booklet). Princeton, 08540, POB 2053.

Clark, Kenneth, writer and narr. *Civilisation*. Dir. Michael Gill and Peter Montagnon. 12 programs. BBC, 1969. Relevant programs: "The Smile of Reason," "The Worship of Nature," and "The Fallacies of Hope."

Cranston, Charles, writer. Narr. Nigel Anthony. *Charles Gray as Voltaire: The Story of His Life and an Account of His Ideas*. BBC (90 min.)

Dinner at Baron d'Holbach's. Film and videocassette. Media Guild, 11722 Sorrento Valley Road, Suite E, San Diego, CA 92121. 24 min.

Frederick and Voltaire—The Story of a Visit. Film and videocassette. Media Guild, 11722 Sorrento Valley Road. Suite E, San Diego, CA 92121. 24 min.

Taylor, Samuel S. B. *The Creation of Voltaire's Posthumous Image*. With Hermitage Museum and Saltykov Sheichedrin State Public Library in Leningrad. Slide and cassette presentation of bicentennial lecture delivered at Society for French Studies Conference, 1978. Available from E. J. Hughes, Dept. of French, Queen's Univ., Belfast BT7 INN, UK.

Alexander Pope

The uniqueness of Alexander Pope is that in some important senses he should be understood as a coterie poet in the style of the seventeenth century; yet at the same time, very much in the spirit of the eighteenth, he was also ruthlessly entre-

preneurial in using print to establish a public literary persona. Leading a solitary life confined by his infirmity and his religion, he wrote for a circle of like-minded, literary friends, such as those of the Scriblerus Club, or for his Catholic friends and neighbors, notably Martha Blount, to whom he addressed *Epistle II: To a Lady (Of the Characters of Women; 1735)*; and John Caryll, at whose suggestion he wrote *The Rape of the Lock*.

Background of Composition

The private occasion and circumscribed world of *The Rape of the Lock* reflect the coterie aspect of Pope's work; its epic resonances and publication history exemplify the author's ambitious and entrepreneurial use of print. The poem is Pope's response to a scandal created by the real-life antics of beaux and belles in their early twenties. Two Catholic families of high standing feuded after the scion of one, Robert, Lord Petre, snipped a love-lock from the unwilling daughter of the other, Miss Arabella Fermor. The families' mutual friend, John Caryll, asked Pope to try and "laugh them together again" by writing a poem that would make a joke of the whole affair. The matter of the poem was thus originally a real but minor social squabble, an obviously trivial concern of Pope's friends among the already marginalized and quasi-exiled Catholic gentry.

The technique Pope used in his attempt to laugh his friends together again (not very successfully, as Arabella Fermor rightly conceived her reputation only further sullied by the publication of such mocking verses upon her vexations), is of course the comparison of small things to great (an important topic for class discussion). The poem's scene is indeed remarkably *smaller, more* private and domestic in character, than are most representations of eighteenth-century high society. Although Belinda proceeds in state along the Thames to Hampton Court Palace, it is easy to forget, when she sits down to play cards there, that she's ever left a private space. This was the heyday of the theater as an important public social space, and it is striking that such public spaces appear nowhere in Pope's depiction. In 1712, the year of the poem's initial publication, Georg Friedrich Händel moved permanently to London, having taken the city by storm the year before with his opera *Rinaldo* (based on Ariosto). Before Händel's introduction of Italian opera, the spoken play had of course been of paramount social as well as literary importance since the Restoration. Contrasting the emphasis on the theater as social space in other works of the time—for example, Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* (p. 569) or the letters of Elisabeth Charlotte von der Pfalz, duchesse d'Orléans (p. 273)—makes it clear how Pope has exaggerated the domestic, miniaturized quality of his subject matter.

At the same time, the several publications of different versions of *The Rape of the Lock* between 1712 and 1717 delineate the trajectory of Pope's establishment of himself as poet and public figure, despite the fact that the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion in 1715 subjected British Catholics to even greater suspicion and social limitation. The poem was among the first publications that gave Pope an

entree to London literary and political circles, including the Whig associates of Addison and Steele, as well as Jonathan Swift and the other Tory members of the Scriblerus Club (which met in 1714). By 1713 Pope had made enough of a public name for himself with *The Rape of the Lock* and a few other early poems to attract subscribers to his next, and he agreed to one of the most successful publishing schemes in history, his translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Reverence for classical epic was only one part of Pope's motivation for this yoking of his poetic talent to what he called on one occasion the "dulness" of the work of translation: "What terrible moments does one feel, after one has engaged for large work! in the beginning of my translating the *Iliad*, I wished anybody would hang me, a hundred times." It was this translation that made Pope truly famous, however, and moreover made him rich. It made him the first commercially successful English poet: the first, that is, to earn enough from the sale of his published works to dispense with the previously indispensable noble patrons, royal pension, or politically appointed sinecure. "Thanks to Homer," as he acknowledged in his *Imitations of Horace* (Epistle 2.2), he could thenceforth "live and thrive, / Indebted to no Prince or Peer alive." His substantial revision in 1714 of *The Rape of the Lock* added the Rosicrucian machinery, while increasing the number of mock-heroic elements to include the arming of Belinda, the battle of cards, and the journey to the underworld Cave of Spleen. "A sort of writing very like tickling," as Pope himself described it, this poem not only was clearly influenced by his immersion in Homer's epics at the time, but also was a welcome diversion from the "dulness" of translating—and a luxury supported by it.

The appearance in print of the first volumes of the *Iliad* in 1715 so established Pope's public poetic reputation that he soon ventured to publish his collected *Works of Alexander Pope* (1717), although he was still only in his twenties. This audacious publication included new poems like *Eloisa to Abelard*, addressed to his friend and fellow poet Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (see p. 292), and the final version of *The Rape of the Lock*, with the addition of Clarissa's speech (5.9–34), parodying his own translation of the speech of Sarpedon to Glaukos in the *Iliad*. With this final version, reprinted in this *Anthology*, Pope solidified his public poetic persona in a perfect fusion of privately addressed coterie writing with the sublime associations of Homeric epic, as popularized by his own brilliantly successful publication venture.

Classroom Strategies

One reason that *The Rape of the Lock* is taught so often is that it can be fruitfully approached in the classroom from so many different angles. However the instructor chooses to present the work, though, one difficulty often faced is that of overcoming the distance between the poet's world and the students'. Neither coterie writing nor epics, nor Pope's richly evoked details of eighteenth-century daily life in this poem, form part of the familiar frame of reference of most twenty-first-century students. Fortunately Pope provides many ways to get students to leap this

historical gap, including his sense of humor, his moral insight, his poetic style, and his vivid evocation of the intellectual, social, and material world he inhabited.

One way to start overcoming the historical distance is to help students see that Pope is funny. Engagement with his humor and wit can help motivate students to grapple with what they may perceive as the abstruseness or foreignness of his frame of reference. Among Pope's works, *The Rape* has the twin advantage of relative accessibility and the fact that much of what can create a sense of distance in the poem can also provide an opportunity to make the eighteenth century come alive. Students don't need to be informed of the details of literary history in order to get the jokes, as with other frequently taught works like *The Dunciad*; yet its vivid evocation of the details of eighteenth-century life provides, more than Pope's other poems, an occasion to learn about the social and material culture of his time (for more on this, see below).

What exactly is so funny about Alexander Pope—and what are the serious lessons he is trying to teach his readers through the medium of his delightful wit? What lessons can we learn from him as a moralist even now? Where are readers encouraged to position themselves in relation to the characters of the poem and their rarefied yet trivialized world? What kinds of reader responses seem to be elicited by the text? What positive values, as opposed to negative criticisms, seem to emerge from this poem? By what standards are the characters being judged? What exactly are the targets of Pope's satire? This last question can lead from a discussion of enduring moral values to one in which students can learn about the historical specificity of Pope's time. Many instructors like to teach Pope because so much can be learned from his satires about the social, political, intellectual, and material context of his era. One of the easiest couplets with which to begin identifying the targets of his satire might be, "The hungry judges soon the sentence sign, / And wretches hang that jury-men may dine" (3.21–22). This famous verse, conveying values we tend to share with a whiff of historical difference, is perhaps the most obvious of many different instances in the poem showing that everyone in this world seems to have his and her priorities wrong, in just about every possible area of life.

In this poem about a literal battle of the sexes, most areas of life are intertwined with gender conventions, though not reduced to them. Pope's social critique, in this poem and others, has what strikes many modern readers as a misogynist edge, which those interested in feminist approaches, or gender or cultural studies may want to explore. Belinda's lament, "Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize / Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!" (4.175–176) exemplifies the near-Swiftian tone Pope adopts in his critique of the misplaced value with which his society encouraged women to invest outward signs of virtue, to the neglect of real chastity. John Dennis was outraged at the sexual innuendo of this couplet, which was just as glaring then as now. Such lines remind us that this is indeed a poem about rape. The eighteenth-century meaning of the word, like the classical sense to which Pope alludes, always implied rape in the modern sense of sexual violence, just as much as it did the more sanitized "abduction": from the rape of Proserpine, to the rape of Helen, to the rape of the Sabine women—and even to the

rape of the Lock itself—both meanings are always active, although one may sometimes hide behind the other. Students will be confused by the title, and want to understand in what senses Belinda is “raped.” Her own concealed sexual desire—for whom is never made quite explicit—is made responsible for her loss of the sylph’s protection from any and all masculine assault: “Sudden he viewed in spite of all her art / An earthly lover lurking at her heart. / Amazed, confused, he found his pow’r expired, / Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired” (3.143–146).

The Rape of the Lock is just as rich a text for a discussion of conventions of masculinity as it is for one about stereotypical femininity. What kind of model is the Baron? Students should soon notice that all such stereotypes or conventions are called into question, or become fluid, during the course of the poem. This is made clear very early on, as the elemental spirits—all shades of dead women—“Assume what sexes and what shapes they please” (1.70). The murkiness of gender and even human identity is given bizarrely concrete metaphorical force in the Cave of Spleen, where “Men prove with child, as pow’rful fancy works, / And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks” (4.53–54).

It is no accident that where men become women, women become fragile vessels; female virginity is at least twice compared to a “china vessel” (2.106; 3.159), and this is one place where it is easy to see how Pope involves his commentary on sexual mores inextricably with a broader one on social, economic, and material culture. “China vessels” imply not only the fragility of female chastity but also the economics of luxury, of global trade, and of the nascent European industry based on tastes whetted by such trade. China vessels also appear “On shining altars of japan” (3.107–110), mingling in miniature on the tea-tray the luxuries of exotic trade, just as India and Arabia, the elephant and the tortoise are brought together on Belinda’s “altar” of “the sacred rites of pride” (1.127–136). The technique for making Chinese porcelain had very recently been replicated in Europe for the first time by Böttger and von Tschirnhausen, resulting in the opening of the Meissen factory in 1710, so that at the poem’s first publication, “china vessels” would only just have become a more widely available luxury, as all the fashionable rushed to obtain their Meissen ware. In a similar metaphor combining images of sexuality and imperialist trade, “China’s earth receives the smoking tide” (3.110); this is only one of many places where the poem could open up a discussion about the material culture of the period, from makeup to gambling to the implications of consuming imported stimulants such as tea, coffee, and chocolate, new luxuries in those days that have become so much a part of our own world as to be taken for granted, even though their production still involves illegal slavery in Africa, as well as poverty and oppression in Asia and Latin America.

Despite its linkage of most of the sins of eighteenth-century society to female frailty, this “tickling” poem is far lighter, more indulgent and good-natured in tone, than more ruthless satires like *The Dunciad* or even the *Epistle to a Lady*: “If to her share some female errors fall, / Look on her face, and you’ll forget ’em all” (2.17–18). “The sacred rites of Pride” (1.128), moreover, are not solely “female errors,” but are generalized here and throughout Pope’s work to all humankind. *The Rape* is thus clearly in line with Pope’s larger satiric project: Not just Belinda’s,

but all human pursuits are trivial in the grand scheme of things. This same critique of human pride is emphasized in the *Essay on Man* (p. 515), and Belinda's Eve-like vanity and presumption is generalized to the poet himself and all the human race in one of Pope's letters to Joseph Addison, written during the period of *The Rape*'s revision:

What a bustle we make about passing our time, when all our space is but a point? . . . Our whole extent of being no more, in the eyes of him who gave it, than a scarce perceptible moment of duration. Those animals whose circle of living is limited to three or four hours, as the naturalists assure us, are yet as long-lived and possess as wide a scene of action as man, if we consider him with an eye to all space, and all eternity. Who knows what plots, what achievements a mite may perform in his kingdom of a grain of dust, within his life of some minutes? and of how much less consideration than even this, is the life of man in the sight of that God, who is from Ever, and for Ever! (December 14th, 1713)

Belinda's pursuits, and those of the diminutive sylphs, are no more trivial, ultimately, than those of mites and men.

The success of Pope's poetry, however, cannot be fully appreciated without due attention to his use of formal elements. One way to help students understand Pope's satire is to have them analyze the rhetorical techniques he uses to achieve his satiric effects. Ask them to identify examples of his use of the figure of zeugma, by which he incongruously yokes together the sublime and ridiculous: "Or stain her honour, or her new brocade . . . Or lose her heart, or necklace at a ball" (2.107–109); "Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey / Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea" (3.7–8). Other rhetorical means of satirically comparing small things to great include, for example, the Horatian grotesque effect of joining the tortoise and the elephant violently together, while at the same time reducing these impressive beasts to mere baubles: "The tortoise here and elephant unite, / Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white" (1.135–136). These various techniques for yoking small things to great—mites to men—contribute to create the delightful effect of surprise noted by the most astute critics throughout the centuries. Johnson, no slavish admirer of Pope's, expressed his wonderment at it: "New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new" . . . "The whole detail of a female day is brought before us invested with so much art of decoration that, though nothing is disguised, everything is striking." Hazlitt's admiration echoes his predecessor's: "It is like looking through a microscope, where every thing assumes a new character and a new consequence, where things are seen in their minutest circumstances and slightest shades of difference; where the little becomes gigantic, the deformed beautiful, and the beautiful deformed." Pope himself uses the scientific metaphor of the telescope—"Galileo's eyes" (5.138)—which Hazlitt inverts as microscope. Students might ponder why both work equally well to describe the poem's simultaneous operations of hyperbole and diminution. For

as both Johnson and Hazlitt observe, comparing small things to great does not involve simply miniaturization or trivialization: the effect is of aggrandizement as much as of reduction. Under a microscope, “the little becomes gigantic.” If the London upper classes are ridiculed for being more concerned with pride than virtue, more with trinkets than with the noble beasts sacrificed for them, or more with filling their bellies than with seeing justice done, nevertheless they are driven by the same passions that motivate Homer’s heroes.

It is important to help students see that the trivial world inhabited by Belinda and her sylphs is also invested with enormous beauty; it is ennobled by Pope’s poetic artistry just as her paltry strands of hair are translated to the heavens. Pope’s moral significance and satiric power are inseparable from his technical skill with the language, reflecting his own view that the moral and the aesthetic are closely related. A widely used strategy for nurturing in one’s students a healthy respect for the heroic couplet is to let them try expressing some thought of substance, or any thought at all, in rhymed iambic pentameter couplets. Unless, like Pope, they “lip’d in numbers” (*Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 1.129), they should find this a challenging, but rewarding, exercise. Their own struggles with the form may help them to see, with somewhat less struggle when they turn back to his lines, the way Pope’s language works; and to discover the naturalness of the meter to the English language—epitomizing the neoclassical ideal of the artful imitation of nature. After such an effort, they may better appreciate the brilliant, gem-like clarity of Pope’s language and, one may hope, take back his lesson to all their future efforts at writing: “But true expression, like th’ unchanging sun, / Clears and improves whate’er it shines upon, / It gilds all objects but it alters none” (*Essay on Criticism*, 11.315–318).

Both before and after such a writing exercise, it can be helpful to concentrate on a close reading of one or two brief passages in class, for example, the scene at the dressing table (1.121–148), the passage describing the nature and role of the sylphs (1.27–114), or the description of the Cave of Spleen (4.17–54).

Pope’s dazzling skill with language is of course one of the tools he used to construct a public persona as the premier professional poet of his age, engaged in a self-conscious classical agon with every other writer in the field. Having students try their hand at his form themselves lets them see how it’s done—and just how hard it is to do. Yet it can also help students engage with his writing if they learn to see him as a mortal struggling with the recalcitrance of language and the petty, frustrating obstacles of everyday life, of his “long disease” in particular and the cutthroat literary marketplace of the early eighteenth century, not so different in some respects from our own era of Web publishing, in which it sometimes seems that anyone and everyone can contribute to the chaos of unsifted and unratified word soup available to the reading public.

Both the beginning and the end of *The Rape of the Lock*, as in many of Pope’s other poems (*Windsor-Forest*, *Eloisa to Abelard*, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*), bring the power of the poet openly to the fore. Whether or not the instructor wishes to inform students about Pope’s very self-conscious efforts to shape his own career and create the role of the modern professional poet, a public figure writing about

private thoughts and actions, students can gain a great deal from analyzing the way he constructs the voice of the poet in the poems themselves. Why, or to what effect, for example, does *The Rape of the Lock* conclude, much like Behn's *Oroonoko* (p. 347), by stressing the poet's ability to exalt and immortalize the hero(ine) and his/her history?

Connections with Related Works and Materials

There are many ways in which an understanding of *The Rape of the Lock* can be enhanced by connections outward, whether to roughly contemporary works or to Pope's classical sources.

In addition to the comparison just mentioned between the construction of authorial voice in *The Rape of the Lock* and Behn's *Oroonoko*, the same volume of this *Anthology* offers many potential connections to works roughly contemporary with Pope's. The most obvious place to begin is a comparison of satires on the female toilette, that mysterious operation by which, with the aid of "puffs, powders, and patches," imperfect bodies of flesh and blood were transformed into dazzling objects of desire. Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" (1732; p. 289) takes us from Pope's airy realm back to Rochester's world—never left far behind—where the divinest pleasures of love remain always disturbingly close to less romanticized bodily functions. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's retort to it (p. 292) is swift to retaliate with equal indelicacy on behalf of her sex. The theatrics, economics, and vanity of dressing indeed constitute an important topic in many Enlightenment texts. Other comparisons with Pope's might include the passage in Behn's *Oroonoko* where the narrator describes her encounter with the Caribs, who marvel at her elaborate dress (pp. 297–298), the theatrics of dressing as a theme throughout Haywood's *Fantomina* (p. 569), the duchesse d'Orléans' description of her strategies for getting around the time-wasting but necessary social requirements of dressing and cards at court (pp. 281–282), or the frivolous significance—and economic ruinousness—of dress as a marker of nationality, gender, and class in Montesquieu. Both Montesquieu and Elisabeth Charlotte describe the French Regency period under her son Philippe, duc d'Orléans, which began in 1715 during the period of *The Rape of the Lock*'s revision, and ushered in an age famous for the kind of luxury, triviality, and moral bankruptcy that Pope describes in the English context.

From the generation preceding Pope's, Madeleine de Scudéry's "The Map of Tender" from *Clélie*, as well as the poems of Katherine Philips, can help illuminate the seriousness of courtly games and the importance of a sense of social bonding based upon superior understanding and sensitivity exclusive to the literary coterie. The Countess of Winchilsea's *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions, Written by a Lady*, published in 1713 between the first and second versions of *The Rape of the Lock*, included her famous poem, *The Spleen* (p. 285). This certainly influenced Pope's addition of the Cave of Spleen episode in 1714, and more importantly for instructors, it can provide a context in which to help students better understand this peculiarly Augustan concept.

The themes of domestic life, courtly ritual, and sexual mores can also form a good basis of comparison between *The Rape of the Lock* and contemporary works from more distant cultural contexts. From the same volume of this *Anthology*, these might include Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone*, or Shen Fu's *Six Records of a Floating Life*. In Volume B, *The Tale of Genji* could also provide a useful comparative example of courtly, vernacular literature. What details become important in each of these descriptions of aristocratic daily life or courtship rituals? Are such rituals viewed with similar or different attitudes of satire or seriousness? Against what moral standards are characters and their actions measured in each? What can we learn from these texts about the traditional values of each culture, and about how they are being reinforced or questioned in their respective literatures? Can references to a classical tradition in works like *The Story of the Stone* or *The Tale of Genji* be identified and compared in their functioning to those in *The Rape of the Lock*?

Classical and epic antecedents provide the most obvious literary, as opposed to cultural, comparisons with Pope's poem. And yet Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letter to Pope dated 1 April 1717 (p. 173) would be a good place to begin. It is a fascinating cultural document that can show students how quick Pope's circle was to look for the naive world of the heroic age in other cultures of their own time, and it offers clues as to why the classics were so important to them in the first place. The manners and mores that remind Lady Mary of the world of Pope's *Iliad* might be compared to those Pope himself describes in *The Rape of the Lock*.

Pope's closest epic antecedent is of course Milton's *Paradise Lost*, whose supernatural angels and devils are somewhere between Pope's elemental spirits and the deities of classical epic. The temptation of Eve is also an important subtext for Belinda's fall and redemption. And what are the stylistic implications of Milton's choice of blank iambic pentameter verse, compared with Pope's rhymed couplets, which he saw as better imitating "the grandeur and the sonority of the lines in which ancient poets composed their epics"?

Comparisons with the ancient epics themselves can help students see just what happens when the Homeric rape of Helen becomes the violation of a modern society belle's elaborate coiffure, when combat is conducted with whalebone stays, cards, and scissors, when smelling the coffee provides the only oracular inspiration. Specific passages might include Belinda's arming in Cantos 1 and 2 to the shield ekphrases in *Iliad* 18 and *Aeneid* 8; her progress along the Thames at the opening of Canto 2 to the journey up the Tiber in *Aeneid* 7, earlier echoed in *Antony and Cleopatra* 2.2; or the Cave of Spleen in Canto 4 to any of the classical epic journeys to the underworld. One of the most instructive and concise comparisons, however, is Clarissa's speech in Canto 5 with that of Sarpedon in *Iliad* 12. How do these two speeches function in their different contexts? Notice differences of audience, purpose, and result, and how these differences are at once exaggerated and reduced in Pope's poem. What is the significance of the fact that the person who arms the Baron with the fatal weapon is the same one designated to "open more clearly the MORAL of the poem," as Pope himself wrote?

PERSPECTIVES

Liberty and Libertines

Life of a Sensual Woman (1686) is a remarkable narrative about the sexual life of a commoner woman in the late seventeenth century. The opening echoes a Buddhist confession in which a person describes the life that led up to his or her decision to take vows. The first-person narrator then proceeds to describe her childhood, her life as an attendant in the imperial palace, her life as a mistress of a daimyō (regional lord), as a high courtesan in the pleasure quarters, and so forth. At the end of that year, she leaves the pleasure quarters and gradually falls down the social ladder so that by the end she is a streetwalker, the lowest kind of prostitute.

It is a convention of the Buddhist confession that when the object of love dies, the person awakens from the world of disillusionment and takes holy vows. But when the narrator's first lover is executed as a result of their love affair, she shows little remorse and soon forgets. Instead, the narrative resembles a guide to the pleasure quarters, handbooks on the way of love, which was a popular genre in that period. In the beginning the two young men who come to visit the old woman in the hut outside the capital still don't understand the way of love. The old woman implicitly agrees to teach them about the secrets of love by describing her past experiences.

Significantly, instead of describing her life in the past, the narrator transforms her past into the present, into the lives of women living in contemporary society. The result is that *Life of a Sensuous Woman* is not a novel or the narrative of the life of a woman as much as a collection of short stories about different women in different social situations, focusing on their love lives. *Life of a Sensuous Woman* describes the lives of many different women from the point of view of their sexual circumstances, exploring a wide range of possible occupations or professions—from daimyō mistress to streetwalker.

In the fashion of *haikai*, popular/comic linked verse, of which Saikaku was a master prior to turning to fiction, *Life of a Sensuous Woman* is a comic novel, revealing the pitfalls in the ways of love as well as a wide variety of human foibles. In "Mistress of a Domain Lord," a domain lord is searching for a perfect woman, but in the end it turns out that he is impotent and becomes haggard from excessive sex with the woman.

Life of a Sensuous Woman is also social satire. In "A Monk's Wife in a Worldly Temple," for example, the woman takes the guise of a young man and becomes the forbidden wife of a priest. The story is a sharp attack on the state of the priesthood and the place of the temple in society. Instead of leading an ascetic or abstemious life, the priests in this "worldly temple" eat fish and fowl and visit the gay quarters. The temple becomes a place where the smell of burning bodies brings thoughts of more money (since the priests earn money at funerals). The butt of the humor is the fallen state of Buddhism and the decadence and materialism of the clergy. Particularly interesting is the fact that *Life of a Sensuous Woman*

reveals the backside of the upper rank daimyō, samurai, priests (wealthy temples), and upper-echelon merchants.

It should be noted that *Life of a Sensuous Woman* returns to the Buddhist confessional mode at the end, when she sees the statues of five hundred Buddhist disciples in a temple. At this point she remembers all the men that she has had relations with and realizes the depth of her sins.

The surprisingly erotic love poems of the sixth Dalai Lama also deal with the intimate overlap of religious and sexual concerns. Historically in Asia as in Europe, the erotic in literature and culture was inseparable from religious issues. In both worlds, sexual freedom could pose a threat to the social order at least equal to that of religious dissent. The European texts in this section, too, show the intimate historical connection between ideas of religious and sexual freedom, and document the period's tectonic shifts in the Western understanding of gender roles and relations, the reverberations of which are still being felt around the world today.

Shakespeare was one of the first English literary authors to borrow the French word "libertine." His use of it clearly expresses its early linkage between the idea of religious unorthodoxy or hypocrisy and that of sexual sinning in particular:

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads (*Hamlet* 1.3.47-50).

Like the related native English term "rakehell," "libertine" began as one of the many slurs hurled back and forth between Protestants and Catholics during the sixteenth-century wars of religion. A "libertine" was originally a member of a French Protestant sect that held that individuals should be guided in matters of religious faith by their own conscience. The word entered the English language at the tail end of the sixteenth century as a near synonym for the somewhat earlier "rakehell": a freethinker in religion whose behavior is generally unconstrained by societal norms or ethical considerations.

In France the word soon came to be applied by the police to any act deemed an "outrage to public morality," so that the original religious sense tended to become obscured by the sexual one. The first notorious libertines in this more modern sense were such great noblemen as the Prince de Conti—who, very much like Don Juan at the beginning of Mozart's opera, boasted that he had collected 2,000 rings as tokens of fidelity from as many abandoned mistresses—and the Duc de Richelieu (1696-1788), who, frustrated in one of his amorous pursuits, burned down the house that stood in his way. This duke was perhaps the most spectacular of the great rakes of the Regency period (1715-1723), the decadent world both enjoyed and satirized by Montesquieu in his *Persian Letters* (p. 427). The permissive and extravagant court culture of the French Regency corresponds most closely to the earlier Restoration period in England (1660-1685). Just as the English Restoration was the heyday of notorious "rakes" like the Earl of Rochester, the

French Regency spawned the *roué*-like “rake,” a synonym for “libertine” that emphasizes the sense of sexual transgression over the original associations with religious dissent. This term is applied to Laclos’ character Valmont by Madame de Merteuil at the beginning of his novel, *Dangerous Liaisons*. Sade, conscious of his political agenda, tends to favor the term “libertine.”

Despite growing impulses toward democracy, relative social equality, and religious freedom, at the beginning of the Enlightenment period it was still mainly the upper classes that enjoyed any real freedoms at all. Thus the libertine impulse, while expressing a general cultural drive toward breaking out of the bondage of traditional authority of all kinds, was nevertheless associated with the persistent privileges of the aristocracy, and of aristocratic men in particular. Libertinage mainly meant the aristocratic male’s freedom to do whatever he could—regardless of the needs (not yet conceived of as rights) of women or of men of the lower classes, and in flagrant disregard, moreover, of the honor of his peers, vested as that was in their ability to preserve the chastity of their wives, daughters, and sisters.

The importance of family honor, expressed as control of female sexuality, is clearly visible in the story of Don Juan, whose quarrel with the Commendatore is one of aristocratic honor resulting from his rape of the older man’s daughter. Don Juan’s insouciant whim to possess a peasant girl on her wedding night, or to punish his starving servant for stealing a morsel while serving a feast—both ancient and established prerogatives of the feudal lord—become themes for social critique from Molière (a contemporary of the Earl of Rochester) to Mozart (a contemporary of the Marquis de Sade). It was because of this crucial identification of male aristocratic honor with the control of female chastity that the libertine’s original freedom of conscience in religion and ethics immediately became so strongly associated with his sexual promiscuity: to transgress sexually was to assault the very basis of aristocratic honor and privilege, and thus of hierarchy and authority. The revolutionary paradox of the libertine, then, is that by abusing freedoms available to him in practice only by virtue of his aristocratic prerogative, he fatally undermines the foundations of that unequal privilege.

Robert Lovelace, the protagonist of Samuel Richardson’s novel *Clarissa* (1747–1748) and the greatest libertine in literature, justifies with cynical clarity in a letter to his friend Belford his culture’s sexual double standard:

Nor say thou that virtue, in the eye of heaven, is as much a *manly* as a *womanly* grace (by virtue in this place I mean chastity, and to be superior to temptation . . .). Nor ask thou: Shall the man be guilty, yet expect the woman to be guiltless, and even unsuspectable?—Urge thou not these arguments, I say, since the wife by a failure may do much more injury to the husband, than the husband can do to the wife, and not only to the husband, but to all his family, by obtruding another man’s children into his possessions, perhaps to the exclusion (and at least to a participation with) his own; he believing them all the time to be his. In the eye of heaven therefore, the sin *cannot* be equal. Besides, I have read in some

place [the Bible: *I Corinthians 2:9*] that the woman was made for the man, not the man for the woman.

Since women functioned as the tokens of the marriage exchange by which families preserved their identity, purity, and honor; consolidated property; and formed alliances with other families, the female capacity for deviance from sexual mores was not generally thought of in the terms of classic libertinage as just outlined. A woman could, as Lovelace writes, “do . . . injury . . . not only to the husband, but to all his family, by obtruding another man’s children into his possessions,” but she was *incapable* of harming in the same way any family to which she did *not* belong by blood or marriage. That is why the rake and the *roué*, who ruin *others*, are always male. And yet, especially during the first half of the Enlightenment period, women were acknowledged to be not merely objects of exchange, but desiring subjects at the same time. The mere possibility of their sexual desire, which might well militate against their role in preserving family honor, was therefore seen as threatening the maintenance of the social order, and thus requiring the ultimate restraint and vigilance. The works of Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood in particular, in this *Anthology*, give voice to a proscribed female sexual desire that provoked the pervasive cultural anxieties so well expressed in Alexander Pope’s famous pronouncement in his “Epistle II: To a Lady”: “ev’ry Woman is at heart a Rake.”

What the line just quoted means, in the context of a poem in which the other most famous line is “Most women have no character at all,” is in part that women are rakish in their infidelity to one character—their own. In other words, rakes in this view cannot be any more fixed to one defining character than they can to one mate; their infidelities are as much about fickleness of self as about betrayal of others’ trust. They manipulate their own personae in the process of manipulating their audience.

John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), was famous in his time as a master of masquerade. In his contemporary biography of Rochester, Bishop Gilbert Burnet marvels at his skill at shape-shifting: “He took pleasure to disguise himself, as a porter, or as a beggar; sometimes to follow some mean amours, which, for the variety of them, he affected; at other times, meerly for diversion, he would go about in odd shapes, in which he acted his part so naturally, that even those who were in on the secret, and saw him in these shapes, could perceive nothing by which he might be discovered” (quoted in David M. Vieth, ed., *Complete Poems*, 1968, p. xlii). In the art of masquerade, a whole series of real and fictional rakes after Rochester, from Casanova to Sade and from Lovelace to Don Giovanni, emulated him.

A good way to steer students away from a simplistic biographical reading of Rochester’s autobiographical poems, then, is to concentrate on the way he manipulates multiple poetic personae in them—just, indeed, as he did in life. How do the speakers in the two poems offered in this *Anthology* differ from one another—and from themselves, even within a single poem? In “The Imperfect Enjoyment,” the poet dons a mask appropriate to the Ovidian tradition of verses detailing erotic disappointments, but then gives it a new face. How does Rochester’s use of diction and rhetoric in this poem manipulate and shift the tone, and thus the persona, of

the speaker? What do we learn about his character, or that of “Corinna,” a name that announces itself as pastoral persona? What is the relationship in this poem of self to lover, of the lovers to the invoked crowd of other, absent lovers they both have known or might enjoy, of the poet’s disembodied voice to the dismembered body parts that litter the latter verses of the poem?

In “A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind” the poet adopts a very different voice, to speak of different, more broadly philosophical issues. This poem is in the same magisterial mode as Pope’s *Essay on Man* (p. 515), and also works well with the cynical philosophical pronouncements of Sade, and even Voltaire and Swift elsewhere in this *Anthology*. These writers’ jaundiced and satirical view of “those strange, prodigious creatures, man” (“A Satyr,” 1.2) make for good contrasts, on the other hand, with the progressive moral optimism of Kant, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft as excerpted here.

Eliza Haywood’s *Fantomina* (p. 569) emphasizes the theater as an important public social space, while underscoring the theatricality of private erotic relationships. This surprising novella shows its protagonist manipulating multiple masks to give voice to proscribed female sexual desire. It explores what happens when a woman actually tries to act like a rake in the sense of acting on her desires outside the social sanction of marriage, in the context of a society where—as elsewhere in the world—women’s social worth was entirely a function of their suitability as the tokens of exchange between families. In the process, it gives a very different perspective on the sexualized theatricality of masquerade from those in the other works included in this *Anthology*.

Swift’s poem “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (1732) more closely resembles Rochester’s in its obscenity and misogyny—to which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu retorts so ably in her “The Reasons that Induced. . . .” “The Lady’s Dressing Room” is the earliest of the scatological poems for which Swift is distinguished, although it recalls previous descriptions of female bodies in *Gulliver’s Travels*. In it he takes up the same theme of gendered masquerade that Behn, Haywood, Rochester, and Pope explore, as in *The Rape of the Lock* (p. 523), where the mysterious operation of dressing transforms imperfect bodies of flesh and blood, with the aid of “puffs, powders, and patches,” into dazzling objects of desire. Swift takes us from Pope’s airy realm, where the battle of the sexes is fought by sylphs and gnomes, back to Rochester’s world—never left far behind—where the divinest pleasures of love remain always disturbingly close to less romanticized bodily functions. Swift’s obscenities here are not much different from such verses of Rochester’s as “Fair nasty nymph, be clean and kind / And all my joys restore / By using paper still behind / And sponges for before.” The discovery of Swift’s Strephon—“Oh! Celia, Celia, Celia shits!”—comes as a shock only to one who buys into his culture’s representations of upper-class women not as mortal human subjects, but as fantastic creatures somewhere between goddesses and dolls. Strephon, thus, must be read as the pastoral persona of a naive speaker not necessarily to be identified with Swift.

In this context, Behn’s narrator’s emphasis on eros, pastoral romance, and costume in her encounter with the Caribs (pp. 297–298), brought out especially well

by contrast with Warren's speculations on how the Caribs might learn the European practice of kissing (p. 344), would round out students' sense of the importance of gendered masquerade to this era in general, and to the character of the rake in particular.

The Enlightenment project of individual liberty inevitably begged a series of questions that still vex many societies today: At what point does individual freedom from political tyranny, religious dogma, or unexamined prejudice become merely unchecked liberty to do anything one can get away with, regardless of the needs, benefits, or rights of others? On what basis can moral principles be established once the traditional authority of church, state, and custom are no longer seen as absolute, and how can individual freedoms be justly limited for the benefit of society as a whole? All the texts in this section explore some aspect of these questions.

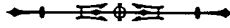
Kant's essay, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" (1784) and the excerpts from Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762) both grapple with these questions directly in philosophical terms. Kant balances the call for every individual to liberate himself (and quite specifically herself) from "tutelage" against the legitimate demands of the established church and the monarchical state. Rousseau argues that the moment a solitary individual turns to others for the gratification of his needs or wants, he enters implicitly into a contract with them that limits the freedoms of each for the mutual benefit and protection of all. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and Barbauld's "The Rights of Woman" (1795) debate the proper place, liberties, rights and responsibilities of women in this Rousseauvian, post-Revolutionary commonweal.

Mary Wollstonecraft followed the lead of the French revolutionary writer Olympe de Gouges (guillotined for her 1789 tract, *The Rights of Woman*) in her rallying cry for a "revolution in female manners." Like Gouges, she points out that the laws and customs governing domestic arrangements and the distribution of property and rights within families lie buried at the core of the public sphere. Directly attacking Rousseau's model for female education in *Emile* and elsewhere, Wollstonecraft cedes that women are born to educate children, but argues that these children—future politicians, leaders, and citizens—are formed by women, who must in turn be educated to be thinking, responsible citizens—free of Kantian "tutelage"—if they are to serve effectively in this crucial public role at the heart of the domestic sphere. It's important to remember that the term "literature" was invented around this time, but it did not separate imaginative works from nonfictional ones. A semiotician and cultural critic *avant la lettre*, Wollstonecraft thus takes on writers from Rousseau to Milton to contemporary clergymen like Gregory, Fordyce, and other authors of popular conduct books, as all contributing in the same register to her culture's misconception of "female character." Barbauld's "The Rights of Woman" is a direct response to Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, in which she found herself held up as a caution against the misuse of female talent in furtherance of the negative "prevailing opinion of a female character." This poem gives students a sense of what Wollstonecraft was writing against in the first place, and also shows that the views seen now to have exerted the most influence historically are

often far from representing a unified or predominant outlook for their time. Wollstonecraft met with as much resistance in many women as she did in many men. Some good topics for discussion of these two texts together are: What is Barbauld's interpretation of Wollstonecraft's work? Does it seem fair or accurate based on the students' own reading of *A Vindication*? Does Barbauld's alternate solution to social conflict between the sexes seem adequate? How would students characterize the different approaches of these two intellectual Englishwomen of the late eighteenth century to such conflict? Was Wollstonecraft's approach really more influential, or do they recognize any modern proponents of Barbauld's views, or other evidence for their continued influence?

Volume E

The Nineteenth Century



Teaching Romanticism Today

As Romanticism taught us, consciousness is always historically and geographically layered, and it tends to mean something rather different to today's students from what it meant to those, for instance, who remember the fervor of the civil rights movement domestically and of the late 1960s internationally, or even the 1956 uprisings against the Russians in Hungary and the British in Suez. Many of us who teach, at least in the older generation, may have felt closer to revolution than our students are likely to do today. Conversely, they feel closer to terror and more viscerally impacted by distant revolutions. Some still remember the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Empire, many will be aware of the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and all are alive to the religious, social, and cultural turmoil besetting and emanating from the Middle East and from several African countries as well. Revolution may be more distant, but it also may seem more widespread.

If the global spread of empire on the one hand and instability on the other brings students close to important aspects of the great age of European and American revolutions, it also teaches them a lesson they will find echoed and brooded over in some of the readings in our volume. For it has become inescapable today that it was wrong to associate revolution only with progress or the hope of progress, as was the assumption after World War II. Revolutionary movements in the Muslim world today more often seek to turn the clock back than to make it jump forward. And not only there. As these words are being written, St. Petersburg (restored a decade ago to its imperial name) has just undergone a massive refurbishing to celebrate its 300th anniversary, and fundamentalisms and nativisms permeate the news alongside more typically progressive reform movements.

For many students, the political excitements may be their most immediate entrée to European Romantic writings. In our selections they will not find what they (normally) have not experienced, namely, revolution at home. But they will find much of what they have experienced personally or vicariously: memories of past disruption, with prison and rescue in Poe, tyranny in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and rebellion in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the celebration of past glory in Pushkin's "Bronze Horseman," shady business success and failure in Balzac. An atmosphere of helpless childhood terror penetrates Blake's "Tyger," contributes to the nightmare atmosphere of Book Fifth of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, and permeates Tieck's "Fair-haired Eckbert"; the countervailing childhood elation touches other moments in Wordsworth and defines "My heart leaps up." The last act of *Faust*,

Part II, ponders the costs and benefits of the Industrial Revolution in a battle-torn land. The landscape of revolution lies in the background of other works as well—in the hermit figure of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” in Leopardi’s pessimism, in the storm-tossed lovers of Byron’s *Don Juan*, in the crowd scenes in *Faust, Part I*, and even in the utopian peacefulness of Keats’s “To Autumn,” written in a season of workers’ riots that preoccupied Keats like almost all Londoners in 1819.

Just as politics affects our students (and their teachers!) unevenly, so too the political and social dimensions are unevenly present in Romantic-era writing. Not all of the political resonances are equally explicit and prominent in these works. That makes politics all the more useful as a possible starting point. Because the writers in our selections rarely represent events directly, the backgrounds and psychic economies become all the more revealing. It becomes possible to link dramatic happenings to small sensitivities, plots to images, and the common weal or bane to the private psyche. All human relationships can be interrogated as public phenomena. Is the Lord of *Faust, Part I*, a despot or a wise guide? Is Mephisto (as councillor) the Mephistophelian villain suggested by his name, or (as foreman) does he represent the energy of the working classes, needing expression blended with wiser management than they receive in this play? Is Faust a quasi-aristocratic roué, an arriviste, or a man of the people working for their good or misled into doomed schemes? (The notion of a plebeian Faust may not strike instructors as promising, but the play was performed in that spirit in the Communist German Democratic Republic, and proposing this interpretation to students can open the floodgates of debate and response.)

Not so long ago, European Romantic writing was understood chiefly as individual expression, and this crucial facet of Romanticism will be explored later in this manual. But instructors today may find it more useful to start with the ways that individuals represent political groups (along with ethnic and national heritages and gendered situations, also to be discussed later) or indeed the ways “folk” writing by and for collectivities emerged at this time. “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” as one famous Wordsworth poem begins, “When all at once I saw a crowd, / A host.” How many readers might now expect, or might then have expected, the “host” confronting the solitary speaker to be an army, either of the French or of the Lord? The energy that a nature poet gathers from ten thousand dancing daffodils is never far from the communal spirit and celebratory dances of revolution. To the extent that the “feeling” or “sensibility” of revolution is the topic, a useful beginning point can be found in the “Revolutionary” Etude of Frédéric Chopin, supposedly composed in reaction to the Russian invasion of his native Poland, on the accompanying CD. The left hand communicates the violent muscularity arising from underneath, supporting and prodding the impetuously oratorical recitative in the right hand; noticeable also is the subsiding energy just before the close.

A second, equally contemporary theme in our selections is the relationship of human existence to the natural realm. One itinerary through the issue could begin in the wonder at nature’s beauty and sublimity, for which Romanticism has long been famed: the landscapes of Goethe’s poetry, the apparently simple enthusiasm

in some of Wordsworth's and Blake's, the life of nature in Keats's work, Emersonian ecstasies. It proceeds to the care, respect, and awe for nature preached by Rousseau as an emotional cure and by Emerson and Thoreau with an almost religious fervor, and philosophized in Wordsworth's *Intimations Ode*. Emotions that arise in confronting and, importantly, in violating nature are the focus of the grand climaxes of Wordsworth's *Prelude* and many of the shorter poems (obviously including "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"). Often, the cooperation between man and nature is uneasy, as becomes evident in the wild-civilized feel of the woodland dwellers in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and of its "hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, / Little lines of sportive wood run wild" and in the sunset glow of "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," where the extinction of civilization is quietly imagined ("And all that mighty heart is lying still").

Nature as cosmos or ordered realm, nature as wilderness and primal energy, nature as the realm of the divine or of the devil (as it notably is in *Faust*), as a source of danger and of salvation, as an origin and as a goal, as a realm of seduction (*Don Juan!*) and of innocence, of life and death (as in Goethe's "Blissful Yearning")—all these issues emerge readily from the readings we have selected and can be complicated and deepened with classroom scrutiny. The instructor can usefully juxtapose contrasting feelings, beginning perhaps with three radically different sensations: the stern emulation of nature's grandeur in Immanuel Kant's invocation to the night sky and "the moral law within," the blissful aquatic reverie of Rousseau's drifting boat (in the fifth "Reverie of a Solitary Wanderer," which is fundamental for many of the subsequent readings in this section), the pious devotion of natural religion in the paintings by William Constable and Caspar David Friedrich we have selected as illustrations. Or, in the song "Gretchen am Spinnrade" on the accompanying CD, encourage students to listen to the drifting, daydream character of Gretchen's labor, where the rippling piano accompaniment portrays the spinning wheel exactly as Schubert elsewhere portrayed babbling brooks.

From nature to human nature is both an obvious step and a large one. If humans are (as Rousseau in particular argued) fundamentally innocent, he and many others felt that civilization denatures them. But it takes thoughtful reading to distinguish the seductiveness of Tieck's Bertha or Goethe's Erlking from that of the innocent Margareta in *Faust*, for the boundaries of unspoiled existence are regularly challenged by the strong energies of revolutionary Romanticism and of what Thoreau called "extra-vagance." That is why so many of the figures in our selections are creatures of risk and terror. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth says he writes as "a man speaking to men," yet a certain amount of wishful thinking is involved in the pretense that his poetry is simple, and more often the Romantics explicitly explore extreme cases: the Ancient Mariner, the Bronze Horseman, and, perhaps weirdest of all, the aged castrato of Balzac's "Sarrasine."

The contrast to the previous century is manifest, even in Balzac's exposé of what earlier doctrines of Enlightenment papered over. Eighteenth-century European writers and thinkers tried to think about man (their word) in general and hence about norms rather than exceptions. Famously, in his four-book poem *Essay*

on *Man* (1733–1734), Alexander Pope had written that man lives “on this isthmus of a middle state,” halfway up the ladder of creation between animals and God, properly keeping to the mean, neither stooping too low nor aspiring too high. To be sure, the second line of his balanced couplet acknowledges that the situation is perilous: Here Pope positions man as “A being darkly wise and rudely great.” He thus sustains a compromise that Romantic-era writing frequently tears apart. The individuals in our selections often fall to extremes related to a vision like Pope’s yet vastly different in effect. They are, it might be said, either rudely wise—naïvely intuitive or self-destructively impertinent—or else darkly great, with a demonic or torrential grandeur. Instructors who make use of *Frankenstein* as a companion volume will find a perfect example of the fragmentation of the Enlightenment compromise in the juxtaposed figures of the student-scientist Frankenstein, a rudely wise character who is drunk on the wisdom of Renaissance mystics, and his monster, a darkly great, huge, and terrifying nocturnal figure that no human can stand to look at.

From within our selections, the clearest example of the extremes of Romantic humanity may be found in Goethe’s ballad “Erlking.” Here the soothing father can be said to be rudely wise and to embody the failed beliefs of an earlier time, while the darkly great seducer carries off a child caught between them—wise enough to know better but too “rude” (unformed) to resist. While not on our CD, the famous musical setting by Schubert could be brought in to illustrate how one voice and the unbroken rhythms of one musical onrush can modulate to encompass the differing tones of Romantic individualism. The father’s feeble attempts to calm the situation are unable to halt the piercing cries of the child with their striking dissonances and ever-rising pitch or to ward off the swift crooning of the Erlking. The song is a masterpiece of precocious genius, written when the composer was a mere 18 and demanding a pianist of exceptional virtuosity to perform the demonic repeated notes; hence even in its artistic and biographical character it exemplifies the tense energies of Romantic individualism. Or use Liszt’s “Mephisto Waltz,” excerpted on the CD, to illustrate the demonic power of the Romantic virtuoso, transfiguring a lively bourgeois dance with its monumental excess. Is the display of unique pianistic magnetism good or evil or, as Nietzsche might have said, beyond both? For good or ill, the Romantic individual is a force of nature, capable of sweeping aside governments, history, even the calendar (as the French Revolution did, inspired by Rousseau among others and commanded by a succession of meteoric leaders).

The Romantic *male* individual, that is. Some writers of both sexes see dynamic possibilities for women. Notably, Mary Wollstonecraft (see Vol. D) expresses a vision of female liberation that combines the civilizing ambitions of many of the preceding women writers with masculine energies. But as Romantic experience was typically polarizing, so it was in respect to gender, and the women in our selections are more often found to correct or, as the case may be, to constrain masculine drives with a pull toward home, nature, childhood, and the past. Margareta’s concluding resistance to Faust, even at the cost of her sanity (in an age when insanity was often considered to be wild, hence natural and authentic) illustrates one pole of the feminine, capable of redeeming even the crime of infanticide; in her, the feminine “draws us on high,” as

the play concludes. More conventional softness is illustrated by Byron's Haidée, who nevertheless combines the love instinct that leads her to protect Don Juan with clever resistance to her authoritarian father. And Tieck's "Fair-haired Eckbert" gives women the seemingly incompatible, hence deeply troubling roles of innocent victim and vindictive avenging angel. Here a profound vision of nature becomes indistinguishable from a profound vision of the psyche; instructors may find it profitable to examine both the conflictive identities and the overlap of individual and collective domains.

Naturally, this list of linking themes—revolution, nature, the individual—is in no sense exhaustive. Another concern in many of our selections, for instance, is the nation, which is discussed elsewhere in this handbook. Instructors will find countless opportunities for relating readings as well as for distinguishing them, and for comparing the readings in this volume with assignments in other parts of the course. We hope that this initial orientation will persuade those who do not regularly teach in this area that the readings should appeal immediately, both viscerally and intellectually, and we like to imagine that you (and your students) will find them as stimulating as professional Romanticists always do.

Still, we would not teach material if our students could be expected to understand it without some study and guidance. Some Romantic-era emotionalism may seem indulgent rather than deeply felt; some of the simplicity may seem simple-minded rather than intuitive; some of the violence may seem, by today's standards, tame. At its most gruesome the reaction takes the form of a student—we have all met him—who responds to Margareta's torment by asking, "Why does a chick like this get so cut up from being laid by a good-looking guy?" Obviously, there are many kinds and degrees of resistance and incomprehension affecting all units of a world literature course, and there are correspondingly many strategies for overcoming them. But one difficulty of Romantic-era writing is worth discussing here: its formality. Characters in action movies do not speak in verse. Contemporary nature-gush shuns the conceptual richness of the grander moments in Wordsworth, Emerson, and Thoreau. And in many cases students in this unit will confront more linguistic challenges than in earlier sections of a course where a greater proportion of the reading is in translation, in prose, or in linguistically simple unrhymed verse. Shakespeare is the great exception to all rules, where students expect difficulty, and if they have studied the earlier selections from seventeenth-century English poetry, they may have been prepared for this aspect of the readings. Still, a good number will be surprised by the difficulty of the language in the course's earliest readings from North American authors and in poems that they might expect to be direct emotional outpourings.

With respect to the challenge presented by verse, there are suggestions below concerning individual readings. Two additional concepts may be introduced either at the start or gradually to ease the approach to other readings. One is that of the genius. While part of Romantic individualism concerned respect for humble representatives of "the folk" such as Goethe's Margareta and Mignon, there was also a cult of exceptional greatness: Faust on stage, the Bronze Horseman in legend, Napoleon in life, Byron's Don Juan in parody. The expressions of genius were ex-

pected to be difficult and demanding. A precocious poet like Keats and a learned one like Droste-Hülshoff show off the range of their knowledge in the demands placed by their verse, and Emerson and Thoreau aim to inspire through the inspiration they receive from nature and from books.

The other concept is that of organic form. Typically, after all, the Romantic genius is a master such as an inventor, not a wild man. Even the “Revolutionary” Etude is conceived as a training piece that balances self-expression with disciplined exercise. As Immanuel Kant famously wrote in his *Critique of Judgment*, the genius “gives laws to nature.” Organic form is the lawful regularity within the spontaneity of natural existence. Yet, as Emerson says at the end of our excerpt from “Nature,” “the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both.” Romantic expressions are supposed to grow and develop like nature and yet to be as perfectly proportioned and completely functional as the human body. Keats gives one well-known formulation of the principle in a letter to his publisher John Taylor (Feb. 27, 1818), in which he writes, “if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all,” by which he means both as easily and as perfectly suited to the organism. Satisfying both proportion and functionality is a complex task, performed by divinity or genius. Thoreau is responsible for the demand to simplify one’s life, and there is plain style and simplicity in many of the readings. But the simplicity is a goal to be accomplished—by the sublimity of violent revolution sweeping away the artificial orderings of past societies or by the constructive and sympathetic thought that finds the perfect place in the social and psychic mechanisms for each individual person and expression. There is nothing merely naive or intuitive in such an accomplishment, and introducing the concept of organic form early can help prepare students for the complexities of the reading.

Another help may lie in a long-range comparison with an aesthetic from a distant culture that is surprisingly similar in some respects and yet usefully distinct in others. The second chapter of the eleventh-century Japanese masterpiece *The Tale of Genji* contains an account of its age’s artistic ideal.

The painter of things no one ever sees, or paradises, of fish in angry seas, raging beasts in foreign lands, devils and demons—the painter abandons himself to his fancies and paints to terrify and astonish. What does it matter if the results seem somewhat remote from real life?

Murasaki Shikibu, the author of this extraordinary work, recognizes the amazing force of genius and embodies it in the radiant beauty of her philandering young hero. But she also recognizes a quieter and more enduring kind of beauty, for the passage continues:

It is not so with the things we know, mountains, streams, houses near and like our own. The soft, unspoiled, wooded hills must be painted layer on layer, the details added gently, quietly, to give a sense of affectionate familiarity. And the foreground too, the garden inside the walls, the

arrangement of the stones and grasses and waters. It is here that the master has his own power. There are details a lesser painter cannot imitate.

As Genji ages, he settles into a less aggressive splendor, reflected in the quietude of a later discussion of art, in Chapter 25 (“Fireflies”), whose views are distilled into one of the book’s many short poems: “The firefly but burns and makes no comment. Silence sometimes tells of deeper thoughts.”

The harmony of the Oriental landscape anticipates (and may even at long distance have influenced) eighteenth-century European ideals. As Pope wrote in his early poem “An Essay on Criticism” (1711), art “works without Show, and without Pomp presides.” Even at its simplest, Romantic art, by contrast, aims at a display of human invention that suggests transformative power rather than eternal stability. A great many of Constable’s pastoral landscapes are consequently focused around the soaring Salisbury cathedral, and the mysterious mountaintop landscape we have selected by Friedrich is overlooked by a towering if inscrutable human figure in the foreground. The Romantic artist is like the moth in Goethe’s “Blissful Yearning,” dying in flame in order to grow in transient beauty. If students know to look for such aspirations and tensions in Romantic art, they will be better prepared for the difficulties they may experience.

Note to instructors: We have given disproportionate space in this section to Wordsworth’s shorter poems. He is at once the author most representative of Romantic currents and the one most likely to baffle students. The comparatively in-depth indications for reading his poetry simultaneously provide guidance for issues and forms of expression in works by most other writers in this section. Consequently, regardless of the composition of the syllabus, we recommend reading the Wordsworth notes as background to the entire unit.

William Wordsworth

Our selections present Wordsworth as a nature poet first, second as a poet of the human imagination, and only rather incidentally as a political poet. All three dimensions, however, are implicit in any of the verse selections. The “vagrants in the houseless woods” in “Tintern Abbey” reflect a social concern pervading the sympathy for the poor and downtrodden that is also one of the themes of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. In “My heart leaps up,” the rainbow with its biblical promise of peace, the “natural piety” suggesting landscape mysticism, and the generally apocalyptic aura all have religious overtones; they link the individual imagination (note the abundance of first-person pronouns) to the greater destinies of the species and of nature. And in the Intimations Ode, one of Wordsworth’s most ambitious lyric poems, the motifs of “My heart leaps up” (from which the ode’s motto is taken) are put in the service of a Platonic myth of rebirth in all spheres of life: individual, natural, aesthetic (note “the little Actor” in strophe 7), social (“dialogues of business, love, or strife” in the same stanza), and religious. (For the reference to Plato, see the notes on the poem below.) Students can be encouraged to look through-

out the readings for the intersections of all levels of experience that constitute the richness of Wordsworth's often deceptively unpretentious verse. The notes that follow aim primarily to suggest approaches to each poem in turn.

Tintern Abbey

Wordsworth was an avid walker, and he traveled to the Wye Valley in southern Wales in 1793 and again, with his sister, in 1798. At the time, the Abbey, a famous picturesque ruin, was also a refuge for vagrants, but the poem is set higher up the valley; it suggests the Abbey itself only through the natural religion developed particularly in the fourth of its five verse paragraphs. Much has been made in recent criticism of the proximity of the poem's date to the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, as well as of its failure to more than hint at the homeless peasantry in the vicinity. In such readings, the poem appears as a "negative allegory" (Marjorie Levinson's term), resisting rather than praising the scene through its multiple denials and tense yearning for a better future. With a sophisticated student group it may be productive to approach the poem via such a hermeneutics of suspicion. But with most groups, a more direct approach will probably yield more insight.

Wordsworth signaled the importance he attributed to "Tintern Abbey" by placing it at the end of *Lyrical Ballads*. (Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was the lead poem.) The poem is one of a number of meditative lyrics in blank verse written by Coleridge and Wordsworth at the end of the eighteenth century. Blank verse is unrhymed iambic pentameter, with ten syllables per line, generally stressed on even-numbered syllables but with the accent rather flexible, especially at the beginning of the line. Students are most likely to be familiar with blank verse from Shakespeare, but the main source for Wordsworth lies in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the long poems that followed it. Apart from a few scattered precedents, use of blank verse for short poems was an innovation of the young Coleridge immediately adopted by Wordsworth; it gives the personal verse an air of depth and metaphysical seriousness that Wordsworth here exploits to the full.

Students can be guided to notice the movements of loss or self-suppression followed by recovery and self-assertion. At the start Wordsworth expresses himself in notably plain language, barely heightened by delicate rhetorical emphasis such as the repetition of "length . . . long" or the slightly elevated "behold" and "repose" in place of the simpler verbs that follow, "see" and "sits." It is a good idea to have the opening lines read aloud, particularly if a student can capture the movable accents, beginning with the spondees (double stress) on "Five years" and "Five sum[bers]." At the same time, note the flexible distribution of words in the line, such as in the subtly varied line endings: "again I hear," "Once again," "I again repose," "Once again I see." The poem is launched, that is, with an appearance of artlessness supported by discreet mastery. So, while the "thoughts" are impressed initially on the landscape, not on the observer, the voice is intensely personal and differs from the

impersonality advocated by Murasaki, Pope, or, in the twentieth century, T. S. Eliot. The middle of the poem then soars to moving exaltation prompted by its hushed sensitivity to the “life of things,” including not just animals but also waters, landscape, sky. The quasi-mystical belief in a living nature, known as *pantheism* (literally, the divinity of all things), was widespread throughout European intellectuals in the period, often seeming at odds with established religion but here leading toward a faith that can sustain the spirit in the present and in the future, in the individual, the family, and the species. “The still, sad music of humanity,” one of the poem’s most famous lines, is a paradox, like the “quiet . . . harmony” or the “presence that disturbs me with a joy.” All these paradoxes are to be regarded as part of the uplift that begins in the opening lines when Wordsworth’s attention is drawn from the scene before him (“These waters,” “these . . . cliffs,” “this sycamore,” “this season,” etc.), always pointing upward, for instance, toward “mountain-springs.”

Once these patterns are observed, students can be guided to notice the firm structure supporting the seeming ramble of the meditation. It is in five verse paragraphs: the first concerns the present scene, the second looks back, the third begins to reflect (“If”), in the fourth “half-extinguished thought . . . revives,” and the last draws the thoughtful moral (“Nor perchance . . . If . . . For”) leading to benediction. Observation brings wildness and homelessness to mind, but memory brings thought that leads to healing restoration. Similarly, in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, poetry begins with contemplation and recollected emotion, rises to the overflow of powerful feelings, and “in this mood successful composition generally begins.” Contemplation and composition are processes for mastering emotion, associated with maturity and the development beyond untamed childish exertion (“when like a roe / I bounded o’er the mountains . . .”) toward feelings of relatedness that the end of the fourth paragraph calls “my moral being.”

It would be wrong to say that spontaneity yields to control, expression to form, childhood to adulthood, nature to man, or the past to the present; rather, Wordsworth here develops a sense of organic growth through which all qualities are related yet set into distinct stages in an ever-broadening circle of awareness and sensibility. Simplicity and complexity join in a poem whose profundity is inseparable from its ease.

Nutting and Short Lyrics

“Nutting,” another blank-verse lyric, presents the negative side of experience. Rather than a return, it is a unique adventure; rather than maturing, it is boyish; rather than simple diction, it is self-conscious and artificial (“sallying forth,” “Figure quaint,” “Tricked out,” etc.); rather than productively directed paradox, it is self-contradictory (“dear . . . unvisited,” “wise restraint / Voluptuous”). The boy releases his sexual energies against a magically edenic nature rather than a realistically pastoral scene, with imaginary fleece and “green stones” rather willfully compared to “a flock of sheep.” The result is “pain” rather than “sober pleasure.” Rather than earning the heavens, the boy sees the sky by looking up through destruction. And so instead of a loving benediction, there is a warning.

Adolescent excess, as portrayed here, lacks the articulated historical sense, the social vision, and the moral power of “Tintern Abbey.” It is tempting to regard the “violets of five seasons” as an echo of the time scale of the earlier poem and to treat the antiquated, fairy-tale-like characters and setting (compare the landscape of Tieck’s “Fair-haired Eckbert”) as an allegory of the *ancien régime* destroyed by the “merciless ravage” of the Revolution. It would be a mistake to harp too literally on a political reading, yet it is reasonable to respond to the richness of implication that encourages an understanding of multiple relationships and ramifying impulses.

The sonnet “Mark the concentrated hazels” is a late and little-known work discussed at length by Marshall Brown in *Preromanticism* (1991). If “Nutting” represents childish willfulness and “Tintern Abbey” the maturing of the individual and social imagination, this sonnet replays the scene a third time with the resigned caution of age. The correspondences with “Nutting” are exact—hazel bower, moss, covering trees, pathlessness, sense of antiquity, urge to preserve and treasure the sanctity of nature. Sonnets, the favorite form of Renaissance poets from Petrarch to Shakespeare and beyond, had all but disappeared for most of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth began writing them shortly after 1800 and eventually wrote over five hundred. Here, then, the very form looks back before the originality of the blank-verse lyrics, as the low perspective no longer suggests exalted looking up and out but rather a downward humility (“bends,” “condescends,” “forlorn humanities”) that lacks the glamour of the early verse but beautifully captures the sunset glow of a later, more tentative age.

“Composed upon Westminster Bridge” commemorates a trip to France when Wordsworth paid his final visit to Annette Vallon and their daughter. The scene actually occurred in July, on the voyage out, but Wordsworth later misremembered and misdated it as a homecoming. Mixed motives are everywhere in evidence, with the city seen as a painterly landscape, dressed and yet “bare,” with splendor equated to dead calm, and with airy openness not far from a vision of drowning (note the equivocation of “steep”). The muted death wish present in this leave-taking—mistakenly transformed as if by a screen memory into a new beginning—can fruitfully be compared to the apocalyptic drowning in the Arab dream passage of *The Prelude*.

“To the Cuckoo” is one of many more light-hearted celebrations of the familiar beauties of nature. The call of the cuckoo is legendary for its mournful, far-resounding repetitiousness; the bird itself is drab and rarely spotted (hence “an invisible thing”). Here memory, overflowing emotion recollected in tranquillity, and childlike wonder combine in a simple, stanzaic form that evokes the delightful youth of humanity.

Intimations Ode

Whether or not a particular course syllabus allows time to examine the poems in this kind of detail, it should be possible to develop an appreciation of Wordsworth’s language that can then serve as a framework for the grand sublimity of the Intimations Ode. In 1843 Wordsworth had this to say about the poem (in a set of notes to his poems dictated to his friend Isabella Fenwick):

Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. . . . I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings, etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. . . .

The child and the adult relate to nature in different ways (as in the fourth paragraph of “Tintern Abbey”). While the 1843 note makes it clear that Wordsworth was still thinking autobiographically, the grand language of the ode reformulates recollected experience in largely impersonal, philosophical, and religious language, before returning at the end (the last strophe opens with an echo of the ode’s first line) to a personal meditation and to an affect that lies beyond mere thought (last line). The composition in fact occurred in two stages: the first four strophes, which are full of first-person singulars and end with obstinate questionings, were composed in 1802; only after a two-year hiatus was Wordsworth able to continue and complete the ode in a more philosophic vein.

Specialists endlessly debate nuances and contexts for the poem. If there is time for class discussion in the context of a literature survey, a fruitful question is whether Wordsworth here prefers childhood or adulthood. In both imagery and tone, admiration and condescension are so mixed that lively attention to detail can ensue without bogging down in the structural intricacies of the poem. Previously in European culture children had been regarded either as an alien race or else, like Shakespeare’s stage children, as small, deficient adults. Even the word *child* suggested a servant (as still in Byron’s poem “Childe Harold”), slave, or prim-

itive. Only gradually, toward the end of the eighteenth century, was childhood understood as a stage in human development, fundamentally different from adulthood yet valuable in its own right. (Adolescence as a separate phase was recognized even later. The best full-scale history of childhood, emphasizing childhood as a “racial” conception, is Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, 1962. A fine study of Romantic childhood is Judith Plotz, *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*, 2001.)

The ode can be used, then, to cap the thematic readings of the shorter poems and to approach three interlocking conclusions: (1) Wordsworth here recognizes and tries to understand childhood as a valuable yet different human experience. “The Child is Father of the Man” implies a genetic relationship together with a different identity in a poem that explores the values and deficiencies of both stages of existence. (2) Here more than anywhere else Wordsworth takes individual psychology to be a key to philosophic thought and social process. The notion that “delight and liberty” could be a “simple creed / Of Childhood” (lines 136–137) stands whole traditions of political philosophy on their head. (3) Hence a poem that opens as a rather vertiginous personal recollection becomes a reflection also on the age, helping others to see how one’s own private feelings can interpret political and historical events. The 1843 note calls the vertigo “the abyss of idealism.” It is represented at the start through a dizzy sense of the loss of meaning in the surrounding world, the letdown that interrupts the hesitant and distant participation (“if,” “valleys far and wide”) of the fourth strophe. “Turn whereso’er I may” (line 7) initially sounds like an almost casual exploration, but, writ large, turning that becomes “Moving about in worlds not realised” (line 145) is a name for the exalted and destructive thrashing of revolution, one version of the “noisy years” confronted in strophe 9. Not all will agree that the explanation for social turmoil lies in a better understanding of individual psychology nor that the cure for the individual lies in the care of nature. But no writer (except, in a different mode, Rousseau) expressed such beliefs with the power and cogency of Wordsworth.

The Prelude

Wordsworth’s great autobiographical poem exists in three principal versions: There is a short (two-book) text dating from 1799 and first reconstructed and published in 1974, emphasizing small incidents of childhood fear and wonder that Wordsworth called “spots of time”; there is a long (thirteen-book) version dating from 1805 that was first published in 1926; and there is the fourteen-book revision published immediately after Wordsworth’s death in 1850. There are countless differences in detail between the two long versions, as well as major insertions and deletions, and each has its proponents. We have chosen to print our selections from the version that has had the longest continuous presence and influence.

The narrative content makes the selections from *The Prelude* easier to teach than short poems often are, and the notes on the poems should serve as guides to the language of the longer work. The Arab dream passage replays the childhood

vertigo of the Intimations Ode (line 96, “an Ode, in passion uttered”) as a visionary experience. The passage combines modern features (such as the fascination with dreaming) with antique ones, including the biblical and prophetic air, the medievalisms, and the reference to Euclid (whose *Elements* was still the standard mathematics text when Wordsworth was in school). In addition to the implicit reflection on personal and cultural histories, there is also a reflection on poetic composition in a passage that throws a “colouring of imagination” (cf. Preface, p. 26) over an everyday reverie and that intensifies the poet’s careful observation (“I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject,” p. 28) into “I looked and looked, self-questioned . . .” (line 84). The crossing of the Alps and the ascent of Snowdon likewise rise from natural observation toward apocalyptic sentiment, with a combination of full time and timelessness, humility and exhilaration, the primitive culture of the “aboriginal vale” where the crossing of the Alps begins, the evocations of the French Revolution (“genuine brotherhood . . . / And universal reason,” “banners militant”), and the cosmic epiphany of a divine order at the climax of the Snowdon vision. If historical and social experience enters these famous passages more by implication than by concrete reference, the excerpt from Book Eleventh balances the picture, with its imaginative heights arising out of the immediacy of revolutionary excitement and commenting through the wisdom of hindsight on the errors of youth.

Students may begin reading Wordsworth wondering about the value of converting psychology and politics into poetry; there is perhaps no finer illustration than his poetry of the insights language provides into the buried feelings that form character and drive ideology.

PERSPECTIVES

Romantic Nature



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Whereas Thoreau spent two years at Walden Pond and minutely catalogued the changing seasons (see the excerpt from the “Spring” chapter of *Walden*), Rousseau’s two months in his island refuge were attuned to the unchanging rhythm of the days. The initial impulse, then, is toward a stoicism that empties out existence. But Rousseau discovers a new form of life within confinement and so veers from passivity into ecstasy. His experience redeems the formerly fallen realm of nature, sin, and imprisonment, making a paradise out of the deserted spot to which he has been driven. His apparently artless praise of the natural world and of the innocent pulse of life is thus revolutionary in its naturalism. It turns religion on its head (“so

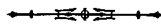
long as this state lasts we are self-sufficient like God”), and its simplicity reflects the same radical impulse that drove his political philosophy.

The return to nature in the *Reveries* can readily be paralleled to the return to nature in the *Social Contract*, where Rousseau had called for the dissolution of all political conventions so as to reconstitute society from the roots. Rousseau is never far from remembering “the tumult of social life,” the threat of the Bastille, indeed, the general passions and disturbances of “our present state of affairs.” He fights his way toward calm and toward justice. The Fifth Reverie thus shows us both the power of impulses toward nature and the conflicted drives lying behind them. And, like so much Romantic-era writing, motifs of nature, of politics, and of the individual imagination are inextricably linked.



Immanuel Kant

The view of infinity suggests the nobility of human aspirations; the heavens and the moral law arise conjointly. And because both are infinite, they cannot properly be stilled by any quasi-scientific formulas such as astrology nor by the quasi-moral self-satisfactions of fanaticism. Kant shares with Rousseau the exalted stimulus by nature, though in this passage nature is unbounded in space rather than (as with Rousseau) eternally repeated in time. The nature exaltation of Wordsworth’s poem “My heart leaps up” is closely related. But Kant was a resistant if avid reader of Rousseau, and he rejects the absorption in self that was Rousseau’s special discovery and curse. Instead, he links moral aspirations to scientific discovery, a connection that helped propel science forward but also relieved science of the obligation to justify its own morality. This brief, famous excerpt from Kant’s ethical work, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, concentrates a number of motifs that have remained controversial from Kant’s day to our own.



William Blake

“The Echoing Green” comes from *Songs of Innocence*, issued by Blake (with the poems set onto his hand-colored engravings) in 1789; “The Tyger” comes from *Songs of Experience*, issued (in the same format) together with *Songs of Innocence* in 1794. The title prepositions are ambiguous. The earlier collection may be sung by innocence or may be sung about innocence, from a position of experience. Consider the rich ambiguities of the natural scene, which may be headed for sunset rest followed by another, similar day (as with Rousseau’s nature), or it may be headed for death (as with Thoreau’s nature): “And sport no more seen.” But who does the seeing? Knowledge is tinged with guilt or danger—guilt of the little ones or danger to them. *Songs of Experience* are even more fraught, whether sung by ex-

perience or about it. And yet experience may point toward redemption, as it does for both Rousseau and Thoreau.

Even shorn of their illustrations, as they have often been read, Blake's poems give marvelously condensed and pointed versions of the Romantic dialectics of selfhood, nature, and revolutionary reconstruction. Electronic reproductions of the plates may be accessed through the William Blake Archive at <http://www.blakearchive.org/main.html>.



John Keats

The Nightingale Ode is the longest of the five odes in Keats's great 1820 collection. It is more self-reflective than the Autumn Ode or those on the Grecian urn, Psyche, and melancholy. Its speaker touches on all the themes of Romantic reverie, including Rousseau's bliss, the hypnotic restlessness of Goethe's (and Schubert's) Gretchen at her spinning wheel, and even, in its third strophe, Poe-like terrors. The ringing song of the unseen bird suggests death to the world but also openness to imagination. When the bird flies away, the speaker resents the deception and thinks again of death ("tis buried deep"). But, as Keats says at the conclusion of his sonnet "O thou whose face," "And he's awake who thinks himself asleep." If he loses the eternity represented by the bird's Greek and biblical associations, he gains in retrospect the deepening of the now three-dimensional local space. So, for the Romantic imagination, in what is known as "dialectic," every loss is also a gain, with the "sole self" balanced against the world, time against timelessness, and the here and now against the depths of culture. Without any overt movement, the ode stages both a static survey and a discovery. That is its buried plot.

Keats wrote four of the five odes in spring, 1819, the Autumn Ode later. It turns homeward, replacing the Nightingale Ode's "sunburnt mirth" with coolness, wine with cider, the mythological nightingale with the homey swallows, the biblical gleaner with a native one. It even leaves the Greek-derived term *ode* out of the title. Time passes from summer toward winter, without anxiety over the lost spring songs and with only the most delicate hints of the coming cold.



Annette von Droste-Hülshoff

Romantic writers employed supernatural motifs and folk legends to explore psychic depths. Droste's "Heath-Man" leaves behind plots such as (notably) that of Goethe's "Erlking" and retains only the terrified feelings. Note how the speaker is increasingly infected with the mother's hysteria. Do the adult voices rescue childhood from corruption or preserve its innocence? In so bold an evocation of the complexities of early experience, no simple answer is possible.

“In the Grass” takes Romantic reverie out of the speculative, intellectual dimensions seen in prior readings by men and into the purely emotive sphere of the love-death, reflecting the cloistered confinement a woman like Droste suffered in her life. In the original the poems rhyme, but not compellingly; their greatness lies in the themes and imagery.



Giacomo Leopardi

Like Wordsworth, Leopardi uses blank verse in “The Infinite” (faithfully represented in this translation) to give his short poem the unfettered richness of epic. But he senses the contradictions of a poetry that aims to be grand and personal at once; the grand obliterates the personal, thought drowns the thinker, and nature is imagined as either hidden or violent and destructive. Wordsworth sometimes falls prey to such moods; you might compare the “Ode, in passion uttered” (*The Prelude* 5.96) and the fear of inundation in the Arab dream passage.



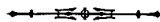
Ralph Waldo Emerson

American Transcendentalism was composed of varying proportions of German idealist philosophy, Neoplatonist mysticism, Wordsworthian elation, and an enthusiasm derived from Puritan religious sources. (In the discussion below, passages in Emerson are located by paragraph number; N = “Nature” and SR = “Self-Reliance.”) Like Kant, Emerson draws his inspiration from the stars (N1). To Emerson, to be sure, they are uplifting and “poetical” rather than sternly ethical, but they also point him, as they did Kant and his followers, toward a mystical view of scientific discovery: The great astronomers are moral heroes (SR1) and “Intuition” trumps “Tuition,” becoming a “primary wisdom” lodged in “magnetism” and in a “science-baffling star” that carries us beyond knowledge toward “inspiration” (SR8). “Let a man keep things under his feet” (SR5) reflects a realist grounding, but, like Wordsworth leaping up at the rainbow, nature leads Emerson toward ecstasy. “Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles,” “standing on the bare ground,” Emerson’s head is “uplifted into infinite space” (N4). This is the trajectory of the famous “transparent eye-ball” passage, which, like much in Emerson, is easier to understand as the restatement of a general pattern than as an isolated, resonant mystery. “In the woods, we return to reason and faith” (N4): such is the itinerary. Likewise, reverie, which calmed Rousseau, thrills Emerson (SR8), bridging between nature and his quasi-religious faith in a world of transcendent illumination.

Here are some related themes you may wish to trace. Emerson is associated with Rousseau and Wordsworth in his idealization of childhood purity (N4). In one respect the childlike wonder found throughout Emerson’s texts appears like a

regression back to nature, to a nativist primitivism, and to mysticism. But in looking backward, Emerson also looks toward origins. A key word in his texts is “cause.” “Every true man is a cause” (SR4); “All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause” (SR 9). To the extent that causes are either biological or symbolic, they are regressive. But a scientific cause is associated with an impulse or force driving things forward, and so “posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients” (SR4). Implicit in childhood is growing up, in science is discovery, in historical action is futurity. A “cause” may even be political, as it seems to be at the close of our excerpt: “let us not rove” (i.e., not let our minds wander from necessity), but instead, “let us sit at home with the cause,” tending to ourselves and our fellows (SR15). Even sitting at home, “beside our native riches,” Emerson is thus always thinking ahead and toward action: “Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men . . .” (SR15). Even in harking back, he points forward—“Whence then this worship of the past?” (SR9)—thus the remarkable energy of his doctrines and of his style. He is the most insistent of all the Romantic vitalists (at least before his great admirer Nietzsche): “Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose” (SR13). Notice in a typical paragraph (SR10) the short, energetic sentences: it begins in declarative verbs that evoke the sage’s knowingness and moves at the end toward transitive verbs, first without expressed objects (“man postpones or remembers”) and then with forward-looking objects (“man . . . laments the past, or . . . stands on tiptoe to foresee the future”). Passive verbs are rare in this most dynamic of thinkers; some students may enjoy discovering that Emerson uses them to speak of royalty, suggesting how backward a monarchical state is and how it must yield to a democratic future (SR7).

The true seer, for Emerson, is the poet. Art is the vision of totality that integrates childhood with adulthood, the past with the future, the individual with the common good (N3). And one name that some instructors may want to introduce for his characteristically American itinerary—from mystical wisdom or naive vision toward vitalist action and social commitment—is *pragmatism*. The pragmatist strain is buried at the core of Emerson’s mystical strain; whether following the itinerary outlined here or some other path, you can help students pull apart motifs in Emerson and then align them in an implicit plot that can make reading him a delightful practice of surprising discoveries.



Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau can be read as a representative European Romantic, as a representative American Romantic in contrast to more world-weary European authors, as a distinctive personality juxtaposed to Emerson, or as a powerful voice for cosmopolitan discovery—or all four in succession. His love for the sights and sounds of nature allies him with Rousseau, Wordsworth, Keats, and many other contemporaries. So does the inclination toward self-scrutiny, especially with its focus on self-consciousness

and the notion of a mind-created world of experience, rather than on moral self-examination: “be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade but of thought.” “Common sense” was an Enlightenment slogan that Thoreau, as an extreme believer in the power of the individual, equates with “brain-rot.” Also broadly characteristic of the age was the inclination toward a grandiose faith in science. The years at Walden Pond were an “experiment” from which Thoreau hoped to learn “the laws of the universe”; the precision of observation that appears in the journals and in other parts of *Walden* is glanced at in our excerpts by the careful notation of species and their habits and by the use of technical vocabulary such as “alburnum.”

The excitement of Thoreau’s “extra-vagance,” however, is distinctively American. The quick-cadenced, ringingly aphoristic sentences ally him with Emerson’s natural religion more than with Wordsworth’s sense of unexpected, often rather shadowed discovery. Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” admires English hedge-rows, and the landscape of Keats’s “To Autumn” likewise reflects the English small farm, with its carefully tended fields and delineated margins; whereas Thoreau, like Emerson, sees or imagines infinities. He also shared or, often, led Emerson’s politics, with a more pragmatic and activist, less sentimental view of reform than the leading British Romantic writers typically mustered. Nothing in Emerson’s sermon-like urgings matches the vigor and variety of Thoreau’s style, where paradox reaches a rare pitch of concentrated wit: “Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one’s self,” a sentence it might be worth unpacking in class.

Thoreau’s vitalism is typical of its day, but his “tonic of wildness” is more bracing and sometimes more threatening than that of any other major writer, with the “inexhaustible vigor” of nature paired with an unsentimental observation of its destructive power. Emerson traveled widely in Europe and America, whereas Thoreau rambled only within New England (where he scaled the heights of Maine’s highest mountain, Katahdin) and neighboring territories. But Thoreau compensates with a cultural consciousness that ranges across the globe. “The wild goose is more of a cosmopolite than we,” perhaps, but not even Goethe can match the geographical range of literary, philosophical, and political interests manifested even within our relatively brief excerpts. Thoreau culminates our “Perspectives: Romantic Nature” section because he offers the most dynamic, restless exhilaration at natural powers and at their human embodiments.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Faust

A large and disparate text, *Faust* connects effectively to any and all themes of the period—Romantic titanism and genius with the moral issues raised by originality; revolution with its sympathetic devil who often steals the stage and blends in-

creasingly with the central protagonist; the transition to economic modernity from the small-town world of Part I to the great world of Part II that ends with Faust as a kind of industrial tycoon; changing attitudes toward nature, from the sentimental nature worship of the late eighteenth century to fears about its destruction at the hands of modern technology; the representation of depth psychology, if one reads Faust and Mephistopheles as the inseparable sides of the same personality; and the problems raised by the new Kantian philosophy about the nature of the self and the possibility of moral action in a secular world in which absolute knowledge of truth or divinity has become impossible. These themes are all responsive to tracking images, but the long composition history sometimes makes the play seem more difficult than it really is. The following materials offer a brief overview.

The lengthy process of composition (1772–1832) can be divided into clear stages. The first one, from 1772 to about 1775, generally known as the *Urfaust* (“original *Faust*”), includes the first half of the scene “Night” (through Wagner’s interruption) and essentially all of the scenes dealing with Margareta (commonly known as the Gretchen Tragedy, Gretchen being the German nickname for Margaret). It is generally considered a work of original genius typical of what in Germany is called the period of storm and stress (1770s). Goethe published part of this material in 1790 under the title *Faust, ein Fragment*, and later destroyed the manuscript (a secret copy of which only came to light in 1870). The *Fragment* is the version in which Goethe’s contemporaries got to know and to judge the play. Many works were published as fragments in the period, so it was not obvious that Goethe would ever add any more to it. It is, basically, a bourgeois love tragedy different from the many others in the period only in its extraordinary quality. It is the part of the play where Goethe is most independent of the Faust legend; it is also the part of the play that has been most influential on imitators and especially on opera composers.

The second major stage of composition took place in the 1790s, when Goethe was surrounded by philosophers, poets, and scientists all trying to come to terms with the implications of Kant’s philosophy. This stage consists of the three prologues and the remainder of Part I; it was basically finished in 1801, but its publication was delayed by the Napoleonic Wars until 1808. The additions make the play fall into two parts, the expanded first part now often referred to as the Tragedy of the Scholar, followed by the Gretchen Tragedy mentioned above. As long as we are willing to believe that Goethe thought the new material was relevant to the old, then it is sensible for students to reflect on how the new material changes the meaning of the old material.

Part II, finally, though begun as Goethe was finishing Part I, was written primarily from 1825 to 1831. It stands in the same relationship to Part I that Part I does to the *Urfaust*. Part II interprets Part I, elaborates it, reinterprets it, and sometimes even parodies it. At the same time it replays the earlier drama at a more general level, dealing now not with individuals but with societies. If Part I reconfigures the Faust of the *Urfaust* from a being organized around genius and feeling into an

individual organized around self-consciousness and reflection, Part II generalizes and abstracts to the level of all humanity.

The scenes we have included from *Faust* are discussed below.

Part I

Prologues: The prologues are worth a lot of class time because they define the central issues of the play as Goethe understood them in the 1790s. Why are there three? It is often helpful to begin with the second, the “Prelude on the Stage.” The director and the poet articulate opposing points of view that can be characterized with the kinds of descriptors listed in Table 1. Their disagreement is mediated by the clown, who urges combining their opposed views in a human love plot—the human, love, and the play are all crucial elements. The same can be done for “Dedication” and “Prologue in Heaven.”

Table 1. Introductory Scenes in *Faust*

Dedication (history)

Ghosts	Stanza 1	Self
Happy memory	Stanza 2	Lament/labyrinth/old loves
Past gone	Stanza 3	Music/throng/applause
Past becomes real	Stanza 4	Real vanishes; music independent of voice
Past	Self-reflexiveness	Present
Other	Memory	Self

Prelude (consciousness)

Director	Clown	Poet
Time	Moment	Permanence/stability
World	Error/truth	Spirit
Sight	Experience/feeling	Hearing
Food	Drink	Poetry
Society	Love	Nature
Theater		Poetry
Deeds	Fancy/actor	Words
Crowd		Isolation
Reality	Labyrinth	Truth
Present	Both/and	Past
Other	Youth (cf. memory)	Self
Real	Theater/play (cf. forms)	

Prologue (knowledge)

Michael	Gabriel	Raphael
Hell	Earth	Heaven
Chain	Spin/alternate	Circle
Mephistopheles	Faust	The Lord
Confusion	Erring/striving	Clarity
Particular		General
Negative		Positive
Grasshopper		Tree
Social	Human	Natural
World	Faust, <i>Faust</i>	Truth

Past and present mediated by reflection in the “Dedication,” real world and ideal mediated by play in the “Prelude,” and world and truth mediated by Faust in the “Prologue” become three parallel structures that identify the major issues of the drama. The different iterations of the dialectical process establish the principle early in the work that nothing in *Faust* has fixed meaning; instead, things can be constantly represented by other things, and all symbols are temporary: meaning exists only in time.

Against this background the moral question posed by the “Prologue in Heaven” is that much more startling. What can it possibly mean that God insists he can save a man who will make a pact with the devil, seduce an innocent young woman, and kill her mother and brother? What does it mean that the criterion for salvation is striving, not good behavior (much less good works), not repentance or atonement? The strong association of God and striving with nature makes the conflict one between nature and justice but not between good and evil, for both are good. Tragedy arises in the play from the incompatibility of the natural order and the human order. The prologues do not resolve this incommensurability; they pose the problem that the rest of the play addresses. Indeed, it might be argued that not even the play as a whole solves the problem, but at best, only fosters reflection on a case-by-case basis. In that sense the play can be understood as a series of episodes that keep reformulating the same problem from different points of view.

Night and Outside the Town Wall: These early scenes define the object of Faust’s longing; what it is that drives him to his pact with the devil. Since Faust alternates here between despair and excitement, the succession of high points—they are actually all epiphanies—successively refines the definition of what Faust wants. Table 2 gives a synopsis of theme, perspective, and imagery in each stage of these scenes; with the second column registering the progressive clarification of the locus of resolution.

Table 2. Climaxes in “Night” and “Outside the Town Wall”

Moon (386–97)	Real	Moonlight	Outside	Nature	Spirits	Hovering	Bathing in dew
Macrocosm (430–53)	Divine	Light	Heaven	Nature	Spirit world	Up/down, weaving	Bathing in dawn’s wave
Earth Spirit (460–513)	World	Fire	From roof	Storm	Spirit	Hovering, weaving	Sucking
Suicide (686–736)	Afterlife	Light/ moonbeams	Beyond	Sea/dawn	Fiery chariot	Hovering	Drinking poison
Sunset (1064–99)	Between	Sunlight	Outside, up	Nature	Sun god	Hovering	Drinking light
Poodle (1147–73)	Real/ spirit	Sparks	Outside	Nature	Mephisto	Circles	

All stages in these scenes address in some fashion the tension between world and spirit, or real and ideal—the first represented by increasingly concrete natural beings, the second by phenomena of light. They are mostly connected by imagery of hovering or weaving (mediation) and drinking (always with overtones of learning). The encounters cover a broad range—poetic longing, magical invocation, psychology, real nature. It is especially significant that Mephistopheles in the form of a poodle is the direct successor to moon, sun, macrocosm, and Earth Spirit. He appears in response to Faust’s call for a spirit between earth and heaven to mediate between Faust’s two souls that strive in opposite directions. The devil is not an outsider; rather, he is part of the larger system of the cosmos, which we call Nature, and he functions simultaneously in the material domain of plot, the psychological domain of perception, and the imaginative domain of art.

Faust’s Study: The first scene in Faust’s study moves from general representations of nature to Mephistopheles as its specific embodiment. He appears first as a poodle, then (as he swells) Faust describes him as a hippopotamus and as an elephant. Faust tries to exorcize him as a spirit of one of the four elements, and Mephistopheles is in fact the lord of spirits who sing Faust to sleep with a song on the beauties of nature. Mephistopheles negates the cosmos but is always defeated by its persistent existence; all the death he brings results only in eternal rebirth.

The second study scene returns to the devil from the opposite perspective, that of human society. In this perspective the devil’s element is time: He has nothing to offer Faust but human experience; his magic will enable him to compress the experience of all humanity into a single lifetime. The pact with the devil familiar from most treatments of the Faust legend, including Christopher Marlowe’s

Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, is here converted into a bet. The issue is not so much that it allows for Faust's eventual salvation at the end of Part II but primarily the distance Goethe keeps from the traditional good/evil dichotomy. The bet is that Faust will never be satisfied with the devil's offerings but will always want more—in other words, that he will never say no to any new temptation. In the language of the "Prologue in Heaven," he will always strive (and therefore, in God's terms, be saved). The paradox is thus that salvation depends on constant acceptance, not rejection, of temptation. The conflict between the demands of nature for constant development and striving and those of society for obedience to a social or religious code is formulated with painful clarity.

A Witch's Kitchen: This scene is an early sample of the world that Mephistopheles offers Faust, and at first glance it seems less evil—the expectation aroused by its witch and apes—than simply chaotic and meaningless. By changing his appearance, the witch's potion costumes Faust for the role he will play as Margareta's lover. The Gretchen Tragedy becomes thereby a play-within-the-play in the same way that the "Prelude on the Stage" made all of *Faust* a play-within-the-play. The clue to the scene's function is that everyone in it interprets what they do or what they see. The apes offer running commentary as they crown Mephistopheles king of the world (an appropriate office for a traditional devil); Faust offers extensive description and interpretation of the beautiful woman he sees in the magic mirror. In a parody of this action, the witch offers apparently senseless commentary of her multiplication, but it is commentary that has tempted scholars to try to interpret it. It becomes the normal pattern in the play to have images or plays-within-the-play that are discussed or explained by other characters. All meaning arises from this interaction of the reflecting mind with the objects of the world.

Gretchen Tragedy: When the witch rejuvenates Faust, she strengthens his inward energy so that he can give meaning to the world around; then he can see Helen in any woman, as Mephistopheles says at the end of "A Witch's Kitchen." In the very next scene Faust falls in love with Margareta at first sight: he projects onto her his ideal of the cosmos, just as he already has onto the figure in the magic mirror and onto his various visions in "Night." Faust's visit to her room in "Evening" offers a good opportunity for analysis of this situation: Margareta is not present, Faust has exchanged but one sentence with her, yet he describes her and her circumstances at length and with complete accuracy. It is fruitful to compare his description of her room to his descriptions of his various encounters with Nature and the Ideal in "Night" as well as to his description of the figure in the magic mirror in "A Witch's Kitchen." When he leaves Margareta to withdraw into nature in "A Forest Cavern," similar language recurs. The tragic destruction of Margareta's family, of herself, and of her child makes clear the ultimate impossibility of reconciling Faust's subjective projection with the objective reality of his beloved's circumstances.

The play that Faust and Mephistopheles construct around her—Goethe's most unique contribution to the Faust legend—set the standards for all subsequent bour-

geois tragedy, in which a young woman of the middle class is seduced and abandoned by an older aristocrat under the sway of a dissolute friend. Nevertheless, the social issues are extremely complicated. Margareta is aware of the social gap between herself and Faust. At the same time, Faust is not really an aristocrat, as is usually the case in bourgeois tragedy; he is only costumed as one. This fact universalizes the significance of the play beyond the social question, while it simultaneously identifies the social question as the particular historical manifestation of the universal tragedy.

The treatment of organized religion is more specific. Mephistopheles is of course the enemy of the church, but there is a striking lack of any positive representation of church institutions in the text—the priest who pockets the casket of jewels for the church is no better than the devil who provides them in the first place. The Evil Spirit who besets Margareta in the cathedral is generally assumed to be or to speak for Mephistopheles, but this is not obvious. In his film of the Faust legend, it is obvious to Thomas Murnau that Mephistopheles cannot set foot in a church, while Ken Russell's film version of Gounod's operatic *Faust* makes the cathedral the domain of the devil. For both directors the church is the domain of social condemnation of love. It is a helpful exercise to let students look for differences between the language of the Evil Spirit and that of the choir singing the "Dies Irae": they are not to be found. The Evil Spirit is also sometimes identified as Margareta's conscience; it is worth exploring what it means to identify the conscience as an evil spirit. If Margareta is stifled by the essentially male, hostile church, she is able to pray outdoors before the statue of the Mater Dolorosa to whom she offers flowers. Some alert students will note the connection to the flower-plucking incident in "Martha's Garden"; whether we see her as sacrificer or sacrifice, it is important that the feminine principle and love are associated with nature. (This is a good opportunity to remind students of all the imagery of drinking and sucking at the breasts of nature in "Night.") As always in *Faust*, nature is the positive location of religious feeling (compare also Faust's elevated mood in "A Forest Cavern").

"A Prison" confronts us with the full complexity of the relation between nature and society. The deserted Margareta seems to have had a child and drowned it; she has at any rate been arrested for infanticide and has lost her wits. Her initial response to Faust's intention to save her has two stages that might be characterized as natural—she wants him to embrace her. But what represents life and nature for her represents loss of the bet for Faust because it means returning to the past, asking for time to stand still. Pure Margareta is thus the strongest temptation Mephistopheles can offer to win Faust's soul. And paradoxically, to win his bet with Mephistopheles and to be saved in the terms of the Lord in the "Prologue in Heaven," Faust must (cruelly, helplessly) leave Margareta to her fate, not rescue her like a bold hero of melodrama. Faust sins against nature if he returns to his past with Margareta, and he sins against the social/religious order if he abandons her. And conversely, Margareta still wants to sin against the social order and go with Faust. Only when he refuses to kiss her does she nobly decide to stay within the limitations of her social world and to take

the consequences of her action. Mephistopheles, who consistently speaks for nature, declares that she is damned, but a voice from above says she is saved. It is worth reflecting on what it means that Goethe does not simply identify the voice as God's or as that of the Lord in the "Prologue in Heaven." The play is not about good versus evil but about two competing goods (or two competing evils) that can be reconciled only in a play-within-the-play. Renunciation, a concept that was to become central in late Goethe, is the order of the day.

Part II

The scenes selected from Part II give a sense of its more abstract, allegorical style, of the great variety of poetic forms it uses, and of its more explicit focus on art as a creative force equivalent to nature that provides the space in which the conflicting desires of the play can be temporarily resolved. It is amenable to reading in selections because the continuities of the plot come from repeated themes and ideas, not from a causally related sequence of events.

A Beautiful Landscape: This is the opening scene of the second part. It is typical of the style of Part II that no explanation is offered for how we got here. Ariel (borrowed from Shakespeare's *Tempest*) and kindly elves heal Faust from his feelings of guilt for the sufferings of Margareta by singing him through the night. Mephistopheles is notably absent, as is any reference to God. Morality is here entirely part of the natural order; living in time is to act, forget, and act again. The end of the spirits' song evokes the terms of the "Prologue in Heaven" and the pact with Mephistopheles: the order of the day is rebirth, and the deeds of a noble mind should always succeed. Striving is living in time; it does not preclude serious errors but is nevertheless the only path for the person worthy of salvation.

Positioned as it is between the tragedy of Margareta and the dreamlike world of the rest of Part II, this view represents not naive optimism but rather an almost resigned affirmation of the need for optimism in the face of a reality subject always to time, decay, and perversion. The splendid operatic sunrise delivers the same message: It is both magnificent and threatening, it is both nature and elaborate artistic staging. Faust's monologue states this resignation more explicitly yet. Faust the striver cannot look directly at nature, in the form of the sun, any more than Old Testament prophets could look at God directly. The rainbow in the spray of the waterfall, formed by a process of reflection and refraction, is the only thing to which we have access. But it cannot, of course, be physically grasped, only imaginatively comprehended. The image interprets in retrospect why taking possession of Margareta had to destroy her. This passage marks Faust's central insight in Part II, that truth can be comprehended only through images and interpretations created by ourselves. This too is an act of renunciation.

A Dark Gallery: This scene is typical of the shift in power from Mephistopheles to Faust in the second part. In Part I Mephistopheles pushed Faust into actions

that would incur guilt, like the duel with Valentine; here he encourages him to create, for the Mothers to whom Faust descends are the guardians of all forms. With these mysterious figures nature, art, mythology, and history are brought together in one image, while the motif of descent into the unknowable depths suggests also that Faust descends into himself. At the same time the often comic self-consciousness of the impossibility of what the text describes gives the scene an almost incommensurable irony typical of the late Goethe. It is thus an excellent example of the multiple levels on which the language of Part II communicates.

Act 5: We present the complete Act 5 except for most of Faust's ascent to heaven in the last scene. Since it recurs to the pact and the end of Faust's relationship to Mephistopheles, it can be read effectively as a comparison of the old Faust with the young (rejuvenated) Faust of Part I and is an excellent example of the way the elderly Goethe reiterated and also reinterpreted his earlier work.

Open Country: This scene introduces us to the current version of Faust's eternal striving: drainage projects to create new farmland. Because it is presented from the point of view of the elderly Baucis and Philemon, Faust appears as the dangerous agent of modern technology destroying a rural idyll. The pair is borrowed from a late myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* about a time when humanity had almost forgotten the gods. Through their hospitality to Jupiter and Mercury Baucis and Philemon earn the right to live to great age as keepers of a temple and then to die at the same time by being turned into trees, while their inhospitable neighbors are transformed into frogs and their city into a swamp. It is striking how Goethe has reversed all the parameters of the myth so that the moral ambiguities of Part I all come to the fore: Is striving inherently good or inherently evil?

A Palace: Faust is now the head of a large concern that is, however, no better than a band of pirates who steal cargo or bully unwelcome neighbors on command. This is a strictly material view of the theme of the rainbow; in "A Beautiful Landscape" grasping had to be understood as comprehension, but now the figurative dimension has entirely disappeared. Is this a condemnation of the materialism of the nineteenth century and thus of modernity, a failing of Faust in his old age (and thus a failing of European culture in its old age), a revelation of the inherent immorality of the Faustian position, or the tragic conflict between fulfilling one's natural potential and accommodating the needs of one's fellow humans?

Deep Night: When Baucis and Philemon die as the intransigent remainders of an earlier age, they are mourned by the watchman Lynceus. Faust has killed not only the kindness of the past but also its beauty. But the couple were already old and old-fashioned; in addition to the old moral question about Faust's striving, the scene also questions our relation to history and the passage of time. Goethe is famous as a classicist, but here he acknowledges that even antiquity cannot be a permanent ideal.

Midnight: The four ghostly crones complicate the moral situation yet again. They ought to be allegorical embodiments of Faust's guilt, but they understand themselves in strictly material terms: because Faust is rich, Want, Debt, and Need have no access to him. Care, however, is the last bridge to a spiritual quality, for she affects above all her victim's relationship to time. What appeared as a general historical question in "Deep Night" must now be analyzed at the level of individual psychology. The blinding of Faust evokes the central tragic theme and especially the blinding of Oedipus in Sophocles. Is it to be construed as an act of justice or as a representation of a true state of affairs? Or, since Faust seems unfazed and replaces the outer light (which represented God in Part I) within an inner light, is it simply an outdated, empty gesture? The themes of knowledge, subjectivity, ethics, and relation to history all come into play here.

The Great Forecourt of the Palace: In a stunning reversal this scene suddenly gives us access to Faust's point of view, and his apparent greed, evil, and heedlessness are transformed into a noble and selfless vision of land reform intended to enable a previously oppressed humanity to achieve its secure place in the world through its own daily efforts. The ideal appealed equally on both sides of the Iron Curtain all through the Cold War. Is striving the crime or the blessing of modernity, of the West? And, of course, who wins the bet? Faust pronounces the fateful and fatal words of the pact in anticipation of a moment in which he can conceive of the highest moment. Is being satisfied with anticipation winning or losing the bet? Whichever side one comes down on, it is a tricky mediation that destabilizes any complacency of judgment. As the play's ending approaches, you may want to start asking why Goethe called it a tragedy. What is tragic about dying in old age, rich and powerful, even if not all one's own projects are successfully completed—and particularly if one is then elevated into heaven, where Faust seems headed in the last scene?

Burial Rites: The song of the lemures comes from the grave-digger in *Hamlet* 5.1, so it is interesting to discuss the implications of the shift from classical antiquity to Shakespeare for the model of tragedy as the play draws to its close. The move into broad comedy, reminiscent of the stagey supernaturalism of the "Prologue in Heaven," is also of interest—few classics before the late twentieth century end with such outright silliness. The theme of love, finally, is central. Typically for this part of the play, the poles are reversed. If Part I was about serious, passionate, heterosexual love, now the theme appears in comic reversal with Mephistopheles' erotic attraction to the boy-angels who rescue Faust's soul. If Margareta and ultimately Faust achieve salvation through love, is it so absurd that perhaps even the devil could be saved through the same power? Or is it another cheap trick—as Mephistopheles thinks—to end the play happily? What does it mean that the end of such a great work as *Faust* should seem to depend on a series of shabby tricks? The implications for the moral function of art and even the nature of art are clearly enormous.

Mountain Gorges: In our excerpt of these closing lines of the play, the questions about the arbitrary endings of the previous two scenes are retranslated into the realm of the ineffable. The play cannot really end any more than time can ever end. The themes of knowledge and representation dominate. The play ends with “Eternal Womanhood.” This generalization of love into the abstraction “the eternal feminine” (as it is most commonly designated) connects love finally to nature in the broadest sense, the material form of existence in time.

Goethe’s Poems

In line with one of the chief emphases of our Romantic-period selections, from Goethe’s well over 1,000 pages of lyric poetry of all kinds, we have chosen five of his most famous nature lyrics. “To the Moon” expresses an enraptured identification with the profound mysteries of nature. There is a palpable influence of Rousseau’s sense of nature as pure fluidity. (Rousseau’s autobiographical works, including the *Reveries*, postdate “To the Moon,” but Goethe had already been profoundly impressed by similar themes in Rousseau’s novels.) Goethe’s reverie is typical of its decade in its moonlit sentimentalism, the rapidly shifting moods, and the strong emotional bonds of friendship (the friend being emphatically male in the German). At the same time, it is tempered in several distinctive and influential ways. First, Goethe keeps a damper on the emotionalism through confining the outbursts of “troubled mood” to a few moments, by the easy grace of the language (such as the adverb rhyme “so” in line 16, translated comparably with “away”) and by a classicizing distancing that was to become a powerful part of his subsequent writing. Starting with a direct address to the moon, Goethe turns to the river and then to generalizing reflection in the final stanzas, beginning with an echo of a then universally recognizable poem about rural retirement (“Happy he, who far from work . . .”), the second Epode by the Roman poet Horace. Second, in parallel with Goethe’s unique ability both to express and to control emotion lies the distinctive religiosity of the poem: nature is at once divinity and friend, unpredictable power and precious solace. There is nothing either doctrinal or indulgent about the atmosphere, yet the aura of devotion raises nature to a high plane as a guide for the poet’s “soul.” Finally, the phrase “mazes of the heart” (“Labyrinth der Brust”) echoed throughout German writing for at least a half century as an acknowledgment of the deep mysteries of psychology that many writers and thinkers of the period were eager to portray and explore.

“Erlking,” like “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” is one of a great many Romantic-period ballads narrating a haunted journey. Again nature is an uncanny force. Caught between his father, a rationalist eager to dispel the mysteries of nature, and the seductive Erlking, the child recognizes the dangers acutely but is powerless to ward them off. Goethe (together with Rousseau) precedes Wordsworth and other great writers of the Romantic decades in portraying the uncanny power of infantile drives. The father and the Erlking, indeed, can be taken to personify the tensions tearing apart the child’s heart. Typical of Goethe are the concluding

monosyllabic understatements—the child's last phrase “has done me harm” and the equally spare conclusion “the child was dead”: These may be felt to protect against the power of the emotion and, at the same time, to keep it in reserve, like a coiled spring. (In Franz Schubert's famous setting of the ballad, his earliest universally acknowledged masterpiece, the child's last phrase is virtually screamed, pounding out the terror the poetry magnificently understates. Conversely, Schubert sets the end of the poem as a spare, low-pitched, unaccompanied recitative, the bare bones left after nature has seized the child back unto itself.)

Mignon is a child acrobat belonging to a small wandering troupe in Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. The most famous wild child in all of literature, she is uncontrollable and subject to fits of emotionalism, until eventually she mysteriously wastes away and dies. After her ceremonial obsequies Wilhelm learns that she was born of an incestuous union in the region of Lake Como in the north of Italy. This song, which haunted the European imagination for a century, combines Mignon's shadowy recollections with Goethe's idealization of the classical realm of the south. In his multiple roles the unnamed addressee echoes her tainted birth, expresses the mixed drives of childhood ahead toward mature sexuality and back toward infantile dependence, and then projects them onto a religious feeling at once pagan and (in the second stanza and in the word “father”) vaguely Catholic. As the most famous prototype of the figure wandering lost in “the mazes of the heart,” Mignon was imitated (and often recuperated into a kind of normalcy) by numerous mysterious “angel in the house” figures in nineteenth-century novels such as Jenny Wren in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*.

Goethe's “Chinese” late poem “Dusk Descended from on High” fuses his classicizing tendencies (abstract diction like “nearness,” emotional coolness, and the semi-ironic mythologizing of Luna) with an evocation of Eastern landscapes such as Goethe might have known from his reading or from Chinese pottery and its European imitations. The style is clipped, almost cryptic; verbs are suppressed in lines 3–4 and (apart from the vague “sense”) remain intransitive throughout. Yet the effect is not of stasis or dancing in place but of time stealthily passing. The past is evoked (“descended” is a past tense, intentionally somewhat awkward even in the German), the future is intimated. But revolutionary fervor is replaced by the quiet ardency of the moon, quietly substituting for the eastern sunrise in a discreet oxymoron (as are the “lake's deep skies” in the preceding stanza). The mood is uncanny (“All dislimns to shape unknown”) without being at all threatening. As in the Eastern poetry known to Goethe, nature becomes an allegory for social and historical experience. Transformation, inversion, renovation: all occur here, reassuringly, without the revolutionary character that had traumatized many in Goethe's generation. With nature lighting the way and with the harmony of peoples that Goethe's advocacy of world literature presaged, the ghosts of the dark past may be overcome and absorbed into a cool, reassuring, harmonic dance.

“Blissful Yearning,” another “Oriental” poem but this time associated with the more passionate Middle East, is less cryptic, more *gnomic* (a term applied to the

slightly obscure epigrammatic style of this poem and others like it). Darkness here is more erotic, with some of Mignon's mystery, but still free from terror and proclaiming the binding of the moth's death to rebirth and life. "Die and grow" became one of many Goethe phrases that have entered the German language just as Shakespeare's (such as "to be or not to be") have become part of English.

George Gordon, Lord Byron

Students will undoubtedly respond first to the jokes. You might begin, for instance, with the anticlimax at the end of 2.182. Zoe seems the type of the loyal servant until she is suddenly revealed as the type of the grasping servant. Sentimentality gives way abruptly to disenchanting realism. *Don Quixote* may be remembered as a somewhat distant ancestor. It's worth calling attention to the stanza form, with the joke often released at the anticipated moment at the end of the stanza, where the couplet rhyme favors a release of tension. Stanza 2.180 is another striking example, where "hock and soda-water" first occurs early in the second line, then becomes a surprise rhyme with "slaughter" at the end. Again social convention releases Romantic and (in this case) political intensities: "After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter." Here, to be sure, "ennui" insinuates preparatory ironies, suggesting the hollowness of the conflicting sentiments that conclude the line. "Long travel" evokes the Orientalist mention of Xerxes, while, as a French word, "ennui" echoes "Burgundy"; both thus contribute to the destabilizing effects of Byron's whirlwind style before the snap back to the comfiness of British sociability. It may be productive to compare the relatively casual disillusionment of Byron's ennui (2.181: "I think it was the coast that I / Was just describing") with Baudelaire's intensely disheartened version of the same term. This can be, simultaneously, a good occasion to reflect on the mechanisms and psychic economy of humor.

Don Juan is not, however, exclusively a comic poem, arguably not even primarily one. The poem's feelings are enormously "mix'd" to the point of "sweet excess" (4.26). Byron's nightingale, like Keats's, represents the impulse of love to flee society (4.28), and sublime natural settings and dream visions (2.177, 4.31-35) play a large role. To be sure, the narrative perspective on the lovers is often from without rather than from within. The fragility of "That spring-dew of the spirit" (2.178) is always subject to corruption from social forces, but it is no less enviable for that. The delicacy of feeling is inseparable from the complexity of perspective. Hence, to begin with, the Romantic Byron can usefully be distinguished from the satiric, anti-Romantic Byron (as in the "domestic doings" that are "true love's antithesis" in 3.8), but only as a stepping stone toward seeing their interconnection. It used to be commonplace to associate the "Romantic" Byron with the other leading poets of his age and the "satiric" Byron with eighteenth-century satirists like Alexander Pope, of whom Byron was indeed a great admirer. But more recent scholarship has rightly insisted that "Romanticism" is not the only tendency rep-

representative of its age. Byron's liberal politics, like his condemnation of women's "unnatural situation" (2.201) and his forceful defenses of their "firmness" (4.42) were just as up-to-date as the conservative naturalism of Wordsworth. Indeed, Byron can shed light on variations in tone and stance within the work of his contemporaries, such as the role-playing of the Wordsworthian child in the seventh strophe of the Immortality Ode.

Still, Byron's quicksilver style confronts readers with acute problems of judgment. In a letter concerning the first two cantos of *Don Juan* he wrote: "I maintain that it is the most moral of poems—but if people won't discover the moral that is their fault not mine." Students might be asked to test this claim against the anarchic or comic impulses of the poem; more subtly, to ponder what Byron might mean by "moral." To what degree is the term restricted to the notion of a moral, and to what degree does "morality" for Byron require the power of extended discrimination among a variety of perspectives, a refusal to be taken in by cant (including one's own smugly self-serving fictions) or to settle for premature judgment? Byron is neither the profoundest nor the most emotional poet of his age, but he can serve as the best register of the enormous range of impulses and sentiments that compose the experience of individuals and of groups.

Ghalib

A good way to begin discussing Ghalib is with the two ghazals by Agha Shahid Ali that appear as Resonances to Ghalib (p. 228), as these poems bring to life the untranslatable rhyme scheme used in the ghazal form. Students interested in the ghazal today can look at a collection of ghazals by a wide range of English-language poets, *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*, ed. Agha Shahid Ali (2000), which includes ghazals by such notable contemporary poets as W. S. Merwin, John Hollander, and Paul Muldoon. Ali's own ghazals have been collected in his volume *Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals* (2003). In an introductory note in that volume, Ali describes the ghazal as based on suspense, built into the form with its repeating meter and rhyme and renewed with the first line of each couplet; the second line, he says, "delivers on that suspense by amplifying, dramatizing, imploding, exploding" (*Call Me Ishmael Tonight*, p. 19). As modern as Ali's own poetry is, and as Western as it often is—with its allusions to Melville and Lorca—Ali's poetry also builds directly on Islamic traditions and on traditional Persian and Urdu poets, notably Ghalib (whose poetry Ali himself also translated). Students can compare their skeptical, anti-authoritarian attitudes and their interweaving of religious and erotic imagery. Ali is more overtly political than Ghalib, however; for another of his poems that refer to Palestine, see Volume F (p. 941) for a ghazal that begins with an epigraph from the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish.

Ghalib's ghazals were composed individually, but together they work almost like a Renaissance sonnet cycle of the sort explored in Volume C in "Perspectives: Lyric Sequences and Self-Definition." Almost every image Ghalib uses is tradi-

tional, yet across his poems he builds up enigmatic variations on his favorite themes: the eyes that weep blood or salt; the candle that flickers with many-colored pain, only to be drowned out with the coming of daylight—a deeply ambiguous image of salvation, or the triumph of reason over emotion, or of sheer forgetfulness. Unlike in a traditional poetic cycle, however, Ghalib’s poems pointedly don’t lead anywhere, or at least not to any progress from pain to comfort or loss to recovery. Students can compare Ghalib’s persona to those of Goethe, Byron, and Pushkin: at once proud and self-mocking, anti-authoritarian yet himself insisting on being the center of the world, free-thinking and obsessively devoted to a woman he may hate, or a God in whom he may not believe.

One thing students can trace in his poems is their usually veiled political reference. Ghalib couldn’t criticize powerful people by name and only rarely voices his concerns openly, as in the conclusion to “Each time I open my mouth, the Great One says”: “Since he’s a friend of the Emperor, he oozes arrogance” (p. 227). On its surface, the poem is criticizing his unnamed poetic rival; but what does it say of the Emperor himself that he’s favoring an arrogant, second-rate poet? Ghalib’s cruel, fickle beloved, “the Great One,” is often daringly compared to God, but perhaps a still more daring comparison often lurks under the surface—of the faithless woman to the Mughal emperor as well.

In some ways Ghalib is closest to his French contemporary Baudelaire (Vol. E, p. 515), whose *Flowers of Evil* also dramatizes a proud but self-lacerating poet, an outsider who becomes the center of attention as he mocks his audience’s values. Like Baudelaire, Ghalib is, among other things, a true poet’s poet and a writer of many poems about poetry: as he says in the concluding couplet to one poem, “I judge the whole world on the basis of my imagination. / I think that every person loves a true work of art.”

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Lyric poetry is especially fragile in translation, but with an extended lyric such as “I Visited Again” the themes and general tenor come across even when verbal nuances are lost. The return to a former locale is a common poetic topic in the period; Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” is the example most familiar to English speakers. It can be fictive, but Pushkin’s, like Wordsworth’s, is autobiographical, written upon revisiting the family estate near Pskov where he was confined in the mid-1820s. For Wordsworth the Wye Valley was a liberation from “the din / Of towns and cities,” but Pushkin’s feelings are different and more mixed. Whereas Wordsworth indulges his individual feelings and concludes with a benediction to his sister, Pushkin (rather like Keats in the Nightingale Ode) thinks more cosmically, of generations past and future. Without either Byron’s ennui or Leopardi’s despair, the mood remains melancholy. The beauty of nature is a haunting emptiness, with Pushkin’s “no longer do I hear” contrasting notably with Wordsworth’s repeated “once again.”

Nature here is less an experience than it is an emblem, with the similes in lines 44 and 46 turning the grove of trees into a self-conscious image of human destinies. To the Russian poet nature is not wild, as it is for Wordsworth and—more emphatically—for Thoreau, but familiar, tamed, and symbolic. If the course is tracing ecological themes, the Wordsworth-Pushkin contrast can be used to remind students that love for nature can mean many different, sometimes even contradictory things.

The cultural consequences are evident in “The Bronze Horseman.” Russia’s triumph lies in humanizing nature; as the Introduction says, “Even the elements by your hand / have been subdued and made surrender” (lines 86–87). Nature is there for use, whether by hungry fishermen or by picnicking officials (2.206–212). The grand city on the Neva demonstrates not the timeless beauty of the landscape (as, for instance, in Keats’s “To Autumn”) nor the pettiness of man confronting eternity (Leopardi) but absolutely the reverse: The famous and splendid paean to Petersburg in the Introduction portrays the imperial destiny of Russia raising itself out of the mire. Yet the uncanny narrative of the flood and the ensuing madness of Evgeny (a common name, as Pushkin says at 1.11–15, not the same character as Onegin) suggest a clear awareness of the costs of empire. Business as usual is exposed as “cold indifference” (2.78). Part One portrays the power of nature, Part Two the bifurcation of human experience into the rigidity of the noble hero of history and the insanity of the everyday “hero” of the narrative. The poem does not necessarily retract its celebratory premise, but at the very least it warns against an unreflecting faith in the antinatural, imperial ideology.

Poets such as Khvostov (mentioned in “The Bronze Horseman,” 2.85–86) and Byron (mentioned in *Eugene Onegin*, 1.56) thus take their place as guardians of sanity and moderation. The urbane tone sharply distinguishes Pushkin’s supernatural ballad from the intensities of Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and other similar representatives of the Romantic fantastic. Not even Byron matches the subtlety of Pushkin’s gradations of tone, through which the poet negotiates the shoals of his modernity with its combination of cockiness and angst, national destiny and marginal encounter. The edge of Europe is the tightrope on which his poetry dances.

Perhaps the finest, certainly (in Russia) the most famous example is his brief lyric beginning, in translation, “I loved you; the love has perhaps not yet altogether died down in my soul.” While the poem is omitted from the *Anthology* as untranslatable, its opening phrase can be explicated here and perhaps introduced to a class to distill Pushkin’s greatness. The “you” in the poem is the formal “vas,” not the intimate “tebya,” and since Russian has only one past tense, the verb form is poised between multiple implications: once but no longer, from then till now, for a moment, for an extended and indefinite time. The uncertainties of meaning make it not just a love poem but also a poem about love, about love’s hesitant tenderness, its uncertain fragility. Such an authorial self-consciousness that delicately registers the finest nuance and the most delicate perspective is Pushkin’s special achievement.

Eugene Onegin makes the poet's achievement a national and a European one as well: European because of the Byronic model and some of the twists of the plot, national because of Pushkin's self-defined role in forging a language capable of the utmost refinement and sensitivity to classes, situations, and mores. Our selection compactly illustrates the poem's range, and the translation captures a remarkable amount of its achievement. The various themes are evident in the selection. The very first stanza of the selection already ties style to nation. Morals ("pious," "chaste"), manners ("circumspect," "strict in bearing"), and moods ("serene") are both honored and mocked in the kaleidoscopic presentation; the concluding rhyme ("serene," "spleen") is a comic jab both more pointed and more wistful than Byron's humor, if less aristocratically confident and boisterous. (The effects differ somewhat in the Russian, but the French word "spleen" indeed sticks out in the end, to abruptly deflating effect.) The narrator shares the mix of moods ("banter" and "bile" in stanza 46) with the hero, and they are at once psychological, social, and moral. The culture is pan-European (stanza 49) and even trans-European (stanza 50: "my Africa's warm sky"), the settings urban and rural, the concerns both realistic (legal disputes) and romantically imaginative, the poetizing self-conscious both in its moments of elevation and in the authorial ironies that conclude our selection and the poem's first book. As the selection is a compendium of the poem, so the poem is a compendium of Romanticism as it reaches beyond its roots (such as the nature piety that is so important to Wordsworth) both geographically and ideologically.

PERSPECTIVES

The National Poet

Goethe, Pushkin, and Ghalib were all read in their own time as national poets. This section of the *Anthology* can also be made to serve, therefore, as a useful perspective on the poetry that immediately precedes it. The interesting complications of the phrase "national poet" can perhaps be introduced by some simple facts from that section: neither Goethe nor Ghalib lived in an independent, unified nation, and Ghalib himself, living in what is now India and writing in both Urdu and Persian, can be associated with more than one nation. Like poems, and for that matter like the life of Ghalib's Kashmiri-American translator, Agha Shahid Ali, nations are not natural or inevitable entities but historical creations, vexed and fragile, that can as easily not come into existence or fall out of it again. This means, among other things, that the process by which they do come into existence is not necessarily something to be celebrated, poetically or otherwise—and not something we should assume that national poets *do* celebrate. All of the poets in this Perspectives section show complex relations of engagement with, and estrangement from, the nations they inhabit, recall, or foretell.



Nguyen Du

A good way into *The Tale of Kieu* is to begin by pairing Nguyen Du's short poem "Reading Hsiao-Ching" (p. 253) with the Resonance by the twentieth-century poet Che Lan Vien, "Thoughts on Nguyen" (p. 282). Che Lan Vien's final stanza refers directly to "Reading Hsiao-Ching," as the modern poet responds to Nguyen Du's own response to the earlier woman poet who is the subject of his poem. Che Lan Vien asserts that he doesn't have to wait until the twenty-first century (matching the three hundred years separating Nguyen Du from Hsiao-Ching) to appreciate his great predecessor, whose poems he compares to stakes set into a river against foreign invaders. Both poems can be compared to the poetry on poetry by other poets in Volume E, from Goethe and Ghalib to Baudelaire and Rubén Darío.

Like other poets in this Perspectives section, such as Adam Mickiewicz and Dionysios Solomos, Nguyen Du had a double struggle: for poetic recognition, and for the creation of an independent nation whose poet he could be. Yet *The Tale of Kieu* isn't a solemn or self-pitying allegory but a rollicking, picaresque narrative with a remarkably strong and resourceful heroine. Like "Reading Hsiao-Ching," *The Tale of Kieu* is also a poem about a poet, and students should look for the many texts that fill the narrative, from the underworld Book of the Damned to Kieu's own poems and songs and the other songs she plays so entrancingly. Notably, her poetic ability saves her before the judge who is about to condemn her (p. 267), and the poem is shot through with dozens of references to classical Chinese poetry.

Students can debate Kieu's character and actions: is she a purely innocent victim, or a resilient pragmatist, or someone who gives in to the world's blandishments more than she should? Consider the lines that describe her key mistake late in the narrative, when she listens to the deceitful Lord Tu who wishes to destroy her rebellious husband Tu Hai: "trust in people moved Kieu's guileless heart: / sweet words and lavish gifts could make her yield." "Lavish gifts" may not be quite the same thing as "trust in people."

Used to Hollywood endings, students are likely to be surprised by the ending of the tale, in which Kieu struggles with her feelings but finally renounces her still loyal first love, Kim. This ending, in fact, would have surprised Nguyen Du's readers as well, as the Chinese novel on which he'd based his poem had ended with their happy reunion (after a more historically accurate first version had ended with her death by drowning). Throughout the poem, Nguyen Du emphasizes Kieu's exceptional physical charms along with her artistic ability, often comparing her to a blossoming flower. You can have students look at the nature imagery throughout the poem to see how Nguyen Du has subtly set up his final emphasis on Buddhist renunciation of a corrupt world and its transitory attachments: Flowers bloom but then fade, bees invade their innermost recesses, reeds are flattened by the north wind, "bamboos split fast; tiles slip, soon fall apart" (p. 273). If Nguyen Du makes

Kieu an emblem for an oppressed nation, he envisions a nation very different from the imperial Chinese and French powers around him: a nation that renounces power and security, a nation that doesn't insist on sexual or ethnic purity and doesn't always repel outsiders. A founder of vernacular Vietnamese poetry (as Che Lan Vien later praises him for being), Nguyen Du is also a devotee of the classical Chinese canon that he evokes on every page, at once a national poet and an anti-nationalistic poet, a poet of passion and of renunciation mingling in the "play of ebb and flow" with which the poem begins.



Anna Letitia Barbauld

Even more directly than Nguyen Du, Anna Barbauld suggests that women's struggle for independence parallels that of the nation as a whole. At the same time, she suggests that the ideal of "independence" is a masculine myth that attempts to flee from the realities of universal interrelatedness. As she puts it: "Thou who hast shared the guilt must share the woe" (Vol. E, p. 288). John Wilson Croker's savage review of her great poem "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" attacks both Barbauld's violation of gendered proprieties for public verse and her politics: She isn't engaging in the patriotic self-celebration he wanted to see. Croker's expectations for "national poetry" have a historical basis, of course. You may remind students of poems of military heroism not anthologized here, like Longfellow on the midnight ride of Paul Revere or Tennyson on "The Charge of the Light Brigade." The historical process whereby figures like Longfellow become less interesting to readers than, say, Walt Whitman, and less interesting even as poets speaking about their nation, can be traced as well through other countries. For example, you might ask students to compare Felicia Hemans's patriotically pedagogical "Casabianca" ("The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck"), which applauded British heroism in the war against Napoleon and was recited in schools for decades, to very different effect from Barbauld's "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven," with its dark vision of the unending destruction brought by the Napoleonic Wars and its portent of the loss of British greatness.

Another interesting tactic is to inquire into transnational identifications, analogies, and parallels with the fate of other nations that these poets offer readers of their own. In Barbauld, for example, you can ask students to note how the conquest of the Americas figures even in "Washing-Day," with its mock-epic reference to the execution of Guatimozin (Cuauhtemoc), the last Aztec emperor, by the Europeans. This can be connected with "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven," where the reference to the conquest of the Americas comes back in an entirely serious vein as the suggestion that if Britain once claimed to be the homeland of liberty, that claim is no longer defensible after years of war; the cause of liberty is now located in the struggle of the Latin American peoples for freedom. (Compare the note struck by Walt Whitman in "Prayer of Columbus," where Columbus, viewing the end of his life from the vantage point of a

“savage shore, far, far from home,” nevertheless expresses the wish that “the lifeless cross I know, Europe’s dead cross, may bud and blossom” in the land he discovered.) The political complexities of this vision should also be emphasized. As a struggle against Spain, once (though not recently) Britain’s enemy, these Latin American struggles for national liberation might be described as a safe and popular target for British solidarity, much as the cause of Italian nationhood would soon become. They did not necessarily entail throwing into question the problems with democracy at home. Much might then be said about the ambiguities of support for “other people’s nations”: for example, about the support by Byron and Shelley for Greece’s struggle against the Ottomans, a support that included elements of what Edward W. Said has called Orientalism. Yet imaginative alliances were at least as complicated as political ones, a topic that is well illustrated in Adam Mickiewicz.



Adam Mickiewicz

Mickiewicz claimed the Muslim Ottomans as allies of the Catholic Poles against the Russians (who occupied Poland) despite the fact that the latter too were Christian. No simple paradigm of East versus West will explain such alignments. Mickiewicz’s imagining of the homeland as a literal landscape, imbued with obscure projects and dense and entangled emotions, often invites juxtapositions with selections from the “Perspectives: Romantic Nature” section. These should be encouraged. Another exercise might be to test the extent to which the ambiguities of Romantic landscape are or aren’t those of the nationalism arising in the Romantic period. For example, students can be asked about the confusion of land and sea, in “Zosia in the Kitchen Garden” as well as “The Lithuanian Forest.” Is this because the sea resists human purposes more obstinately, including the purposes of demarcation, appropriation, and national independence? Another question might concern why Mickiewicz presents Chatir Dah, a mountain in what is now Ukraine, where he was exiled, as sacred to the Muslims, who had both battled and co-existed with Christians in that area for centuries. Is this just an opportunistic gesture toward a potential Muslim ally? What Mickiewicz seems to appreciate most intensely in the mountain is its simultaneous availability to—and distance from—all religions and national causes. “The Ruins of the Castle of Balaklava” similarly singles out in these ruins an apparent affirmation of the meaninglessness of taking sides or trying to cordon off the various waves of inhabitants: Greeks, Italians, Mongols, and Muslims. Apartness from national purposes is suggested in a different register when Mickiewicz displays a hero who has been forgotten by the nation for which he struggled, for example, in the pathos of “Hands That Fought” and (with even deeper ambiguity) in “To a Polish Mother,” a poem written in 1830, a year of abortive national revolution. There he seems to be telling the mother to discourage her son from taking up the national cause: “a fight without splendor” and a “martyrdom . . . without resurrection.” But is the image of the son in a “solitary

lair,” sharing his bed with “the venomous serpent,” then himself becoming a serpent (“like the cold snake”), an image of what the mother is supposed to recommend her son to do, rather than letting him get involved in the cause of “the ancient Poles pride and nobleness”? Or is it an image of what will happen to the son if he *does* take up that cause? Is poisoning with soft talk an alternative to martial valor, or is it what the national cause requires?



Dionysios Solomos

In the selection from Dionysios Solomos, the obvious paradox of the title—can one be free while under siege?—seems to lead the poet away from politics in any narrow sense and into a more philosophical reflection, only weakly tied to the events at Missolonghi. Is it the siege, or is it the national struggle itself, from which the poet longs to be liberated? And into what freedom? In the “Eros and April” section of the poem, pagan sensuality, which defines the beauty of the (national) landscape, also becomes a dangerous temptation, very likely leading away from national-political mobilization. Easter references, suggesting the particularly beautiful Greek spring as well as the story of Christ’s resurrection, generalize the Greek nation’s revolt against foreign rule and also problematize it. Can insurrection be properly figured (here as in Mickiewicz) as resurrection? This metaphor will surely have a good deal of conversational meat on it. The same ambiguities can be explored in the last lines, with their sudden violence and their final image of peace: Is this the justification for the battle, what it is for, what will remain afterwards? Does it make the violence seem misguided rather than necessary? Is the Greece that is the endpoint of these efforts and sacrifices a palpable assemblage of historical people, or must one say that Solomos offers only a mysterious and even mystical image of what the Greeks are fighting and sacrificing themselves for? The grass at the end of “The Free Besieged,” like Whitman’s grass, like the other humble vegetable life in Mickiewicz, and for that matter like the act of washing in Mickiewicz and Barbauld, can suggest the deeply democratic element of nationalism, its retrieval and revaluing of the people’s ordinary everyday life—the momentous decision to “chant our own times,” as Emerson put it. Or on the contrary, it can suggest a potent contrast, apart from and in some sense more real than the dramatic and ultimately disappointing quest for national glory.



Walt Whitman

For American students, Walt Whitman is no doubt the easy sell of this group. The real challenge will perhaps be to work backwards, linking the familiar excitements of Whitman’s poetry to the nation, then to the national projects of other, less fa-

miliar poets. Thus an ideal class on this unit would use Whitman as an agent of deprovincialization, stretching parochial sensibilities and revealing unexpected common ground.

Whitman's most famous "national" poem is no doubt "O Captain! My Captain!," written after Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865. In it one can detect Whitman's deep personal involvement in the Civil War, in which his younger brother George fought and survived incarceration in a notorious Confederate prison, and his mourning over the casualties he saw while assisting in Washington military hospitals. But his other poems are arguably national in a more interesting sense. (How far Whitman had to go in order to change the prevailing taste is suggested by Barrett Wendell's comment in 1900 that the concluding stanzas of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" sounded as if "hexameters were trying to bubble up through sewage.") In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," the city of Manhattan can be seen as a microcosm of the nation. What Whitman relishes is the chance to see the society in which he lives as a whole. From the special vantage point of a ferry-rider poised between the then-separate cities of Manhattan and Brooklyn, outside and yet also a part of what he contemplates (compare with Wordsworth looking at London from Westminster Bridge), he can capture the enormous diversity of its inhabitants and their activities and, paralleling them in his characteristic participial lists, show their common belonging. In a typically nationalist gesture, Whitman stretches this common belonging to include the dead as well as the living, though in this case the dead are not the country's heroic ancestors in the past but rather Whitman himself, looking forward into an imagined future. Whitman had experienced a certain disappointment with the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, and one possible motive for inventing the nation as an imaginary entity stretching into the future is in order to go over the heads of his fellow citizens in the present who didn't want to buy his book. Living on in the nation is another version of poetic immortality, a compensatory response to the thought of one's death, perhaps a mode of transcending one's death. According to Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1983), this is one of nationalism's greatest but least obvious strengths.

You might invite students to think about how different Whitman's mode of nationalism is from the more forced, sacralizing, or tradition-bound versions of "national unity" that can be found in everyday nationalist propaganda. As a poetic mode, the panorama of parallels involves an enormous acknowledgment of difference. There is always lots of action, lots of people and things flowing and progressing, each allowed the freedom to move and be and do. If Whitman asserts that all of these are nonetheless connected, parts of a larger whole, within the spectrum of various nationalist visions, the emphasis here certainly falls less on historical continuity or racial and ethnic homogeneity than on difference. Whitman's idea of the nation, that is, contains more present than past, relatively speaking, and also has more difference in it—difference seen for once as a strength of the nation rather than a weakness. In a more critical mode, you might also ask students whether this greater tolerance for or incorporation of difference neces-

sarily implies a more benevolent or respectful attitude toward those outside the nation's borders.

Noticing that there is relatively little Brooklyn in the poem but a lot of Whitman, students may also inquire into the heroic role the poet allots himself as the empathetic, egalitarian, nonjudgmental consciousness that brings all this diversity together, connecting that which would otherwise not be connected. Susan Sontag, who is not herself immune to the charms of this heroic role, might be quoted here from her book *On Photography* (1977) on how dangerous the image of unity-in-diversity can be, how easily it can lead to empire.

One somewhat oddball exercise is perhaps worth mentioning for its pedagogical potential. In a novel called *Gain* published in 1998 by the novelist Richard Powers, there's a passage in which the heroine, a 42-year-old mother and real estate broker named Laura who has just discovered she has cancer, tries to help her 13-year-old son with his homework. She finds him at the kitchen table, frustrated, cursing the poem in front of him and starting to cry. His assignment is "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." She asks him, "What are you supposed to do with it?" And he answers: "Supposed to say what it's fucking about." His mother has other things on her mind, but she wants to keep up the pretense of normal life, so she offers to help. She looks at the poem, and we get bits of the poem juxtaposed with bits of her thoughts:

The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others. Not exactly what Laura had bargained for. She was never very good with words. Always hated English, social studies, all those invented topics. She couldn't wait to become an adult. When things would be real.

She stares at the commodity stretching across these pages. Somehow, she's become a working adult. Somewhere, she's learned: nobody makes a living. There are no other topics but these impenetrable, urgent fakes.

Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west . . . Fifty years hence, she reads. She has to take the poet's word for it. *It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not.*

She hasn't the first clue. It's like doing some kind of Martian archaeology. She's in badly over her head. She looks at the page for something to say. Her son stares at her. (*Gain*, p. 87)

Students will perhaps take some encouragement, as they take on the formidable task of studying American and world poetry, to discover that lots of others have trouble understanding it too—that to them, too, it looks like the archaeology of the planet Mars. It should also be encouraging to think that although this piece of poetry homework seems painfully irrelevant, next to the thoughts of her diagnosis and prognosis and chemotherapy that are filling Laura's mind, in fact the novel suggests that nothing could be more relevant to her situation, if only she could see it.

Notice the first lines from the poem that are quoted: "*The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.*" These are the others that Whitman sees as he crosses

on the morning ferry from Brooklyn to Manhattan. He talks about “love” here, but these are not his “loved ones,” his family or friends; they are people he doesn’t know, strangers simply going to work in the morning. And one simple point of the poem, although also a strange point, maybe even a Martian point, is that strangers going to and from work exist on the same plane of “love” as the people at home. They matter to you. Whitman refuses to recognize the usual line between how you care about what’s private or intimate and how you care about what’s public.

It seems clear that Whitman can accomplish the strange feat of seeing strangers as loved ones in part because he doesn’t feel disheartened by this distance, doesn’t feel so restricted in time. The passage goes on: “*Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west . . . Fifty years hence*, she reads. She has to take the poet’s word for it. *It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not.*” The reference to “Fifty years hence” and what others will see then is of course also an indirect reference to the possibility that, like Whitman, we will not be there in 50 years. The poem confronts us with the difficult prospect of caring about things we will not be there to see, whether because they come after or because they are far away. Whitman himself seems supremely confident that this doesn’t matter, that he can care perfectly well about things from which he is distanced in time and place: “*It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not.*” The plot of *Gain* will suggest that Laura herself would have gained from taking Whitman’s moral to heart in her own life.

You can also ask students to discuss some more unpleasant aspects of the poem. After noting Whitman’s enthusiasm for the morning commuters of the future, students might consider Whitman’s uncritical, equally enthusiastic embrace of factories and industry: “Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys!” And the way the objects produced by industry get inside us and even become us: “We use you, you objects, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us.” For environmental reasons, among others, this is not a prospect we can accept with total equanimity.

PERSPECTIVES

On the Colonial Frontier

The simple idea that you ought to encourage students to get from this section is that the American frontier, which will be familiar to most if not all of them from endless “cowboy” films, novels, TV shows, and other narratives of “how the West was won,” is only one example of a global process that was happening in various countries and in various ways during the nineteenth century. Exactly how this recognition might change their feelings about the national mythology of “cowboys and Indians,” about the century’s American literature, and about the other national literatures in which similar mythologies appear is, of course, an open question. Given the section’s open-ended juxtapositions of texts about the U.S., Russian, Argentine, and Philippine frontiers, you will surely want to discover

individual ways to induce fresh and comparative thinking. To begin with, you might ask students to think about the concept of the “barbarian” as it appears, for example, in Lermontov’s “Bela” and in Sarmiento’s *Life of Juan Facundo Quiroga*, discussed next.



Mikhail Lermontov and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

The background of “Bela” is the long-term Russian effort to dismember the Ottoman Empire and in so doing to conquer native peoples of the Caucasus who had no desire to be ruled by either empire. And *Facundo*, as Ilan Stavans writes, is structured by an opposition between “we” and “they,” where “they” are feudal landlords and gauchos, “uncivilized dwellers on the fringes of civil behavior, instinctual and brute,” while “we” are rational urbanites. (See Stavans’s introduction to the Penguin edition of *Facundo*, 1998; the quotation is on p. xvi.) For Sarmiento, all that is worst in Argentina comes from the frontier. Seeing native inhabitants as barbarians helped justify the so-called civilizing mission by which Europeans presented to themselves their conquest of non-European spaces. But in Sarmiento’s narrative, the barbarians are themselves European settlers, not the Indians those settlers have already displaced. In this case, then, the term “barbarian” does *not* seem to be racialized, as it so often is in the United States, in Africa, in the Caucasus, and elsewhere. Does this make a difference?

In his essay “Caliban,” which came out in Spanish in the early 1970s, the Cuban writer Roberto Fernandez Retamar suggested that Sarmiento’s opposition between civilization and barbarism was part of a dialogue with the Cuban writer and patriot José Martí, a dialogue that Martí had initiated by means of his own Latin-American allegorization of Shakespeare’s characters Prospero and Caliban from *The Tempest*. But Martí had seen, Retamar said, that this is a false dilemma: “*There is no battle between civilization and barbarism, only between false erudition and nature.*” Is there indeed such a battle in Sarmiento’s text, or does one have to revise the terms of the opposition in order to make more accurate sense of it? You can also ask students whether and/or how much it matters that Sarmiento also believed the Indians were barbarians: “Many difficulties will be presented by the occupation of so extensive a country; but there will be no advantage comparable to that gained by the extinction of the savage tribes.” What has been called Sarmiento’s “anti-indigenism” seems the other side of the same coin as his deep identification with the “modern” and “civilized” United States, which was busily expropriating and exterminating its own indigenous people in these same years.

In spite of all this, however, Retamar admits that on first reading *Facundo*, which he did as a teenager and “passionately,” “I had not been on the best side in that otherwise remarkable book.” In his first reading, in other words, he accepted Sarmiento’s perspective. You can ask students whether they had the same experi-

ence, and if so, what the secret might be of the book's ability to get people to identify in spite of some inclination not to. And for that matter, once tricky moments of improper or unavowed identification are brought up—as they must be brought up, in Lermontov as well as Sarmiento—you should also ask students to point out evidence that the authors do not simply channel (i.e., manipulate) the feelings of their readers in one politically determined direction. What about, say, the element of exoticism—in other words, a sneakily positive identification with representatives of supposedly primitive or barbaric societies? One necessary topic for discussion is Pechorin's world-weary desire to lose himself in a non-European place (p. 341) like the Caucasus. How does this desire, which involves some sort of appreciation of that which makes these lands and peoples different from those of his homeland, fit together with his contempt for the inhabitants of such places, which he expresses with no apparent inhibition? Does it complicate the text's ultimate view of the non-Russians?

The large question here is whether the story allows for any distance at all from the cruelty of Russia's imperial expansion, and if so, how. Far in the background, but visible nonetheless, are reminders that a guerilla war against the technologically superior Russian conquerors continued (as indeed it continues today). Azamat, Bela's brother, has always wanted to go off and join the guerrillas, but he has been kept from doing so by his father. Having stolen Kazbich's horse, he finally realizes his ambition; when he disappears from the story, in other words, it is not just as a successful thief, a boy who has seized a much-desired toy, but as someone who can potentially be seen as acting on a political principle.

For those students interested in the larger literary and cultural traditions in which "Bela" might be placed, there is much to be said about, say, the paradigm in which a native woman is beloved by a white outsider, then tragically killed off, while the white outsider goes on to think more or less deep and philosophical thoughts as a result. (The parallel between woman and horse as objects of exchange between men ought not to go unnoticed here.) Does the book take Pechorin's side by having Bela admit her love for him, becoming pleased with her captor and her captivity? Does it back up Pechorin's claim to know what the natives desire? When Bela seems to be longing for her native village, he says, "She could see the very same mountains from the fort as she had seen from the village, and that's all these barbarians want" (p. 333). Yet this is also an interesting context in which to put the delighted descriptions of mountain beauty by the narrator and the other Russians, who themselves seem to be "barbarians" in this particular respect. In them, that is, an aesthetic appreciation of mountain views is allowed to replace the affective and ethical ties that the narrator is here seeming to accuse the Cherkess people of lacking. (After 1812, the attraction of the mountains to the Russians, who were used to flatness, might be seen as equal and opposite to the attraction of the Great Plains to Americans coming from the East a bit later.) It is also an interesting context for Pechorin's inability to know his own desire. The long speech on pp. 340–341 in which Pechorin confesses to having become bored with his conquest will perhaps be key to student discussions.

Boredom itself is a wonderful topic, both in historical context (the nineteenth-century fashion for “ennui”) and perhaps in psychoanalytic context (boredom not as an emptiness, an absence of psychic investments, but rather an active blockage of such investments by some counter-forces that need to be named). Indeed, it seems likely that Pechorin would have become bored with Bela and abandoned her if she had not been kidnapped (for the second time—we should not miss the parallel with her kidnapping by Pechorin himself) by Kazbich. This too, it is suggested, would have led to her death. With only a slight exaggeration, one might say that where Bela is concerned, Kazbich is acting less against Pechorin than as a sort of double or unconscious extension of him. In this way, and perhaps also in others, the narrative might be said to express a certain reluctant admiration for Kazbich. Why? Consider Pechorin’s daredevil imitation of the tribesmen, his suppression of his emotions at Bela’s death, how he uses money and cunning to win her love, and his panegyric to the horse. Is there anything similar in Sarmiento’s treatment of Facundo?

This is one of many ways into the central and intriguing question of Pechorin’s character. A world-weary “superfluous man,” like Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin (and like Onegin named for a river), he is more aggressive and perhaps more enigmatic. Self-consciously “Byronic” in his egotism, he is like Byron’s heroes something of an Orientalist, ready to rescue noble pagan maidens from their pagan menfolk. Another somewhat demonic descendant of Milton’s Satan, he too is an antihero, addicted to cruel and capricious behavior because he has no ground of action other than his own will, who somehow manages to be something of a hero as well, if only by dint of his proud rebelliousness and suffering interiority. Released from traditional morality and inhibitions by the new freedom of thought, yet finding no channels open through which the creative energies of the new might flow, he risked becoming merely predatory, a seducer of vulnerable women, a man whose superior culture in a “primitive” place makes him nothing more than a role-player in the drama of imperialism. An obvious and rich point of comparison within this volume of the *Anthology* is Dostoevsky’s *Underground Man* (p. 582), whose “rescue” of a suffering young woman is at least as ambiguous and who has also been seen as a new type of protagonist expressive of Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. He too stands apart from himself in dialogue, acting out society’s own self-division and recognizing in himself the emptiness of society’s moral codes. You can ask students to what extent we are supposed to be ironic about him. You can also remind them that heroes who are not paragons of moral virtue, who indeed have much in common with villains, are among other things good places to hide the moral ambiguity of the Russian colonial adventure itself, about which the country had not quite managed to articulate its incipient doubts—the sort of doubts that are perhaps most explicit in Tolstoy.

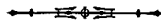
Attention should also be paid to the theme of “cultural relativism” that seems to contrast with a simple civilization/barbarism opposition. Maxim Maximych’s comment when Kazbich murders not the young man who stole his horse but the young man’s father, stealing the father’s horse, is “Of course he was absolutely

right according to their lights” (p. 335). To which the narrator comments: “I was struck by the ability of the Russian to reconcile himself to the customs of the peoples among whom he happens to live. I do not know whether this mental quality is a virtue or a vice, but it does reveal a remarkable flexibility and that sober common sense which forgives evil wherever it feels it to be necessary, or impossible to eradicate” (p. 335). This is a counter-generalization about the Russians to match Maxim Maximych’s generalizations about the peoples the Russians are trying to conquer. And it may be taken as a criticism of the Russians (the possibility of it being a “vice” is mentioned). But whether students decide that Lermontov is taking some distance from the colonial mentality or not, you can certainly raise this as a moral issue with many contemporary analogues. For example, Michael Ignatieff argues in *The Warrior’s Honor* (1997) against taking a strong human rights approach—by coincidence, perhaps, in these same areas of the world—and instead proposes respecting as far as possible the customs and sense of honor of the natives. Yet this can be convenient for an American foreign policy that would prefer not to antagonize the Russian government, which is still fighting rebels in these mountains and which has often been criticized for its human rights record.

Cultural relativism offers a possible segue to (or from) the more obvious issue of narrative framing and ironic distance. We get a huge number of traditional stereotypes, male “natives” practicing habits of deceit, theft, revenge, and violence while their women are just as extreme in their passionate if unprincipled devotion. We get a supposedly authoritative discourse of cultural knowledge, as when Maxim Maximych confidently tells Pechorin that gifts of fine Persian cloth will not be enough to win Bela’s heart, for Cherkess women are “nothing like Georgian or Transcaucasian Tatar women—nothing like them” (p. 334). With equal confidence he says that “[t]hese Cherkess are a nation of thieves” (p. 342). Yet we do not know how much of all this our narrator, who is carefully distinguished from Maxim Maximych, actually believes himself. Note that Maxim Maximych is unable to explain to Pechorin why he disapproves of Bela’s abduction. We know that Lermontov, who took lessons in the Tatar language while posted in the region, also removed allusions to the fact that he was an officer. (“Bela” was first published separately, in 1839, with the subtitle “From an Officer’s Notes about the Caucasus,” but the book version, *A Hero of Our Time*, expunges all such references.) Why insist so strongly on the sophisticated traveling narrator and the frame within a frame? Why play up the humorously self-deprecating tone in which the narrator speaks about the loss of his travel notes as lucky for the reader? As someone who, like Pushkin, had reason to fear the government and its censors, how much did Lermontov feel obliged to dilute or displace his own perspective? How much irony did he infuse into the way “Bela” is told?

For that matter, how reliable is the narrator of *Facundo*—the figure whom we may as well call Sarmiento? Atrocity stories, in which this book and Latin American literature generally abound, are a subgenre that must be treated with a certain suspicion, for their enormous power to move their readers makes them susceptible to abuse. A wonderful illustration of this principle is conveniently in-

cluded partway through Chapter 10 of *Facundo*. The paragraph that follows the phrase “pyramids of human heads” (p. 347) describes the fate of a beautiful young woman, Severa, who remains behind in Rioja, after the rest of the inhabitants have been ordered to emigrate, because she has “excited the lust” of Facundo. Sarmiento describes what follows as a “fairy tale,” but the term is far too realistic for what Sarmiento asks us to believe. He tells us that Facundo, after attempting to poison Severa—but why would an absolute dictator do anything so indirect?—then “seized her by the arm, beat her with his fist until she was covered with blood, then threw her upon the ground and kicked in her skull with the heel of his boot” (p. 347). Full of abomination for this brutal murder, the reader reads on, and two sentences later is told that Severa sought refuge in a church, then “fled to Catamarca and went into a convent.” If Severa is not only alive, but alive enough for a successful escape to another town, and this after having her skull kicked in with the heel of a boot, then it seems safe to conclude that a fair amount of this narrative must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. Along with a certain inflation in Sarmiento’s prose, students can also be asked to note, on the contrary, its no less strange unbendings toward the object of its fascinated indignation. Like other monstrous protagonists of Latin American “dictator” novels, Facundo is in danger of being built up so high that he can’t be vanquished (though he is, and easily) or of being appreciated in an almost amoral or aesthetic sense for his charismatic generosity, his transcendence of brutal self-interest, his magnificent gestures.



Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa)

The center of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* is of course the ambivalence of Charles Eastman (or Ohiyesa: the question of what to call the author is an immediate way into this theme) about the new Western “civilization” he comes to adopt and about the alternative Native American civilization—he at least would not call it “barbarism”—in which he was raised and on which he is asked to turn his back. To be sure, his title contrasts “civilization” with the “deep woods,” as if it was only the West that possessed civilization, as if the Indian way of life did not deserve that more respectful designation. But you can ask students to show the ways in which he nevertheless presents his native culture as a noble one (e.g., the custom of sharing everything, p. 351). When he notes that the Indians treated war as a natural part of social life, and thus something for which everyone expected to be trained (p. 352), he does not offer this, as we might have expected, as evidence in favor of leaving that culture behind. Perhaps this is because, as he also pauses to observe, what counted as warfare for the Indians was so much less bloody and horrifying than what he himself saw with his own eyes when war was conducted by the whites. His father’s reasoning in favor of his going to school has less to do, finally, with needing to learn the proud secret of white civilization—the ability to record everything (pp. 353, 359), even the number of times one can breathe in a day

(p. 357)—than with the recognition that his son has no real choice but “learning to live like those among whom we *must* live” (p. 358, emphasis added). You can also encourage students to notice how the case for acculturation to white American civilization is made in Indian metaphors (e.g., “When you see a new trail . . . ,” p. 359). Students will no doubt recognize without help the note of foreboding with which the excerpt ends: “General Custer had just been placed in military command of the Dakota Territory” (p. 359).



Hawaiian Songs

These delightful songs beautifully round out this section on the colonial frontier, here giving direct voice to poets who saw themselves comfortably at home on their islands in the center of a great ocean, not on anyone’s frontier. Students can observe the ways in which the poets come to terms with European and American products by naturalizing them: The ship masts become a forest, the piano resembles a songbird, while the sprinkler seems to join in the hip-swinging dance it inspires. Conversely, in “A Feather Chant for Ka-pi’o-lani at Wai-mānalo,” the very latest in Western technology, the telephone, is shown not as some astonishing, intimidating Western magic but simply as a convenient appliance: “Now that the telephone makes work such a trifle, / how easy to converse with the best beloved!” The English language itself isn’t an invasive force but an amusing “jibber-jabber” of Bill the ice skater, immensely proud of an accomplishment he cannot actually demonstrate at home. In “The Pearl,” however, King Ka-l’ā-kaua uses his world-circling journey—and Christian imagery—to shore up his authority at home.



José Rizal

The excerpt from Rizal is the first chapter of a novel. Since students will not have access to the rest of the plot, which concerns the young hero’s attempt to seek justice for the death and humiliating exhumation of his father (mentioned in the chapter), pedagogical strategy would seem to suggest spending more discussion time on the novel’s voice. This voice is stylish, distinctive, wittily sarcastic, and in general worth careful attention in its own right. But it can also be taken as a sort of attempt to embody the values of a certain community. The Manila drawing room is a comic version of what Mary Louise Pratt calls in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) a “contact zone.” The situation is like that of Voltaire’s *Candide*: a naive first glimpse of an “ordinary” civilization by someone raised outside it, laced with a humor that cuts in various directions. You can encourage students to follow them out. They may want to hunt down evidence establishing that the intended readers are not limited to native Filipinos; much in-

formation is given that Filipinos would presumably not need to be told. An interesting passage for analysis along these lines might be the one beginning “You who read me, friend or foe” (p. 365).

Behind this is the question of what the objects of satire are, and in the name of what values they are satirized. Here the key character in the passage is perhaps Padre Damaso, the Franciscan friar. You can ask students about his physical appearance, his conversational habits (e.g., how he doesn’t let the others speak), in short how quickly and deftly he is raised into an allegorical figure of the sorts of priestly abuses of monopolistic colonial power that so incensed Rizal. Note his contempt for the Filipinos and for their beliefs and language (which he sees as mere dialect), his allegiance to the myth of the lazy native, and his mix of Eurocentrism and egocentrism, as exemplified by the doubly erroneous assertion that gunpowder was invented not only by a European but by a Franciscan.

Padre Damaso also exemplifies the motif of European colonialists, whether military or religious, who claim to “know the natives” by virtue of their long experience of the place. His claim to know “the *indio*” (p. 367) can perhaps be compared with Lermontov’s Maxim Maximych, who says, “They’re terrific rogues, these Asiatics!” (p. 324), or again “that’s what always happens with these Asiatics” (p. 330), then tells stories involving very bad behavior about his Russian compatriot Pechorin, yet draws no conclusions about “these Europeans.” One interesting issue is how far the “European” text by Lermontov differs from the “native” text by Rizal in its treatment of this issue.

THE ROMANTIC FANTASTIC

Tzvetan Todorov influentially defined the fantastic as a literary mode that hesitates undecidably between a supernatural and a psychological explanation for mysterious events. The definition is predicated on specific works: many tales by the German Romantic author E. T. A. Hoffmann, a good number of Poe’s (such as “The Black Cat,” where the deadly animal could reflect either magical power or the protagonist’s insanity), and some of Henry James’s, notably “The Turn of the Screw.” Strictly speaking, the definition does not apply perfectly to any of our selections. The Ancient Mariner’s tale is unequivocally supernatural, while the ambiguously fantastic elements in Todorov’s sense are confined to the frame and little developed; most plausibly, after all, the Wedding-Guest hears the tale as the ravings of a lunatic. “Fair-haired Eckbert” is a magical narrative, even though much of the interest is in the protagonist’s psychological breakdown. Balzac offers a world of mystery that proves anchored in and explainable by social and economic realities at the time of the French Revolution. And the Poe tale we have chosen is a narrative of persecution, with an Inquisition setting such as is found in many Romantic-era gothic novels and with elements of advanced mechanical contrivance, but free of any hint of magic.

Still, more broadly understood, Todorov's characterization illuminates the dynamics of these works and of others in our anthology (such as *Faust* and "The Bronze Horseman"), as well as a great many others in the period. The mood of uncertainty, the see-saw of sublime power and terrible impotence, the sense of history as a transcendent destiny, the dawning awareness of the psyche as an undiscovered continent (so different from the articulate passions and self-conscious soliloquies of Renaissance drama)—these are the motive forces in this section of the *Anthology* and in a great deal of early nineteenth-century writing to which the dynamics of the fantastic give access.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is easy to teach. It combines passion and intellectual force, psychological and social concerns, dramatic immediacy and imagistic subtlety, contemporary politics and ancient myth. Students typically enjoy debating the meaning of the symbols—the shifting associations of the heavenly bodies, the alternating linkage of water with life and with death, and of course the setting at the threshold of a ritual of consecration. What does it all mean? Is the poem about primal sin or the slave trade, about tyranny and revolution or reverence for nature, about the aged Mariner's sudden entry into adult responsibility or about his failure to mature? Is there a resolution or not?

In effect, it can't go wrong. On the other hand, it also can't go right. As the Mariner says near the end, "I have strange power of speech" (line 587). The festivities are characterized by joyful noises such as the "loud bassoon" (line 32) and by silent devotions; both are interrupted by the Mariner's compulsive talking. A comment made by Coleridge in 1830 (reported in his "Table Talk") is always useful:

Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired the Ancient Mariner very much, but that there were two faults in it, it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up, and says he *must* kill the afore-said merchant, *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.

The mixture of too much meaning and too little is what links the poem most directly to the topic of the Romantic fantastic. In form it is a ballad. But in lieu of a refrain there is a constant piling on of new twists and torments. And the typical

ballad stanza (4-3-4-3, rhyming *abcb*, as in the conventional final stanza) is continually expanded with extra syllables, feet, and lines by the garrulous narrator. By continually thrusting into view the problems of meaningfulness, the ballad thus foregrounds character over incident. Indeed, the animist Mariner turns all of nature into a realm of spirits; everything has a psyche.

The dilemma of assessment, like the ambiguous perspectives of Byron's works, affiliates "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" with the uncertainties of knowledge and judgment that characterize the fantastic. The story is a supernatural one, but its legacy is a problem in understanding that the Wedding-Guest cannot solve. With some groups you might mention the relationship between mysteries and problems of understanding: The god Hermes both presided over hermetic mysteries and also, as messenger god, sponsored hermeneutics, the science of interpretation. With other groups, try asking what the Wedding-Guest has learned. What is the relationship between wisdom and sadness? Since there is no clear answer to these questions, it will become evident that what matters in this drama of character is not the contents of knowledge but the state of mind.

"Kubla Khan" is likewise a psychodrama beneath its supernatural surface. Its "deep romantic chasm" is "girdled," seems to breathe "in thick fast pants," dances, emotes, and lives until it dies in the ocean. The imagery evokes a body, but only as what Coleridge calls a "phantom world" (he uses the phrase in his poem "The Picture" and quotes it as an epigram to "Kubla Khan"). And so the singer appears enchanted by his own imaginary landscape. "Kubla Khan" thus proves to be a portrait of a haunted mind, thrown between the extremes of fire and ice, ecstasy and agony, and drunk on "The milk of Paradise"—a period name for the opium to whose effects Coleridge's preface attributes the poem.

In connection with the Romantic fantastic, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" can be read similarly: sun and moon are as much shifting moods as heavenly bodies (e.g., "the moving Moon . . . she," in lines 263–265), and the whole a restless alternation between waking visions (line 146: "How glazed each weary eye") and dream visions (line 299). Transitions are abrupt and unexplained—the crucial act of shooting the albatross famously so, but really every shift in the action, which throughout passes "swift as dreams" (line 554). In one stanza of Part 2 the sailors aver that the albatross brings the favorable wind, in the next that it brings the chilling fog. Who knows? "I pass, like night, from land to land," says the Mariner at the end (line 586), leaving the Pilot's boy "crazy" (line 565) and the Wedding-Guest "stunned, / And . . . of sense forlorn" (lines 622–623), and the whole has the character of a phantasmagoria that reveals the mechanisms of dreams, the illusions, the irrationality, the fantasies of power and of weakness, and the terrors haunting human individuals and human societies throughout their existence. (*Phantasmagoria* was then the name for a newly invented technique for theatrical projections on a screen, with a ghostly effect; Balzac's *Zambinella*, for instance, is called a "phantasmagorial personage" [p. 410].)

Any literary reading is potentially infinite, but the problems of understanding in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" compound the general open-ended-

ness of interpretation by making it thematic. The poem is and always has been endlessly fascinating, and the notes in this manual can do no more than provide a few small suggestions toward teaching an inexhaustible poem. Do not be afraid of uncharted waters.

Ludwig Tieck

All the world's a tale and all the people in it tellers—so a story like this might vary the famous line from Shakespeare about plays and players. Bertha reads storybooks in her forest hut and tells a tale (no “fairy tale,” she claims) to Walther, Eckbert tells his tale to Hugo, and at the end the old woman tells Eckbert the truth that in early childhood he had heard his father relate. And then of course there is the bird, singing on cue. No wonder that Eckbert's life at times “appeared to him like some fabulous tale [*Märchen*]” (p. 401). The whole thing also sounds much like a bad dream, not just to readers but also to Bertha when she leaves home in a kind of trance (“scarcely knowing what I did”) and eventually arrives at the hut “only falling out of one dream into another still stranger,” and at the end to Walter when he finds his way there “in a dreamy mood.” (It is of interest that the German word for nightmare is *Alptraum*, which means or at least suggests a “mountain dream.”)

By highlighting the themes of unreality, you can show how, throughout its length, this story examines the psychic mood that other fantastic tales generate at their conclusions. “Fair-haired Eckbert” begins in the melancholy at which “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Sarrasine” end. Identity appears stable, even bourgeois, at the start. Philip Walther (though his last name, prophetically, means “ruler”) appears to be a naturalist, like the Rousseau of the Fifth Reverie. Bertha's childhood bliss too evokes Rousseau: “One would perhaps be very happy, could he pass his life so undisturbedly to the end” (p. 397). But the story is retrospective, and the act of exploring and exposing the roots of this kind of bourgeois Romantic melancholy (and remember that even the Wedding-Guest comes out of a quite ordinary social sphere) unearths dark childhood passions. Fantasies of both wealth and power abound. (Here, too, you might introduce some of Tieck's original German. The English word “fortune” suggests luck, but the German word “Vermögen” [translated “independency” on p. 393 and, more accurately, “fortune” on p. 399] means “capacity” or “power,” potentially even sexual power.)

The storytelling is launched by an “irresistible desire” (p. 393; the German is “Trieb,” as in a Freudian drive). Bertha is lost in the woods, as she had been “lost” by her father; the old woman who presides over the pseudo-paradise where Bertha arrives is in such constant motion that she can hardly be identified. Bertha's fantasies of wealth, consequently, imply the drive to establish an identity within a bourgeois and domestic context. As she approaches puberty, her fantasies take on a sexual cast, even a masturbatory one. Where the Victorian translation reads,

“often, in fancy, I would tell myself strange stories” (p. 397), the original says more equivocally: “and now in my fancy I played strange stories with myself.” She would like a “fortune,” a “power,” in both senses of the German term.

The paranoia that besets Bertha and Eckbert is thus self-inflicted. Like the Ancient Mariner, they suffer from a guilt that is both arbitrary and universal, equally resident in their hidden and unique past and in the hunger for sexual satisfaction, power, and recognition that is endemic to the fabled world of infancy. The realization of one’s dreams is worthless, as Bertha discovers on p. 399. The story is undecidably a sentimental excuse or a pitiless exposure; in any event, the more it is pondered, the more it seems to use the fantastic to attack the roots of what we understand as Romantic sensibility. Of course literature often functions in this way, not falling into current modes but reflecting on them. It should be no surprise, then, that in the course of the next decade Tieck (like many Romantics of his generation in Germany and in England) moved away from Romantic emotionalism toward more settled, if less impassioned, modes of writing and of living.

Honoré de Balzac

“And the Marquise remained pensive.” At the end of the story, after listening to the narrator’s fascinating revelations, the unnamed interlocutor remains in the same boat as Coleridge’s *Wedding-Guest* (“a sadder and a wiser man”). Much earlier, the story has alluded to Byron’s mysterious romance heroes, to the gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe, and to Faust, along with other supernatural or grotesque figures. Atmospherics govern the conduct of all such Romantic-period endeavors. “Seen amid these fantastic surroundings,” we read in the first paragraph of the mostly excellent Balzac translation; here, however, a literal translation would read, “in the bosom of this fantastic atmosphere.” Nature is personified (the word “bosoms” reappears a few lines below with regard to the women), humans become part of the setting, creatures of the natural history of France that was to compose Balzac’s great life work. The fascination throughout the story lies in the slow but highly evocative preparation, followed by startling encounters and shifts. Balzac was a great dramatist among narrative artists, but drama no longer issues in shared wisdom as it did for the Greeks nor in the reconstruction of shattered societies as in Shakespeare. Rather it opens a window on what the end of Wordsworth’s *Intimations Ode* calls “thoughts that do lie too deep for tears.”

The unspeakable, in this story, is linked to the mysteries of identity. Instructors may be familiar with Roland Barthes’s well-known deconstruction of this story, sentence by sentence and sometimes phrase by phrase, that occupies his book *S/Z* (1974). The title letters stand graphically for the central characters of the story within the story, Sarrasine and Zambinella, or they stand phonically for the different sounds of the same letter in Sarrasine’s name, or they stand pictorially for the reversals that govern the action. Most instructors will probably re-

frain from laying a heavy dose of Barthes's Lacanian musings on students. However, his decomposition of each moment into various codes is an acute pointer to the overlay of different narrative modes that makes the story so resonant: it is at once a detective story (Barthes's hermeneutic code), a psychological investigation (the semiotic code), a symbolic structure (symbolic code), a realistic narrative (proairetic code), and a moral fable (cultural code). The interactions between the narrator and the Marquise concern their jockeying for positions of superiority in a sexual duel of advances and evasions; those between Sarrasine and Zambinella concern their attempts to consolidate their identities in situations of intolerable ambiguity.

The climax comes when Sarrasine discovers Zambinella to be a "monster." Balzac imagined himself a great zoological investigator of the orders of humanity, and in addition to its colloquial meaning the term "monster" also carries a scientific one: A monster is a creature that belongs to no single species and is the opposite of a norm or "ideal type," such as the children in the Lanty family are. Filippo is called an "ideal" in the English, a "type" in the French; he is the perfect human, as Zambinella the castrato represents the perfectly inhuman. The haunting of the former by the latter is the inescapable, unspeakable moral of the story. It unfolds like a detective or mystery story, with Sarrasine looking for the truth and the narrator carefully staging its revelation. But the discovery comes (or should come) as a complete surprise. The reader expects the title character to be the person of greatest interest, until abruptly he is stabbed and the old man proves to be the castrato—the creature of uncertain sex, associated with both art and money. The stability of the world is undermined as powerfully as in Tieck's "Fair-haired Eckbert."

The frame features the juxtaposition of Zambinella with Marianina. June and January, youth and age, is a timeless motif, traditionally suggesting either the universality of existence or the inevitability of aging. Balzac's reference to the late Medieval Dance of Death evokes the motif's Christian resonances. However, as the story develops the dominant association comes to be historical. Zambinella, along with Cagliostro, is a creature of the Old Régime. The nouveau riche Lanty family would like to represent its future through the timeless, classically perfect sister and brother, free from all taint of sexuality or violence, but it cannot hide its decrepit past, with its wealth resting on murder. The narrator is a half outsider who sees Paris together with the cloistered salon; though not free of intrigue himself (*vis-à-vis* the noblewoman he teasingly courts), he represents a truer vista of the complexities of the modern world. As a knowing observer, he has affinities with figures of modernity who appear elsewhere in Balzac, including the detective and the reporter. Balzac uses the devices of the fantastic in the service of a historically aware understanding of the dishonorable roots and deceptive aspirations of modern capitalism.

Students may be interested in more information about castrati. From the late sixteenth century until well into the nineteenth, Italian boys aged six to eight were secretly castrated to preserve their soprano voices. The Church condemned the practice yet also tolerated it because (as the story indicates) it remained common to forbid women from singing in public. In the eighteenth century the castrati

were celebrated throughout Europe, adulated and paid as handsomely as operatic divas are today. Many of Handel's greatest operatic roles were written for castrati, as were several of Mozart's roles up to his very last opera, *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791). The last known performing castrato was recorded in 1903 and died in 1920. Despite the impression given by Balzac, castrati were not effeminate. Some were homosexual, but others chased women and even married. With the build of men, castrati had a lung power that women could not match. Gérard Corbiau's motion picture *Farinelli* is a historically based portrayal of the leading castrato of Handel's day; while the film is highly melodramatic (and too sexually explicit for some audiences), the costumes and music are authentic and give a convincing idea of both the physical and the social statures of these figures.

Edgar Allan Poe

In one of the common categorizations of Poe's work, "The Pit and the Pendulum" belongs to the mode of terror rather than that of the supernatural. Still, it is not just the overwrought mood that links it to the fantastic, for it evokes Romantic, imaginative writing explicitly on p. 426: the "strange palaces" and visions "floating in mid-air" is a virtual quotation of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," just as "faces in coals that glow" remembers another well-known Coleridge poem, "Frost at Midnight." Many of Poe's lesser-known writings are explicitly metaphysical; among his best-known stories, this is one that most directly concerns the mysteries of consciousness.

Whether associated with the "negroes" of his unfinished novel *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*, the poetic raven, or the black cat after which another famous story is named, blackness is always sublimely terrifying for Poe (a close follower in that of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*). Here the image of blackness reaches its purest (and, for that reason, ideologically perhaps least controversial) form as an exploration of the dark pit of the mind. Characteristic of Romantic-period thinking in general—and particularly of Kant, whose thought seeped toward Poe by various channels—is the structuring of experience in terms of polar opposites: sleep and waking, fire and water, frantic speed and lifeless waiting. Like the preceding stories, this one too is an allegory of consciousness in general and of its resources when confronting absolute vacuity; it is also a narrative of social transformation, with the forces of the French Revolution bursting in at the end to sweep the past clean. Other stories, including Tieck's and Balzac's, as well as Coleridge's "Rime," are frame tales, stories within stories, suggesting the depths to be plumbed. Here a similar result is achieved more economically, if with less "realistic" plausibility, by having a virtually postmortem narrator relate a nearly closed-end story of his own death. The vertiginous effect is characteristic of Poe; it intensifies the psychic probing without undermining its relationship to other writing of the early nineteenth century.

Gustave Flaubert

Ezra Pound once said that “A Simple Heart” “contains all that anyone knows about writing.” A model for future writers like Gertrude Stein in *Three Lives* and for later minimalists, this story contains so little in the way of event or action that we seem to have no choice but to redirect our attention to the writing. You may encourage students to begin their examination of Flaubert’s detached, tightly controlled style with the first sentence: “Madame Aubain’s servant Félicité was the envy of the ladies of Pont l’Évêque for half a century.” This sounds like praise of Félicité, but literally speaking it is only a report on what the ladies of Pont l’Évêque thought or felt, and we can’t tell whether Flaubert wants us to share this sentiment or not. Indeed, the sentiment might seem to call for criticism—if only because “envy” is not usually considered a highly desirable emotion. But the criticism is not forthcoming. Are we supposed to take a distance from this laudatory account of Félicité’s skills and virtues as a devoted servant, or not? And if so, what other norms are we supposed to apply? Are we supposed to feel, for example, that Félicité has thrown her life away on an unworthy object, a mistress who (here the opinion of the ladies of Pont l’Évêque is suddenly and artfully allowed to seem authoritative) was not much fun to work for? Would all Félicité’s fifty years of self-sacrifice have been more worthwhile if Madame Aubain had been *more* fun to work for, more appreciative or “amiable”? It’s as if, by refusing any hint of the proper norms by which Félicité’s life might be judged, Flaubert flings us into a bottomless void of ever deeper questions, questions about the meaning not just of her life but of *any* life. At the same time, Flaubert’s language sometimes seems to push us quietly toward those depths. When Flaubert describes Félicité’s polished saucepans as “the despair of other servants,” for example, “despair” is so obviously a word saturated with the narrow values of the people of Pont l’Évêque—who seem convinced that all the servants had to think about was competing to do the best possible job—that we are inescapably reminded of its more proper usage, a usage we may then apply to Félicité in a very different sense.

Aside from his long-standing commitment to a stylistic detachment so profound that all the usual signs are missing of what the author wants the reader to feel about the characters and events, Flaubert seems to have begun “A Simple Heart” with nothing more than the simple image of the old servant and her parrot. What the parrot means to the servant, and how much the answer to that question ought to determine what the parrot will then mean to us—two useful lines of thought in helping to focus class interpretations of the ending—cannot be investigated, however, without reference to the emptiness and monotony of the rest of the servant’s life. Are we being invited to see the seemingly small and trivial matters of daily housekeeping as in fact profoundly meaningful and even (like the parrot in the ending) apparently sacred? Or are these matters—for example, her investment in the lives of her mistress’s children—merely a sorry attempt at compensating herself for an emptiness in her own life? Should she have been obliged to live her own life through that of her mistress’s family? Are

we supposed to remember, with some degree of bitterness, that a servant could not both remain employed—let alone employed for fifty years—and still have children of her own? We are told that Félicité is like a wooden doll driven by clockwork, that she has a “dog-like” devotion to her mistress. Are these signs of a life kept from rising to a properly human level, or on the contrary signs of a self-effacement that has something heroic about it? Perhaps we are being urged to imitate the saint-like story of someone who expects very little from life—that’s why she is hired—and receives very little in return. Perhaps, on the contrary, we are being urged to see in her life a scandal that the protagonist herself is not prepared to recognize, nor are those who surround her. If that is the case, this simple story could be described as the indictment of an entire civilization. But how are we to tell?

One crucial piece of evidence in this argument is the scene in which both women are expecting letters (bottom of p. 444), Madame Aubain from her daughter (who is at the convent) and Félicité from her nephew (who is away at sea). Madame Aubain complains—in Flaubert’s characteristic *style indirect libre*, or indirect discourse—that she has had “not a word for four days!” When Félicité tries to comfort her by saying it has been six months since *she* has heard, she is interrupted before she can say from whom. Madame Aubain cannot imagine whom she might mean, and when told shrugs her shoulders, “as much as to say: ‘I was not thinking of him! . . . A scamp of a cabin-boy—what does he matter? . . . whereas my daughter . . . !’” Félicité is indignant, then forgets. Again we must ask where her forgetfulness might fall between the poles of the saintly and the subhuman. The nephew then dies (in Havana), and his death is immediately followed by that of Madame Aubain’s daughter. It is as if the story were covertly supporting Félicité’s inchoate sense that the two children were bound by a common destiny, or as if Flaubert were testing his characters to determine how many losses they can sustain, how little emotional sustenance they can manage to live on. Since no character inside this world carries forward Félicité’s momentary indignation, it is also hard for the reader to keep any hold on it. We too are tempted to forget.

The parrot, which comes from that colonial space into which the nephew has disappeared (and is carried to the house by a representative of the race among whom Félicité has imagined him in Cuba, a “negro”), reminds Félicité of her nephew. In a sense the parrot substitutes not just for the nephew but also for the wider world that Félicité does not get to know (think of the horses in the sky she sees at the port, which stand so strikingly for a world she can make no sense of). Indeed, Loulou replaces every other worthier object of love and devotion of which Félicité has been deprived. In this sense the parrot, “almost a son and a lover to her in her isolated state” (p. 450), might be considered a fetish. To some the parrot has seemed to offer Flaubert’s mocking allegory of religion itself as a means by which people flee from the harsh reality of their lives—the Holy Ghost seen as a stuffed parrot. To others, her habit of praying in front of the parrot, the Corpus Christi procession that coincides with her last day, and the final vision of the gi-

gantic parrot she sees in the heavens as she dies represents a genuine religious transfiguration of the everyday.

This is not to say that the story cannot be discussed in the traditional terms of plot and character. Students can consider, for example, the authority that Félicité assumes by way of her devotion to her mistress and her mistress's children, which is visible when she throws Monsieur de Grémanville out. Equally noteworthy is the way she obtains the parrot—at no cost to the Baron and Baroness, it's true, but still, a successful maneuver. On the other hand, these moments must be set against her little grasp over the world around her and little ability to turn it to her advantage. Her passivity is so great that she develops the sickness that kills her only because she doesn't want to have the roof fixed and her bed is dampened by a leak. When she refuses to see her courage with the bull as heroic, we cannot tell whether this is genuine humility or a failure of imagination on her part. Her respect for the Almighty, we are told, comes of a sacred history filled with the Tower of Babel overthrown, of cities burning and peoples dying. This is not orthodox Christianity, to say the least. And she is unable to understand the Passion. All of this is relevant to her confusion of the stuffed parrot with the Holy Ghost.

"This is not at all ironical as you may suppose," Flaubert wrote of "A Simple Heart" to Madame Roger des Genettes, "but on the contrary very serious and very sad. I want to move tender hearts to pity and tears, for I am tender-hearted myself. . . . Now, surely, no one will accuse me of being inhuman anymore." Can we believe him? We may wonder whether even this private communication manages to escape the omnipresent Flaubertian irony. The word "inhuman" does not always seem inappropriate for Flaubert's carefully arranged absence from his work, his refusal to provide positive figures of identification or stage directions distinguishing the virtuous from the less virtuous, his unswerving dedication to making his readers feel uneasy. Some have suggested that, as an artist ignored by bourgeois society, Flaubert may even have felt a secret identification with Félicité. On the other hand, it's worth remembering that human stupidity is described in Flaubert's *Idées reçues* as "parroting."

Those interested in contextual approaches to the story may wish to steer class discussion toward, say, the long literary history of relationships between masters and servants and the strange fact that, though such relationships have come to seem archaic in the twenty-first century, they have not dropped out of the cultural repertoire but on the contrary have staged something of a comeback. Another possible angle would be to compare "A Simple Heart" with "Hérodiade," which was also published in Flaubert's *Three Tales*. Here his subject is a biblical one. Yet by the mid-nineteenth century, the Bible had become fair game for investigation by historians and textual scholars working in a skeptical, scientific spirit to ascertain what really happened. Like an anthropologist, Flaubert takes a neutral stance toward these cultural authoritative events, forcing us to savor their disorienting bizarreness.

The excerpts from Flaubert's *Travels in Egypt* included in the *Anthology* lend themselves to any number of possible uses, whether in concert with "A Simple

Heart” or for contrast with the “Occidentalism” section that follows, devoted to non-European travelers to Europe. You may invite students to confront their surprise about the frank sexual descriptions, which seem so different from the century’s public, published prose. For those who are curious about the colonial margins of “A Simple Heart,” this account of the opportunities for low-cost sexual tourism made possible by French colonial power reveal with a certain brutality who is strong and who is weak on a global scale. The sheer power of Flaubert’s male presence as he moves through the colonial world and the eventfulness that follows from it offer an obvious contrast with the constraint of Félicité’s life. We see various aspects of Flaubert’s own life that he is keeping out of hers. And we see some of the contempt for those, like prostitutes, that a privileged man of his class and day was accustomed to make use of without a second thought. The characteristic Flaubertian detachment may also look different when attached, as here, to the life of a tourist.

PERSPECTIVES

Occidentalism—Europe Through Foreign Eyes

This section teaches well with many other selections in Volume E of the *Anthology*, providing a valuable counterpoint to “Perspectives: On the Colonial Frontier,” to the varied voices in the “Other Americas” grouping, and to travel writing such as Flaubert’s *Travels in Egypt*, which directly precedes this Perspectives section. It’s important for students to realize the complexity of the processes of composition and transmission that produced these texts, particularly the ones published in English in the nineteenth century itself. Written during the high tide of European Imperialism, writers like Najaf Kuli Mirza and Mustafa Sami Effendi were negotiating major cultural shifts and conflicts that they couldn’t stand outside or view dispassionately. Nor do these early texts show “the empire writing back” with the kind of ironic mastery that became available to postcolonial writers in the twentieth century: These writers are often struck by the rapid technological advances being made thanks to the European industrial revolution and often want to see their home countries make similar progress.

The writers thus have complex agendas in writing their accounts, and further complexities are introduced by those who translated and published them in English. The first selection, from **Najaf Kuli Mirza’s *Journal of a Residence in England***, is a case in point. Footnotes by the translator, Assad Kayat, show Kayat’s own discomfort with his author’s non-Christian perspective and values, at times because as a Christian convert he rejects Kuli’s theology, at times because he’s embarrassed to see fellow Christians behaving in ways that justly elicit Kuli’s amusement or scorn. In a preface to his translation, Kayat spoke quite directly about his own position and the

choices he had to make in translating materials that sometimes made him as uncomfortable as they might have made some of his English readers:

The translation of this work having been accomplished solely by myself, it may be proper to inform my readers that I was born in Syria, and for some years, by the blessing of God, received as much as could be obtained of an oriental education. In the East also, I acquired with much labour and perseverance what I know of occidental literature. My attachment to the English language was my principal inducement to acquire it. Providence favoured me with the acquaintance of several good and pious missionaries, who endeavoured in every respect to encourage and assist me in the acquisition of this language. This I value above every other knowledge of a similar kind which I possess, as through it I hope to obtain whatever information I may require in my future labours, in promoting, by all the means in my power, the Christian education of my own country-people. (p. xv)

To his credit, however, Kayat didn't censor Najaf Kuli outright, though he did periodically insert footnotes expressing his discomfort with some of Kuli's judgments. In his preface, Kayat speaks of his effort to capture the flavor of Persian in his English, and this discussion of translation issues shades over into a defense of Kuli's thoughts as well as his expressions:

I beg to observe that I have endeavoured simply to render the Persian text into English, with the closest adherence to the original, that could be tolerated consistently with an exhibition of the meaning of the Author. I have naturally supposed that greater interest would be excited in this work, the more perfectly it should be clothed in its oriental dress. In numerous cases where a metaphor, or word, would have in English but a remote or no allusion to the thing intended, I have still chosen to retain the word or phrase, for the purpose of showing the Persian actual style of writing and genius of the language. The Author has also in some cases used flights of language which, in the present refined state of the English, may be considered as deficient in taste. I however have not ventured to modify them, for the abovementioned reason, but have chosen rather to annex some explanatory notes, which I hope will point to their meaning, &c. (p. xvi)

Students can follow the interplay of concerns of "taste" and morality as they show through Kayat's translation and Kuli's own account and can look in this and the following texts in this Perspectives section to see just what features of Occidental life elicit the greatest admiration, comical confusion, or moral or aesthetic distaste. Western technology is a major focus in all these accounts, whether admiring, hostile, or both, and the relative freedom of European women is a source of fascination and some discomfort, as when Najaf Kuli has to go to great lengths to avoid dancing.

Najaf Kuli's remarks on English politics (Vol. E, p. 468) are especially interesting, as he clearly sees the Tory association with the landed gentry and the politics of privilege, contrasted to the Whigs' populism. You can ask students why Kuli would begin the discussion by noting that "the difference between these two parties is political, that is, every one has a different opinion on policy." Students are likely to find this so obvious that they won't even have remarked Kuli's emphasis here, which stems from his surprise that English politics isn't based in clan and ethnic loyalties but on secondary issues like policy. Hence his surprise that parents and children might actually belong to different parties as a matter of course—a phenomenon that, at home, would signify a radical social breakdown, as it has in his own family's tragic recent history.

Mustafa Sami Effendi's "On the General Conditions of Europe" is written from a quite different perspective, not that of a poetic prince in exile but as the report of a government minister seeking to promote reform at home. The author is one of a rising generation of what would later come to be called technocrats, and he sees a lot to like in European industry, health care, literacy, and printing. Students can have an interesting time teasing out which of Mustafa Sami Effendi's observations seem close to the truth and which seem less so: Of the latter sort, which most likely stem from a foreign observer's necessarily incomplete picture, and which represent strategic exaggeration meant to inspire change at home?

By contrast, Hattori Bushō's "The Western Peep Show" takes a voyeuristic pleasure in recounting the horrors of the peep show, surely piquing his readers' interest even as he denounces the deceptions of the magic lantern show. Its falsity, ephemerality, and licentiousness come to typify for Bushō the evils of imported Western culture—even as he denigrates the peep show as only the latest low-class fad to hit Tokyo's long-established red-light district.

A very different approach is seen in the urbane, tolerant closing works in this section, Okakura Kakuzō's "The Cup of Humanity" and its Resonance, Chiang Yee's *The Silent Traveller in London*. Written directly in English, these works speak to English-language readers without a translator's mediation, and both seek to foster intercultural understanding, balancing cultural difference and universalism. You can ask students to see when and how each writer employs each of these strategies: At what points are Asian or Western cultural practices valued for their fundamental variety and distinctness, at what points for their underlying commonality with other cultures?

Okakura and Chiang are similar as well in their skillful use of seemingly insignificant items and telling details to build their accounts. In Okakura, tea becomes the basis of a whole philosophy of life, "Teism," comically coined from "Taoism." It is nothing less than a still point from which he hopes to "stop the continents from hurling epigrams at each other" (p. 480). Even as he rejects hurled epigrams, Okakura builds his essay around witty perceptions and contrasts, as when Tea becomes a stand-in for the Orientals themselves, its brown color slyly set over against the scoffing of "the white man": "The white man has scoffed at our religion and our morals, but has accepted the brown beverage without hesitation" (p. 480).

Chiang Yee expands on Okakura's method to create an entire world through telling details: a child's behavior when arriving for a play date; the ways children speak to their parents. Combining traditional Chinese themes and perspectives with a modernist's desire to "make it new," Chiang masters his adopted homeland more fully than its native inhabitants can, habituated as they are to their surroundings and their customs, which for their preternaturally observant visitor are continually new and surprising. As in Najaf Kuli and Assad Kayat's texts, Chiang often looks at language; his scrutiny of his own medium is an important part of his message.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

In *The Second Common Reader* (1932) Virginia Woolf wrote that people were more interested in Barrett Browning's biography than they were in her works: "'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' is glanced at perhaps by two professors in American universities once a year; but we all know how Miss Barrett lay on her sofa; how she escaped from the dark house in Wimpole Street one September morning; how she met health and happiness, freedom, and Robert Browning in the church round the corner" (p. 182). While renewed critical interest in *Aurora Leigh* makes it harder for professors to remain aloof from Barrett Browning's texts, student curiosity about the interplay of her love life and her love poetry still tends to dominate discussion. Yet this is as Barrett Browning would have had it: Unlike her husband, she valued highly the open, personal quality of poetic expression.

The question of how a woman can love, write, and do God's will is raised most extensively in *Aurora Leigh*, where the heroine recounts her growth as poet and lover, undergoing experiences that loosely parallel Barrett Browning's own life. *Aurora Leigh*, she said, was a book "into which my highest convictions on Life and Art have entered," and she focused her efforts on making an epic of her moment: "my chief *intention* just now is the writing of a sort of novel-poem . . . running into the midst of our conventions, and rushing into drawing rooms and the like . . . meeting face to face and without mask the Humanity of the age, and speaking the truth of it out plainly." Reversing the mask-obsessed poetic strategy of Robert Browning, she presents Aurora's quest as a successive stripping away of masks—all the preconceived notions of what a woman is and should do. Aurora begins with her own dawning, describing her childhood and parents (mother first), starting to construct a modern, psychologically informed autobiography. The dominant event is the early death of her mother (Barrett Browning's mother did not die till the poet was twenty-two), and the dominant pattern of imagery is maternal: pregnancy, birth, nursing, caring for children. She then describes the mystery built about her mother's picture, a disturbing concatenation of the stereotypes applied to women, ranging from Muse and Madonna to the Medusa. These are the conceptions she must contend with, first suffering through her miserable aunt's idea of a proper Victorian gentlewoman's

education, and then confronting the condescending prejudices of her rich cousin and lover, Romney Leigh.

Having dedicated her future to art, she is outraged when Romney proposes that they marry so she can help him with his grand plans to cure society's ills. Echoing Jane Eyre's rejection of St. John Rivers (Brontë's novel was published in 1847), their great debate explores the conventional ideas about women's characters and capabilities. But unlike *Jane Eyre*, it also offers crushing feminist rejoinders to these views, particularly 2.359–361: “am I proved too weak / To stand alone, yet strong enough to bear / Such leaners on my shoulder?” Aurora's views quarrel in important ways with Tennyson's widely quoted passage from *The Princess* (1847), “The woman's cause is man's,” and anticipate Mill's systematic attack on sexism in *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

In Book 3, set seven years later, we see the results of Aurora's defiance. She has found “a room of one's own” in London, and earns her living as an independent literary woman. In a kind of interior monologue she comments on her mail—the ludicrous advice of critics, the bizarre requests from strangers, and an intriguing note from an artist friend, Vincent Carrington, asking her opinion of how to best represent Danae's sexual encounter with Jove. Aurora comments that the two versions of Danae's response, one active, one passively self-negating (3.121–143), represent “Two states of the recipient artist-soul.” Surprisingly, she appears to opt for the passive response. Is the poet being ironic? Or is the ambitious Aurora's quest for a feminist poetry, with Jove as male muse, as fraught with contradictions as the masculinist views she opposes?

The visionary, oddly violent passage that follows (3.169–203), one of the rare descriptions of an *urban* sunset in Victorian poetry, also stresses how humans can be blotted out by superior forces of nature or God. As she “view[s] the city perish in the mist,” the poet safe in her garret compares Londoners to the Egyptians swallowed by the Red Sea, and herself to Moses's sister Miriam, who celebrated the Hebrew victory. This alternating classical/biblical frame of reference—poet as ravished Danae, poet as virgin Miriam—indicates the complex, sometimes contradictory way Barrett Browning seeks to clarify the experience of the woman artist, and her all-out search for metaphors to sustain her quest.

Her poetic ambitions come through most clearly in Book 5, where she presents her rationale for a modern, feminist epic. In his Preface to *Poems* (1853) Matthew Arnold had insisted that contemporary life had little to offer poets, and here Barrett Browning responds at length by asserting that the poet's duty is “to represent the age, / Their age, not Charlemagne's,—this live throbbing age” (5.202–203). Having read the social satire of Pope, Swift, Johnson, Blake, and Byron, and conditioned by American culture's obsession with the present, students may not have noticed how wary the Victorians were about dealing with contemporary life in poetry—and thus how bold Barrett Browning's words were. But a quick run-through of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and others will turn up very few poems that directly address the looks, clothes, fashions, events, issues, and technology of the day. Almost every theme was treated obliquely through a histor-

ical parallel, a static rural setting, or the borrowing of some earlier story. Asserting that “every age / Appears to souls who live in’t (ask Carlyle) / Most unheroic” (5.155–157), Barrett Browning rejects the Victorian tendency—from Carlyle and Pugin to Morris and Pater—to denounce the present by reimagining the past. Moreover, in what is probably a rebuke of Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, she feminizes this iconoclastic perspective: “King Arthur’s self / Was commonplace to Lady Guenever” (5.209–210).

Her aim is to reinvent the epic poem—and even the “man’s world” of Victorian culture itself—on matrilineal terms: “unscrupulously epic,” she will capture “the full-veined, heaving, double-breasted Age” in a “living art” that will suckle future generations (5.216–222). In *Cassandra*, Florence Nightingale complains, quoting from *Othello*, that women are expected to “suckle their fools and chronicle their small beer”; rejecting this confining familial role she turns to a *metaphoric* nursing and makes a worthy profession of it. Barrett Browning, however, uses her epic to stress repeatedly the value of suckling as a *literal* as well as metaphoric act, an image of female creativity and cultural transmission—like poetry itself. Nightingale compares wives to prostitutes, but Barrett Browning claims that if a woman is true to her art, genuine love and marriage are possible.

An interesting biographical aspect of Barrett Browning’s writing is that she appears to have considered herself as, in part, descended from slaves. Discussing her family name and background (her father’s family were rich slaveholders in Jamaica) in a letter to her future husband, she wrote: “Nevertheless it is true that I would give ten towns in Norfolk [where an ancestor was governor] . . . to own some purer lineage than that of the blood of the slave!—Cursed we are from generation to generation!” In *Dared and Done: The Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning* (1995), Julia Markus explores the significance of Barrett Browning’s writing *The Runaway Slave* on her honeymoon, and suggests that the reason her father allowed none of his children to marry was his fear of continuing black blood in the Barrett line (pp. 88–115). Like Elizabeth Barrett, Robert Browning was considered “dark” in complexion; his paternal grandmother was Creole, and this may have been a further bond between the two poets.

Charles Baudelaire

As is the case with many nineteenth-century modernists, Baudelaire’s writing was intimately related to the city in which he lived. His verse, his prose poetry, and his essays all addressed the dizzying experience of the industrialized, rapidly growing, protean metropolis of Paris. The most influential and still the best introduction to this aspect of Baudelaire’s writing is the German critic Walter Benjamin’s various studies of the poet translated in *Charles Baudelaire* (1973). Fundamental to Baudelaire’s depiction of Paris was the insistence that nothing existed beyond its confines. Paris was to be regarded as a natural environment with its proper species, behaviors, and rules; Baudelaire organized his writings around the search to catalogue

and analyze the features and idiosyncrasies of this ecosystem. It is characteristic of his stance as a literary modernist that the project can be viewed either as a coherent philosophical inquiry or as an ironic satire on modern life. Baudelaire structured his writings around irresolvable paradoxes and antitheses partly because this was how he viewed the modern city—as a place that could no longer be understood in the rational manner of the previous century's Enlightenment thinkers and as a place that could not be represented in the poetic language of his lyric predecessors.

Baudelaire spent his formative years under the so-called July monarchy of Louis-Philippe (1830–1848), a time that saw the rise of the modern bourgeoisie in France and the heyday of the bohemian and the *flâneur*, the do-nothing stroller of the Parisian streets. Many of the poems in *Les Fleurs du mal*, or *The Flowers of Evil*, were drafted during the early 1840s. By the time Baudelaire was ready to consider publishing them as a collection, however, the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon had ushered in the centralized and authoritarian Second Empire, and Paris was being transformed from a dense network of teeming streets and a hotbed of revolution and dissent to an open city of broad boulevards and segregated populations. The cognitive and historical break between past and present was symbolized for Baudelaire, as for many other Parisians, by the Revolution of 1848, the only political moment in which he directly participated. Richard D. E. Burton gives a detailed analysis of the importance of this period to Baudelaire's writings in *Baudelaire and the Second Empire: Writing and Revolution* (1991); T. J. Clark's study, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851* (1999), is also a good source. This break is most directly and poignantly expressed in the poem "The Swan," which layers bittersweet memories of the vanished neighborhood of Baudelaire's bohemian youth with what he regarded as the sterile present that had replaced them.

Although he was a prolific critic and essay writer, Baudelaire considered *Les Fleurs du mal* the collection that would make his reputation. When the primary reaction to the publication of the first edition of the volume in 1857 was prosecution for obscenity and the proscription of several poems from subsequent editions, his reputation was indeed made, if not perhaps exactly as he had expected it to be done. Still, as the biting descriptions included in the selections from the diary of the Goncourt brothers suggest, Baudelaire carried the paradoxes and vices of his poetry into the obsessive details of his public persona as well. In many places in his writings (including the opening poem of *Les Fleurs du mal*, "To the Reader," and the intentionally provocative prose poem from *Paris Spleen*, "Let's Beat Up the Poor!"), Baudelaire outlined what he referred to as his Satanism, a loose collection of attitudes, the basic tenet of which was that anything regarded as good by the Catholic religion, bourgeois morality, or the natural philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau was best refuted by turning it on its head and taking the viewpoint of the devil, whose role was to negate any attempt to address the world in a positive fashion. Susan Blood provides an excellent discussion of these attitudes and their relation to the aesthetics of modernism in the first half of her book, *Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith* (1997).

The first edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* contained 100 poems; subsequent editions expanded it to over 150 poems, most of them fairly brief. The book is divided

into several parts. The first and by far the longest part is “Spleen and Ideal,” from which the majority of the selection included here is taken. “Parisian Scenes” is explicitly devoted to the landscape and people of the city (“The Swan,” “In Passing,” “Twilight: Evening” and “Twilight: Daybreak” belong to this part). “Ragpickers’ Wine” is taken from “Wine”; “A Martyr” from “Flowers of Evil,” the most explicitly perverse and shocking section of the collection. The collection concludes with sections entitled “Rebellion” and “Death”; the final and longest poem, “Travelers,” posits mortality as the final possibility for escape, the final source of novelty for an urbanite who has tasted and tired of all that the city has to offer.

Many critics have worried over finding what is termed the “secret architecture” of the collection. Students may be more responsive to a focus on the ways Baudelaire mobilizes a series of extreme symbolic polarities and philosophical and linguistic oxymorons to link the poems and establish their enduring sense of modernism. Baudelaire inherited such antinomial pairs as light/dark, natural/artificial, proper/improper, good/evil, God/Satan, and life/death from Romanticism. What was new was the way he used wordplay and thematic ambiguity to eliminate any sense of certainty of meaning or morality in these oppositions. As F. W. Leakey has observed in *Baudelaire, Les fleurs du mal* (1992), even the title contains a double play on words: a “flower” may either be the product of something or its adornment; “mal” in French can mean either an evil or an illness—in this case, the poet’s syphilis. Another central play on words that pops up, for example, in “Carrion” and “Spleen (II),” uses “vers” (translated as “vermin” and “worms”) to suggest the power of the poet’s verses (“vers”) both to decompose his subjects, revealing their corruption, and to transform them into the fertilizer of a soil where something new might take root.

The central polarity of the collection is “Spleen and Ideal.” Baudelaire borrowed the English word “spleen” to describe the deadening despair of someone who has seen the familiar world of his youth replaced by something alien, cold, and empty of meaning but who nevertheless cannot bring himself to leave it. In poems such as “To the Reader,” “Carrion,” “The Albatross,” “Spleen (II),” and “Twilight: Daybreak,” Baudelaire dissected the ennui or boredom of this dilemma, using the imagery of a debased Paris to describe the plight of a poet who could find no new subject with which to outdo his predecessors and applying the traditional structure and rhyme schemes of the love lyric to the obscene vocabulary and shocking sights and sounds of industrial Paris. In other poems, such as “Correspondences,” “The Head of Hair,” and “Invitation to the Voyage,” as well as in prose poems such as “Get High” and “Any Where Out of the World” (from *Paris Spleen*), he implied that the only means of escape, of finding some kind of “ideal,” were mental rather than physical and sensual rather than intellectual. As the center of a trading empire stretching across the ocean to east and west and as the global capital for luxury commodities, Paris contained within its shops, warehouses, and brothels all of the exoticism and sensual pleasures of the Orient so beloved by the romantics. As a city dweller and as a cynical modernist, however, Baudelaire expressed no confidence in the ability of any actual voyage to assuage the thirst for novelty and escape from drudgery; rather, these images stood for the mind’s ability to travel the world

from the confines of the city. The imaginary nature of escape implies simultaneously a faith in the senses to overcome the effects of spleen and a resignation to the fact that such overcoming was always only imaginary, temporary, and usually induced by mind-altering substances—Baudelaire entitled his 1860 book on hashish and wine *Artificial Paradises*.

Artifice, as Baudelaire argued in the essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” was the highest achievement of civilization, a break from the degrading impulses of nature that had themselves become second nature to the native Parisian. The exuberant and biting irony of this essay can be useful in helping students get a sense of the self-consciously artificial quality of the poetry, most of which is expressed through the tight formal structure of the original French. As is evident in the decorous and languorous description of a brutally murdered corpse in “A Martyr,” the poetic voice of Baudelaire manages to glory in the decadence of modern life at the same time that it expresses repulsion at its excesses. The tone of the prose poems can be difficult to distinguish from that of the verse; their flatness and the obviousness of their messages are both a parody of biblical proverbs and a self-conscious mimicry of the lack of traditional lyricism in the modern city. This is not to say that Baudelaire took them any the less seriously for that; their half-mocking, half-exalted voice was another modernist strategy for simultaneously voicing conflicting desires.

Baudelaire never exactly created a school of poetry, but he exerted a profound influence on the French poets who came after him, and his paradoxical and ironic attitude toward modern city life has been a staple of urban cynicism ever since. Mallarmé’s homage to his predecessor is characteristic of the symbolist master’s hermetic imagery and tortuous syntax. “The Tomb of Charles Baudelaire” teaches well in conjunction with the nocturnal cityscape of “Ragpickers’ Wine.” Baudelaire’s symbolism remained rooted in the environment and people of Paris; while he liked to personify the city’s types and invoke its activities and features as allegories (“Sleep,” “Wine”), his tableaux can nearly always be visualized as miniature urban narratives. Mallarmé, and Rimbaud as well, depicted the city as the site of dramas, or simply visions, whose full meaning was clear only (if even) to them. Comparing “Vowels” to “Correspondences,” we find a common vocabulary of decomposition and of ideals, but where even Baudelaire’s most abstract sonnet provides concrete examples for the overwhelming sensual experience he is describing, Rimbaud matches colors to letters to sensations to fragments of images in a far more mysterious manner. Similarly, Rimbaud’s short prose pieces, or “Illuminations,” rather than telling ironic urban proverbs or painting sharp caricatures as Baudelaire did, describe the poet’s utter alienation from the experiences around him.

Leo Tolstoy

The most direct way to plunge students into this extraordinary story is by working back from the ending. It is clear that at the moment of his death, Ivan Ilych goes through a wondrous and positive transformation. The reader’s first thought may

be that this is simply a conventional deathbed conversion whose meaning is the inevitable or predictable triumph of Christian faith. Alongside the evidence for this reading, students may also be encouraged to seek out the small details that deepen and enrich this final conversion and perhaps even offer alternative perspectives on it. Ask them to pay attention to the words that don't make obvious sense: for example, the mistake of "forgo" for "forgive me," and especially the poetic vision of "dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, from all sides." Is there more than one way to read the line "death is finished"?

How does the crucial idea of being sorry for others come to this quintessentially selfish man? Its immediate source seems to be his schoolboy son. It is at the moment when his son kisses his father's hand and begins to cry that Ivan Ilych sees the light (literally) and understands that he can still rectify his life. But are we supposed to believe that this is true, that an entire lifetime of selfish propriety can indeed be rectified even if his inner change of heart is not recognized by anyone around his bedside? Why is repeated allusion made to what the reader presumes (from the dark circles under his eyes and so on) is the son's masturbation? This might seem like too much information. What is information like this doing in such a story? Why should this be the only information we're given about the son, who is also the only member of his family who genuinely feels for him?

From the schoolboy son, students may be asked to think about his wife, who is callous and indifferent. Is she the story's villain? Why or why not? They should also consider the role of Gerasim, the servant who somehow makes Ivan Ilych feel better in his last days. Unlike his wife and friends, whom he has freely chosen but who are not much affected by his death, Gerasim is paid to care for him. It's in thinking about Gerasim that Ivan Ilych arguably has his first unselfish thought. What is it about Gerasim's attitude that could explain such an effect?

To what extent does the bitter satire of the story's opening, where we see how little the survivors care about the death, aim at Ivan Ilych (this is what you get for a life of caring deeply about nothing but yourself)? To what extent does it aim, rather, at everyone?

For secular readers especially, much of the force of the story may center on the harsh judgment that the dying Ivan Ilych develops on the life he has led before he fell ill. He realizes that he has not lived as he ought. Tolstoy appears to agree very strongly. But note that there is nothing grossly immoral about that life; Ivan Ilych falls well short of being a real monster. Note that he comes to consciousness of his own everyday bureaucratic conduct when he is treated in the same way by the medical specialist he visits. Is the specialist a monster? In a sense, one might say that Tolstoy is using the religious authority that surrounds Ivan Ilych's death in order to judge not just one man, but an entire society and almost everything it takes for granted. In this context, students can be asked to consider the criterion of "happiness" as Tolstoy treats it. When is Ivan Ilych happy? One example: when he's given a promotion over the heads of his former colleagues. How are we supposed to feel about happiness as the criterion of how to live?

Fyodor Dostoevsky

If the class reads Dostoevsky together with Tolstoy, it might seize the opportunity for a bridge between them by pointing out, once again, how pervasively the military conquest of neighboring territories (here too the Caucasus) served as the quiet yet not quite taken-for-granted background of nineteenth-century Russian life and literature. It is the dinner with the protagonist's old schoolfellows in Part Two that (after the long, ranting detour of Part One) finally sets in motion the novella's plot. The occasion of this dinner is an officer's departure for the Caucasus to join his regiment. Allusions to the native or "Circassian" women he's planning to seduce there, which offer interesting resonance with the plot of Lermontov's "Bela," also suggest the possibility of linking the narrator's strange social ineptitude with his or Dostoevsky's hypothetical moral distance from this imperial enterprise. We can speculate, in other words, that there is some resonance between this enterprise and the nameless distress and discomfort of Underground Man's relation to his "friends." The ill-treatment of a social inferior, in this case a poor woman over whom he enjoys, despite his own poverty, a certain power, will of course be at the center of his own crisis of conscience as well, later in the story. And though Dostoevsky goes to some lengths to disqualify his central character from playing any straightforwardly heroic role, in the context of his later effort to save Liza from a life of prostitution, his reaction against Zverkov's anticipated rape of his female underlings can be read, through the cloud of spiteful and confused motives, as directed at least in part at a critique of all this domain of the taken for granted. The logic is there: Underground Man is such an outsider, and has to be such an outsider, in part because this is what the normalcy of the insiders looks like.

Plot, properly speaking, is of course not the uncontested interpretive center of *Notes from Underground*. What the reader encounters first and comes back to again and again is the protagonist's astonishing, perhaps unprecedented voice, and the unique, challenging qualities of that voice should not be pushed aside in favor of the (perhaps easier) topic of Underground Man's problematic and perhaps allegorical relations with his friends and with Liza. If students protest that the narrator is not likable, as well they might, you may ask why, assuming Dostoevsky was capable of being more charming than this, he chose a narrator who seems so deliberately off-putting. (Dostoevsky's *White Nights*, a sort of dry run for *Notes from Underground*, shows him making use of a gentler, more humorous, more ingratiating persona.) And if students do after all find him intriguing, you can ask where precisely the attraction lies. The idea of a hero/narrator who is unsympathetic, even perhaps what is sometimes called an "antihero," can lead naturally, if you desire, into larger issues of whether literature itself should try to give pleasure by means of "identification" and what it might seek to accomplish by trying on the contrary to avoid this sort of pleasure. Refinements of this discussion topic would include the question of what other

kind of pleasure *Notes from Underground* does give and whether there isn't after all some sort of identification here too.

Of course, Underground Man does not claim to have a higher opinion of himself than we are likely to have of him. On the contrary, he seems to be lacking all respect for himself. What does one say about a man who seems ready to send his servant for the police against himself? He lies, or says he's lying—most dramatically, when he cruelly tells Liza that he has lied to her even though we are able to understand that he has not. But when self-loathing splits the self in two, the reader tends to give credit to the self doing the describing (Self 1) no matter what is said about the self described (Self 2). Or rather, that's our tendency, a tendency that Underground Man both exploits and questions. A good example of the drama of self-consciousness, worth having the class analyze in detail, is Section IX of Part Two (p. 645), in which we see how much interior conversation, how much thought and feeling go into the apparently simple act of raising his head to look at Liza after he has been sobbing in her arms on the sofa. The least one can say here is that Dostoevsky has discovered or invented a literary form uniquely suited to the task of manifesting and working out the familiar idea that the modern self is divided, at war with itself, or (to use a milder metaphor) in dialogue with itself.

In a book called *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963 in Russian; 1984 in English), the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin famously presented the “dialogical” element as at the heart of Dostoevsky's work. For Bakhtin, however, the key to the dialogical is that the voices of Dostoevsky's characters respond in advance, as it were, to the presence of the people around them, adapting to what these other people are likely to think about the words said and thus changing the words—if such a thing is possible—even while pronouncing them. In effect, then, the reader is hearing these other people as well while only apparently listening to one voice. If Freudian psychoanalysis offers one obvious way of thinking about Underground Man's acting out of self-contradiction, Bakhtin offers another, one less concerned with the inner make-up of the self and more concerned with the self's relations with others, or rather insisting that the former is really the latter. From this perspective, you would want to ask students *which* voices Underground Man's incorporates and why. The address to the “gentlemen” who believe in progress is one example, which can lead to discussion of Dostoevsky's rejection of the scientific and determinist assumptions of nineteenth-century progressive thought, seen by many Russians as a Western imposition but eagerly embraced by many others. Underground Man seems to offer the enigma of his own apparently irrational behavior as (paradoxically rational) evidence that we are not creatures who can be reformed by anything so simple as reforms in our environment.

One critic has described Dostoevsky's characters as “walking books.” This could not be said about Underground Man, though he is certainly bookish, because of the liveliness of his social interactions, bizarre as they may be. When he announces that, having successfully made a friend, he had to tyrannize over the

friend, and when the tyranny too succeeded, he lost interest, he seems proud of his own perversity. You might also propose to the class his relations with his servant for analysis as a possible social microcosm. Against what norm (if any) are they seen? Are they humorous? If so, why? If not, why not? Underground Man's obsession with the officer who moves him out of the way (pp. 606–607) offers a different kind of example of the self's horrifying vulnerability to invasion by those around it, its openness to the social world. You might suggest a comparison between the "spite" or rancor exemplified here, a sort of vengeance that is frustrated, bottled up, pervading one's consciousness because it is never released into action, and the "traditional" or primitive sort of revenge seen in Lermontov.

Another possible line of discussion might focus on the city of Petersburg, a new and intentional city, as Underground Man says, and in this sense offering (like the colonial frontier and the freeing of the serfs in the 1860s) another parallel or convergence with the United States. Wandering the streets of Petersburg at night, especially in the less prosperous sections, Dostoevsky seemed to be seeking a conversation that did not yet exist, one in which the interlocutors would not be the wealthy inhabitants of fashionable salons. Literarily speaking, this will become the world of prostitutes like Liza and especially of petty clerks like Underground Man, a characteristic social type that naturally enough gathered around the government bureaucracy. This social ground, where meritocracy had yet to be imagined, still less realized, encouraged tendencies to resentment and paranoia like those we hear in Underground Man's voice to thrive. Notice, however, that in spite of all his self-loathing, Underground Man is that anomaly of nineteenth-century Russia, a bureaucrat who doesn't take bribes. This indication that he after all possesses principles, and indeed has perhaps suffered for them, helps complicate the portrait.

The "woman question" had been put on the agenda by Western liberals like the feminist Georges Sand and the feminist sympathizer John Stuart Mill, whom Dostoevsky was (or at least seemed to be) opposing in *Notes from Underground*. But when Dostoevsky plays with some of the clichés of nineteenth-century popular melodrama, especially the prostitute with the heart of gold and her socially superior would-be rescuer, his own position is hard to locate with any precision. Is women's power to "save" men by accepting them a surrender to patriarchal convention or on the contrary a reversal of the male savior myth and thus a welcome innovation? The critic Tzvetan Todorov says that the gaze that Underground Man receives from Liza is neither that of a master nor a slave, and that it retains the power of the utterly unexpected—something that is certainly not true of, say, Lermontov. Others have suggested that the influence of Georges Sand's heroines on Dostoevsky was in fact profound in spite of their political differences. One might argue that the love Liza offers him when she recognizes his unhappiness, and perhaps for no other reason than *because* she recognizes that unhappiness, plays back to him one of his own impulses, perhaps his best, in wanting to save her. In any event, it can certainly be linked up with early allusions, among the former schoolfellows, to men's cruelty to women over whom they have power as a sort of

primal and inevitable fact of life. Thus it becomes a roundabout justification for the protagonist's primal, even pathological unease. If this is normal, how can he accept himself as a normal male?

Readers have often felt that even though Dostoevsky is so much a novelist of ideas, his greatness lies in his ability to transcend those ideas. He feared that people would conclude, as he wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*, that if there is no God, everything is permitted. Yet to someone like Jean-Paul Sartre, it is precisely that existential truth that Dostoevsky, against his own will, forces us to recognize. The enduring power of *Notes from Underground* comes in part from its ability to hold this question open. We feel the incongruity between Dostoevsky's ideas and the literary form in which he placed them—in particular, the radical democracy of a dialogical voice, a voice that can't help opening itself to the voices around it, even when it desperately wants to criticize them.



RESONANCES

Friedrich Nietzsche and Ishikawa Takuboku

The notion that consciousness, a value on which the nineteenth century sometimes seemed to pride itself over all others, might in fact be seen as a kind of disease is of course attributable to Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche questioned how much consciousness actually served the purposes of life. Perhaps, he wondered, it even hindered the moderns from living. Yet even while trying “to undermine our *faith in morality*” (p. 649), he continues to believe in something he cannot describe further but calls, hopefully, “daybreak”—apparently a return from below ground to the light. Note that, as enthusiastic as he is about the tunneling metaphor he shares with Dostoevsky, he is just as happy exchanging the underground for what might appear to be its opposite: the aerial metaphor of “brave birds” flying farther than any bird has flown before. You might ask students to discuss whether the shift in metaphor has any consequences.

The *Romaji Diary* of Ishikawa Takuboku, a real-life underground man living apart from his family and writing in the Roman alphabet as a form of code, offers a fascinating counterpoint to Dostoevsky's text. Here, though the writing is rich and lends itself to analysis on various levels, much of the same impulsive line-by-line self-contradiction that we saw in Dostoevsky appears as nothing more than the transcription of a talented but seemingly sane mind as it tries to do uncensored justice to the elusive, free-flowing nature of all consciousness. Who could not say, as Takuboku does, “What I wrote this morning is a lie” (p. 652)? But if so, then do we have to revise our estimate of Dostoevsky's *Underground Man*? You can also ask students to consider the fascinating mix of traditional and modern elements in this extraordinary text: the movies, poetry-writing sessions about fountain pens, and so on.



OTHER AMERICAS

Hathali Nez and Washington Matthews

Students who know the biblical accounts of creation, Eden, and the Flood (Genesis 1–11, Vol. A) will be fascinated to see the many similarities, and the telling divergences, between Genesis and the Navajo “Story of the Emergence.” It can work well to ask students, individually or in small groups, to make lists of as many similarities and differences as they can find; indeed, one team can be set to find similarities, another to find differences, and they can debate which set is more important. Are the two stories fundamentally different, or are they essentially similar (whether through a common stock of ancient myth dating back before the Asiatic settlement of North America or through the influence of more recent Christian missionary work)? Similarities include the sexual misbehavior that keeps getting the protohumans expelled from their earthly paradises—and the tendency to put the largest share of blame on the women; the near-destruction of life through a great flood; the finding of dry land by two winged messengers; even the fact that there are initially twelve species on earth, in a kind of insect version of the tribes of Israel.

Equally notable are the differences. Though much trouble is caused by sin, the Navajo story doesn’t show an all-powerful God offended by human misbehavior; instead, the focus is much more on social obligations and breaches in hospitality. As the offended Swallow People say in the second world, after new sexual misbehavior by the refugees from the first world, “We have treated you as friends, and thus you return our kindness” (p. 663). Further, the story reflects the extreme environment in which the Navajo were eking out their living. As the Swallow People say, the problem isn’t only sin but overpopulation: “this is a bad land. People are dying here every day, and, even if we spare you, you cannot live here long” (p. 663). Native Americans have often (at times exaggeratedly) been celebrated for their ecological awareness; this story shows the very real material basis for a close attention to the limits of the possible in the arid Southwest.

“The Story of the Emergence” is told in clear language and with lively dialogue, but it is also constructed on principles very unfamiliar to most readers of modern prose fiction. Even Washington Matthews, who lovingly transcribed and translated the story, seems to have become impatient with some of the repetitions and cut them down. Yet the many repetitions throughout the story are worth attending to: Why are they there? Partly, oral narration relies on repetition as an aid to memory, but beyond that, the larger structuring of the story through the series of journeys gives the teller a chance to develop his themes through expansive variation. What patterns and what developments emerge as we progress from one world to the next? What image of the universe itself emerges through all these nested layers? The eventual emergence of First Man and First Woman comes as a result of an almost proto-Darwinian evolution from lower forms of life, to which

First Man and First Woman remain closely connected, rather than estranged outright as in the end of the Eden story. At the story's close, symbolic self-sacrifice by the Grebes and the Locusts, together with energetic assistance from Badger, open the way for the humans' final emergence into our world. The story ends with no indication that our world is the final one; new worlds, and new expulsions, may yet await us in the sky above.

Expulsion from ancestral lands is again the issue in Nicholas Black Elk's haunting memoir, included as a Resonance in the *Anthology*. In transcribing, editing, and translating Black Elk's account, John G. Neihardt went far beyond Washington Matthews' reshaping of Hathali Nez's tale; the introduction and footnotes signal some of Neihardt's major alterations. One result is that, while Black Elk's story still has a clearly oral quality, it has been shaped in literary terms as a highly readable narrative, full of dramatic suspense and development. Indeed, in Neihardt's hands, Black Elk become an almost Odyssean warrior-bard. Much as Homer begins by telling us of Odysseus that "Many cities of men he saw and learned their minds" (Vol. A, p. 259), Neihardt begins the account with Black Elk saying that "I . . . have gone far and seen strange lands and men" (Vol. E, p. 694). Black Elk's understanding of events is further shaped by his own Christianity (obscured though that aspect of his experience is in Neihardt's version).

For all these changes, the heart of Black Elk's account is "The Great Vision" (pp. 673ff.) that inaugurates his career as a shaman and prospective leader, even savior, of his people. This vision makes an excellent comparison to the Navajo "Story of the Emergence." There is no question of any direct knowledge on Black Elk's part of the Navajo story in particular; instead, both stories seem to stem from a common base of mythological stories that circulated, with major variations, through the Great Plains and the Southwest and beyond. Taken ill and confined to bed, the nine-year-old Black Elk had a vision that he clearly experienced directly and personally, yet just as clearly his vision was shaped by creation tales he'd grown up hearing. In a general way, his expansive vision of flying over the landscape can be compared with the several heavenly flights in the Navajo story, but now the drama of loss and search is played out across the single landscape of our modern world—or more precisely, a world that mixes modernity and the most ancient traditions.

Whereas the Navajo story seems to echo and revise the creation and Eden/Flood stories of Genesis 1–11, Black Elk's account instead echoes the stories of the Patriarchs in the later sections of Genesis, from the rainbow with flames "of many colors" that leap over him as if they were Joseph's coat, to the Abrahamic covenant conveyed in the divine song of power: "A good nation I will make live" (p. 681). How far such resonances reflect Black Elk's own reading of the Bible and how far they reflect a love of biblical cadences and images on Neihardt's part is difficult to say. In any event, the text as we have it results from a collaboration between the two, poetic thinkers whose worldviews are not so far apart as Neihardt often suggests.

Once students have looked at the Native American bases of Black Elk's vision and the biblical terms in which it is related, they can more fully appreciate

the shock that comes with the shift to the grim events of Wounded Knee. The mythic time of the Six Grandfathers gives way to specific dates: “It was the next morning (December 29, 1890) that something terrible happened” (p. 684). As these terrible events unfold, how far and in what ways do Black Elk’s early visions sustain him? Is the ancient culture a viable resource today or has it led him and his friends into a hopeless impasse? Black Elk bitterly blames his own personal failings for his lack of success in rousing and preserving his nation, whereas Neihardt emphasizes instead the inevitable eclipse of a great but doomed culture. “A people’s dream died there. It was a beautiful dream,” as Neihardt’s version ends, a rather different conclusion than Black Elk’s forward-looking vision of cooperation between white America and the other America that predates it and still lives on in its midst.

Herman Melville

One quick and efficient route into the heart of “Bartleby the Scrivener” is by way of its famous negation: “I would prefer not to.” You can ask students how this is different from saying, for example, “I don’t want to” or “I don’t feel like it.” And having established the difference between a report on the state of one’s feelings and a statement that lays implicit claim to a gamut of choices, the class can proceed to reflect on the statement’s strange politeness, which treats Bartleby’s refusal to verify copy (one of the most boring of tasks, as the narrator agrees) as something ordinary, normal, self-evident, and thus treats the boss as if, despite his authority, his interests were not structurally opposed to Bartleby’s, as if the narrator could somehow be expected to be on Bartleby’s side. You can then ask students to trace and account for the subsequent contagiousness of the “prefer” locution. Since Bartleby says so little—thirty-seven short lines, by Elizabeth Hardwick’s count, of which one-third are a repetition of “I would prefer not to”—each variation in his speech acquires tremendous potential for meaning. The steps are worth following, for example, the addition of “at present” in “At present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable,” or “too much confinement,” or “But I am not particular.” Finally, there is the rich ambiguity of “I know where I am.”

The power of “I would prefer not to” could then lead into the closely related issue of Melville’s choice of narrator and the bizarre bond that joins him to Bartleby. The text’s critical distance from this narrator can be established by any number of early details. For example, there is the narrator’s self-serving identification with New York’s most detested slumlord, John Jacob Astor, whose name he so enjoys pronouncing. Why add the detail, you may ask students, that Astor’s name “rings like unto bullion” (p. 690)? In what tone do we imagine this sentence spoken? There is the fact that his immediate reason for hiring Bartleby is receiving the office of Master of Chancery, an institution reviled (in the United States as in the United Kingdom) for serving the interests of lawyers better than those of the public. And there is the oft-mentioned bust of Cicero, who famously proclaimed

that self-interest (like the cheap purchase of “delicious self-approval” [p. 697] which the narrator admits as the motive behind his charity toward Bartleby) is not a virtuous motive. How does Melville use the narrator’s “ordinary” worldview both to establish a frame for Bartleby’s “deviance” and to wean us away from the narrator’s values, make us see the need or at least the possibility for a very, very different value structure? Here a possible comparison opens up with the narrative structure of Lermontov’s “Bela” (Vol. E, p. 323), which again demands that we investigate the power of the “deviant” protagonist over the “normal” man who narrates his story. Like Pechorin, Bartleby is someone who refuses to live by society’s rules and also refuses to explain by what rules, if any, he is living. But what is the source of Bartleby’s power to stymie the narrator for so long? What is the source of the narrator’s guilt, his inability to use the law against the employee who from the law’s point of view is so clearly in the wrong? The narrator sees Bartleby’s story in terms of loneliness, but there is reason to think this term is more his own than Bartleby’s. His own loneliness, which becomes visible in the margins of his story, seems to result from his single-minded pursuit of self-interest. Perhaps it is a reason for his vulnerability to Bartleby’s challenge. Some have seen here the dilemma of individual liberty achieved only at the expense of a sort of absolute detachment and absolute loneliness. At any rate, whatever values we decide Bartleby might embody, they must be values in which the narrator can be a sort of secret sharer. “Do you not see the reason for yourself?” (p. 703).

It is perhaps foolish to propose any particular entry point into a story that has meant so very many things to so many people and that seems capable of continuing to interest generations of new student readers in still more various ways. Under the heading of new sorts of interest, for example, we can imagine that Bartleby’s behavior overlaps sufficiently with what is now called anorexia so as to stimulate some lively conversation from those concerned with that phenomenon. If anorexia is (in part, at least) about the assertion of will in a social situation where one otherwise has very little control over one’s life, the nineteenth-century situation of the passive copyist, doing unbearably repetitive work, would seem an invitation to it, as is the flagrant consumerism that was associated with the enormous and newly visible wealth of people like John Jacob Astor. There seems no reason to discourage those biographical readings that tie Bartleby’s status as a sort of writer, and one who refuses to produce the desperately uninteresting writing that helps in the making of money, with Melville’s own difficulties on the literary market, his angry response to the public’s dislike of his increasingly serious and metaphysical, ever less “entertaining” and swashbuckling narratives (the financial failures *Pierre* and *Moby Dick*). Here the class will want to consider the story’s epilogue. Turkey and Nippers can perhaps be brought forward as more publicly acceptable literary models, allegories of the sort of writer Melville too refused to be. You can also ask students for evidence that Melville was or was not attacking commercialization more generally, as opposed to commercialization merely as it impinged on him as a writer.

You might use the comic pair of Turkey and Nippers to lead into the equally up-to-date theme of emotional dynamics at the office. After all, the ways people in-

teract at the workplace are both a source of easy comedy, as here, and a serious component of modern life. Think how many hours people spend with their coworkers in these nondomestic spaces. Think how far the interactions there either displace or reflect the emotional narratives of so-called private life, with their better-known shapes and supposedly weightier stakes. The narrator hires Bartleby in part because he sees him as “motionless,” hence a force for order in the office, an antidote to the “flighty” Turkey and the “fiery” Nippers. In fact, Bartleby can be seen as combining the unconscious unrest of each, thus forming a far more revolutionary whole. Or, for those who feel the painful absence from the *Anthology* of Charles Dickens, among other practitioners of the long nineteenth-century novel, Turkey, Nippers, and Ginger Nut might also serve as an opportunity to bring Dickens into the conversation. As caricatures, they are sometimes mentioned as products of Dickens’s influence. Comparing them with the humorous characters and everyday conflicts on and over, say, buses and cabs in his (easily excerptable) *Sketches by Boz*, the class could then make an easy segue into the rich theme of the nineteenth-century city. Dickens’s early treatments of public transport and the sorts of exchanges that were becoming characteristic among more or less anonymous people on their way to and from work—commuter stories—offer a second context for Melville’s snapshot of Wall Street as well as a possible point of comparison with Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” another commuter-eye vision of a more or less contemporary New York. What connection might there be between Whitman’s mobile crowds and Bartleby, who doesn’t want to go out? Given the fact that jobs like copyist, which were exclusively performed by men during Melville’s time, came to be performed with equal exclusiveness by women, it’s also worth asking what difference it would make if Bartleby were a woman. Could we describe the relations between Bartleby and the narrator as a chaste but compelling sort of love story?

The architecture of the Wall Street office, with its walls and screens, lends itself to a discussion about the priority of social or metaphysical levels of interpretation. Like the whale of *Moby Dick*, the wall that is all that can be seen through the window and that Bartleby is in the habit of staring at seems a symbol of impenetrable metaphysical limits. Some have seen parallels with Kafka. Yet the fact that Bartleby acknowledges no difference between the Wall Street office and the prison of the story’s end could be read in a social sense as well as a philosophical or ontological one. Folding doors and screens suggest that walls are fundamentally man-made, designed to serve the comfort of some at the expense of the comfort of others, and that these arrangements might be altered. You can encourage students to ask: What are these walls, metaphysical facts of the existence of all men or socially constructed and hemming us in selectively, some more than others? A related question for the end concerns the relation with the story of Job, from which the narrator quotes (“With kings and counsellors,” p. 712). This was part of Job’s curse that he was ever born. It comes at the beginning of Job but at the end of “Bartleby the Scrivener.” Does the placement make a significant difference?

Frederick Douglass

Douglass's reasons for writing his 1845 *Narrative* are so obvious that students may need to be reminded how much the book contains in addition to its historic contribution to the literature of antislavery protest. To begin, you can ask students to consider a complication that most authors never had to worry about: Douglass's need to convince people that he had written his own book, that—contrary to the beliefs of many at his time—a man raised under slavery like himself was in fact capable of writing something so elegantly articulate. You can also ask students to distinguish between the story of one person's life, which will inescapably include many elements of more importance to that person than to anyone else, and the story of a “representative man,” efficiently designed to stand for and champion a cause. What has been emphasized and what has been de-emphasized in order to create the story of transformation from slave to free man? An example is the omission (some would say silencing) of his wife Anna. Would students have preferred a “private” self-portrait, warts and all—something like what Hegel called the *valet de chambre's* view? Why or why not?

On the question of Douglass's representativeness, the class might discuss his special, perhaps formative experience in Baltimore, away from the plantation. You can ask students whether his literacy and skill in the use of the English language, which won him readers in the North, would be likely to cut him off in some sense from his fellow slaves. Looking forward to the inevitable comparisons with Harriet Jacobs, whose autobiographical narrative about her own experience of slavery follows in the *Anthology*, you can ask students to address questions of how women are presented in the *Narrative* and how much of Douglass's heroic story could also hold for a woman protagonist. Could a woman, for example, have been equally “self-reliant”? In what ways is “freedom” associated with a gender-specific manhood?

For those tempted to see Douglass's *Narrative* as simply a product of its time, one useful exercise is to compare its style with that of, say, William Lloyd Garrison, the famous abolitionist who wrote a preface to the book. Unfortunately, the preface could not be included in the *Anthology* for reasons of space, but even a brief passage should be sufficient to give students an adequate sense. Hearing Douglass speak in 1841, Garrison writes in the preface, was a fortunate occurrence. Garrison cannot say *how* fortunate without resorting to the heavy-handed figure of apostrophe: “Fortunate, most fortunate occurrence!—fortunate for the millions of his manacled brethren, yet panting for deliverance from their awful thralldom!—fortunate for the cause of negro emancipation, and of universal liberty!” Douglass has written the book in his own style, Garrison writes, and we can see the truth of the statement if we play it off against Garrison's own: “It is, therefore, entirely his own production [. . .]. He who can peruse it without a tearful eye, a heaving breast, an afflicted spirit,—without being filled with an unutterable abhorrence of slavery and all its abettors, and animated with a determination to seek the immediate overthrow of that execrable system,—without trembling for the fate of this country in the hands of a righteous God, who is ever on the side of the oppressed, and whose

arm is not shortened that it cannot save,—must have a flinty heart, and be qualified to act the part of a trafficker.” Against this background, we can suddenly see the freshness of Douglass’s matter-of-fact descriptions, how hard he must have worked to achieve the dry, ironic, understated attitude to bloodcurdling scenes and events, the heroic, sentence-by-sentence overcoming of anger and self-pity that go into his very particular self-fashioning as champion of the abolitionist cause. Questions about the historical framing of the *Narrative* can also lead to the issue of why Douglass broke with Garrison in 1851, and for that matter why he might have opposed the plan of his friend John Brown to create a guerrilla army to help Virginia’s slaves escape (he had to flee briefly to Canada after Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry failed and a warrant was issued for his own arrest).

The other side of this question, which it is only fair to ask, is how much contemporary rhetoric does after all pervade the *Narrative*—for example, strong rhetorical antithesis, as in the famous line from his fight with Covey: “You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man” (p. 741). The power of this line is worthy of analysis. Does the word “man” mean the same thing in the sentence’s two halves? What is accomplished by confusing “man” in the most minimal or general sense (any human being) with “man” in the stronger, prouder, hortatory sense? Thinking of the text by Harriet Jacobs, you can also ask students what or whom such an ideal of manhood might favor or neglect. A rich line of discussion might well open up here around Douglass’s sense of himself as a “self-made” man (the title of one of his most popular lectures). Does his choice of appealing to northern readers in terms of the value (or ideology) of self-reliance seem in retrospect like a strength or a weakness of his text? Does it cut down the range of his likely readers as well as adding to it? Reference to Jacobs also brings to mind the possible presence in the *Narrative* of the contemporary machinery of fiction, including dialogue, sentimental language, and melodramatic plot. Does this make the text seem less realistic? Should it? You can ask students to note anything that surprised them, on the order of, say, Douglass’s pleasure at the sight of his new mistress, Sophia Auld.

Two key scenes for analysis are the whipping of Douglass’s Aunt Hester in Chapter 1, in which some readers have found an unconscious and troubling sexualization, and the struggle with Covey in Chapter 10, the “turning-point in my career as a slave” (p. 744). These scenes can of course be talked about independently. It’s hard to imagine *not* having some independent discussion of the Covey scene—for example, of how, in the struggle with Covey, Douglass could exploit cracks in the system, like the fact that Covey could not summon others to punish Douglass without losing his reputation as an efficient breaker of slaves. Also noteworthy is the quiet solidarity of the other slaves who refuse to come to Covey’s aid. But the two scenes of violence can also be discussed together. You might do this, for example, by first laying out for the class the notorious ambiguities involved in any representation of violence, and then comparing the first scene, in which the violence is unjust and seen from a spectator’s viewpoint, with the second scene, where the violence (Douglass’s revolt against ill-treatment) is just and seen from the view-

point of a participant. What details make these two episodes seem either realistic or unrealistic? Why?

Various pedagogical exercises also suggest themselves. Responding to, say, Douglass's line about not knowing his birthday and about slaves in general knowing no more of their age than horses, you might want to ask students to think about the ways in which their own sense of themselves might be different if, like Douglass, they did not know how old they were. You might also ask students to imagine, in light of Douglass's references to animals (like the horse analogy), how their own attitudes toward animals might be different if they knew the society around them made little if any distinction between animals and certain humans, themselves included. You may want to take the opportunity for an exercise in institutional self-consciousness, for example, by using the confrontation between slave and master to encourage students to reflect on teachers' power vis-à-vis students' power. This would of course not be everyone's cup of tea. An easier yet equally rewarding exercise might involve asking the class to compare portrait engravings of Douglass and Whitman, looking at their differences in posture and expression.

A larger exercise which many have found valuable is a comparison of the *Narrative* with Douglass's second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Published after ten years more of life in the North, in 1855, *My Bondage and My Freedom* is (perhaps for that reason) less optimistic about the North as a refuge from racism and more conscious of a new set of problems arising around individualism. Yet in 1855 the issue of slavery still remained unresolved, and both books invite further comparison with Mark Twain's famous antislavery masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which was written well after the issue was settled and the period of slavery was over. If we can see certain ways in which Twain might have made things easier for himself, morally speaking, by taking the issue up only in retrospect, can we also see certain ways in which Douglass's book, written in the heat of an unresolved issue, was that much more of an achievement?

Harriet Jacobs

Like Douglass's *Narrative*, Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is also intended to serve the abolitionist cause, and it too can be analyzed in terms of how and how effectively it makes its antislavery argument to a Northern readership. Yet Jacobs (comment should be made on the fact that she had to call herself "Linda Brent" in the autobiography) also makes visible certain assumptions about the slave narrative, derived in part from Douglass, that allowed a distinctively male experience to stand for slavery and for black experience in general. You can encourage students to note, for example, how little appeal Jacobs makes to rugged individuality and physical strength, each of which resonates through Douglass's story. Douglass's eerie motto "Trust no one!" is almost the antithesis of Jacobs's social philosophy; she relies a great deal on other people, though not without critical consciousness of their failings and limits (see in particular her reluctant deal-

ings with Mrs. Flint). If Anna, Douglass's wife, appears only at the end of Douglass's *Narrative*, and at the moment of marriage, Jacobs is very self-conscious about how her own story avoids the expected structure: "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage" (p. 788). Indeed, the triumphant achievement of freedom in Jacobs's text is even stranger. The death of her evil master does not after all liberate her from her ordeal, just as the death of her much-praised mistress had earlier failed to result in freedom. Now it is Dr. Flint's daughter who remains in pursuit of the valuable piece of property she has inherited. Finally, against all Linda's values, she has her freedom bought, and it arrives in the ironic form of a bill of sale. Even at this climactic moment, therefore, she remains ambivalent.

The unusual details of Jacobs's childhood are worth stressing. In its form, Jacobs's story begins with a fall from relative happiness—not the obvious way to present slavery, and one that has much in common with other narratives on very different themes. Jacobs is sheltered enough that she didn't know she was a slave until the death of her mother when she is six years old. It was unusual luck to have both a father and a grandmother who managed, despite their status as slaves, to achieve some financial independence, as well as a kind mistress. Yet the brutal fact remained, in spite of these mitigating circumstances, of being property that can be sold or, as here, passed on in a will. You can invite students to reflect on the defrauding of the grandmother out of her savings by her mistress as well as the scene in which the grandmother, who chooses to put herself on the auction block, is given her freedom. If this were fiction, we might be tempted to describe as melodramatic the coincidence by which the entrance of the evil Dr. Flint and his equally caricatured wife, "totally deficient in energy" (p. 771), is more or less simultaneous with the death of Jacobs's father. Here students can perhaps discuss the question of genre, or how and how much it matters. Dr. Flint's arrival is the beginning of Jacobs's account of physical torture—the cook forced to eat mush into which a dying dog has slobbered, the beating of one of the plantation slaves. And these anticipate the text's central concern with sexuality, torture of another kind that will be based, some years but only a few lines later, on Jacobs's physical development into a woman. Here it will be useful to reflect on Jacobs's cold-eyed analysis of her alliance with Mrs. Flint: for example, the fact that she does not initiate this alliance, and that limits remain on the sympathies of her mistress, who was "incapable of feeling for the condition of shame and misery in which her unfortunate, helpless slave was placed" (p. 776).

The question of how far their bond as women does and does not extend is profoundly relevant to the book's rhetorical enterprise of speaking to Northerners, in particular Northern women, about experiences Jacobs knows are likely to seem very alien and perhaps distasteful to them. Chapter 10, "A Perilous Passage in the Slave Girl's Life," can also be looked at as a perilous passage in her way of speaking, her rhetoric. Here the central exhibit is the moment when she has to confess to sexual wrongdoing—that is, confess that she herself believes what she did is wrong—and yet defend herself against the shame and discredit that invariably fol-

low such a confession. Students must consider those pages in which Jacobs talks about her relations with Mr. Sands, another ally, the man she came to love but could not marry and with whom she bore two children. “But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely!” (p. 778). On the one hand, Jacobs must appeal to the universality of moral principles in order to condemn slavery. On the other hand, she must also show that moral principles can never in fact be genuinely universal; they must take account of circumstances like those of slavery. Here we confront what has been called the paradox of Jacobs’s writing: She tells readers that they cannot understand her, for their experience has been too different, and yet they *must* understand her, for unless they do they cannot understand slavery itself, which is much more mysterious in its influences on American society and morals than is generally realized.

Emily Dickinson

Poems as dense and audacious as Dickinson’s are a miraculous gift not only to the lover of poetry but in particular to the teacher who prefers a “hands-on” or “close reading” approach. There are other ways to teach Dickinson, but in terms of sheer pleasure, there is no substitute for a patient, scrupulous working through of these brief poems, line by line and even word by word. Nothing less will make students feel how many surprises Dickinson has stuffed into them or allow them to participate so actively in putting the enticing fragments together.

“I never lost as much but twice” is a very simple, economical poem that leads (as the introduction suggests) to the very heart of Dickinson: her interest in the soul’s bandaged moments, its recovery (or not) after great pain, what it learns (or doesn’t) from states of psychic extremity. A third experience of extreme psychological or emotional loss—the fact that we skip over two others so quickly is part of the effect—is presented in the vocabulary of poverty. The loss is so great that it resembles or approaches the loss of life itself, as we understand from the tableau of standing before the door of God. The angels descending very clearly stand for the process, whatever it is, by which the speaker was saved from the first two experiences. The last line is equally clear: The speaker is once again in dire need. It is the second to last line that the class will want to pause on and investigate at some length: “Burglar! Banker—Father!” Who or what is this figure? In the context of “the door of God” and the descending angels as well as the capitalization of “Father!”, one cannot help but associate him with the deity. In following this suggestion, the class will want to ask whether the idea of a God who is a burglar as well as a banker—who steals away as well as safeguarding and adding to this precious, life-sustaining quantity of love, self-respect, or whatever—can possibly fit within any version of Christianity available in Dickinson’s time and place. Some may be tempted to consider “Burglar!”, with its exclamation point, as separate

from “Banker—Father!”, as if the line’s first word (and perhaps also its second) were like a cry of alarm rather than an apostrophe, whereas “Father!” addressed the potential rescuer. To others, this solution will not work, and the poem’s immense power will depend precisely on the confusion of burglar with banker and on the fusion of these seemingly contradictory roles in the word “Father.” It is hard to avoid the theme of patriarchy while focusing on the paradox by which the speaker appeals for help from the very figure whom she also accuses of stealing from her and putting her in *need* of help.

The burglar who is also a banker and a father, the criminal attacker whom one also loves and from whom one also desires and indeed implores love, is obviously the source of a certain emotional and psychological complexity. Much the same complexity, though no longer presented in father/daughter terms, can be explored in “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun.” Imagining herself as a lethal weapon, the speaker (presumed female) again sets up an ambivalent complicity with the male hunter. It is he who delivers the female weapon out of her empty inactivity and allows her to realize her potential. Yet by doing what? Shooting not deer in general but does, the female of the species, she speaks for the man, yet she may be totally miserable in playing this role, as the deadly last line suggests. Why else would she suggest she wishes she had the power, not merely to kill, but to die? It seems there is a high price to be paid for woman’s voluntary acquiescence in her social secondariness to man. Note that almost all the activity is attributed to the gun and almost none to the master/hunter. Note too that, devoted to violence and perhaps rage, the gun protects the master without actually sharing his bed. Note finally that the word “Vesuvian,” one of Dickinson’s characteristic references to volcanoes, suggests violent rage bottled up under a quiet exterior and then explosively released.

The possibility of a desire for death, at the end of “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun,” offers a natural segue to Dickinson’s rich metaphorical uses of death. In “After great pain, a formal feeling comes,” for example, the ending seems deliberately to confuse death with life: The memory of pain by those who do not die but “outlive” their pain is likened to the “letting go” of people who are freezing to death. Hence outliving pain and dying are forced together. Dickinson asks readers to consider the ways in which death may have had a particular significance for women. Dickinson’s ambivalence about men as both bankers and burglars adds to her sense of the failure of marriage—for her as an individual, or as an institution in general, from the perspective of women—leading her to imagine marrying death itself, personified as a male suitor. If this is part of the sentimental tradition, a logical extension of that spiritualization of women that denied their embodiedness, it was also revolutionary in its potential to say a bold “no” to existing social relations without stepping outside the realm of female stereotypes. You can also ask students what other functions death might fulfill: for example, as a figure for madness, or as relief from unimaginable pain or release from self-contradiction, or as a socially sanctioned self-heroicizing figure (as in the word “Calvary” in “Title divine—is mine!”), or as a stronger version of that yearning for escape that also drew Dickinson to images of asexual childhood. In each case, of course, students will

want to ask whether the use of death is ironic in some sense, a theatrical display of her own helplessness that Dickinson also transcends.

The use of religious language has to be worked through in detail to dissipate the churchly aura and get to what she is actually saying by using this religious vocabulary. Often it is something extremely heterodox, and if (in an age when there is not much study of theology) students must first be taught the orthodoxy of that day in order to be shown how far Dickinson departs from it, then so be it. “Title divine—is mine!”, which reminds us of marriage as a holy sacrament, is about not being married. The religious vocabulary (“Calvary”) seems there in order to represent not the public sacrament but a private pain for which there as yet exist no public sacraments. The counter-attack against marriage, one of Dickinson’s most powerful, again takes the form of an immensely rich three-word line: “Born—Bridalled—Shrouded” (line 10). To be married, for a woman, is to be born, to come into existence, as if one were not yet alive or had no identity before that. To be married, for a woman, is both to become a bride and to receive a bridle, like a horse: to be forced to submit to the male rider. To be married, for a woman, is therefore to die, to be shrouded: to lose the possibility of living a life of one’s own. To call this a triple victory is to sound a note of sarcasm that one might think Dickinson is incapable of surpassing—until she gets to the line about the “Melody” with which women say “‘My Husband’” (lines 13–14). A possible topic of class discussion related to the cattiness of these last lines is whether, by analogy with the innocent phrase “love poem,” we might have the right to speak of this and other similar poems as “hate poems.”

If you are interested in biographical approaches to Dickinson, of which there have been many, you may want to focus on any number of her well-known eccentricities: for example, her habit of wearing a white dress, that Romantic and Victorian symbol of female innocence or virginal purity, but also of isolation (especially in landscapes of snow and ice, as in “After great pain”) and death. It is hard not to see Dickinson as taking from her life the themes of the deepest frustration and erotic disappointment, and yet as also transcending them in her writing. A religious concept like immortality, which Dickinson certainly achieved in its secular form as a writer, offered some kind of recompense for the “normal” female pleasures that Dickinson was denied but also thought unworthy.

If you are inclined to exercises in comparison, you may wish to relate Dickinson’s poems to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh* (Vol. E, p. 492), a poem that Dickinson admired enormously, indeed claiming Browning as her mentor. Looking forward to the texts by Machado de Assis and Gilman, another exercise might explore the female tradition (though not restricted to women, of course) that gives a positive value to ideas and behavior that challenge the norms of the day and have been labeled “pathological” or “deviant.” Here is Dickinson on madness:

Much Madness is divinest sense—
To a discerning Eye—

Much sense—the starkest Madness.
 'Tis the Majority
 In this, as All, prevail—
 Assent—and you are sane—
 Demur—you're straightaway dangerous—
 And handled with a chain—
 (“Much Madness is divinest sense—”)

Joaquim María Machado de Assis

The work of Michel Foucault and others on the history of madness and the founding of madhouses, which will naturally occur to some instructors, offers a tempting context for a sentence like “The idea of having madmen live together in the same house seemed itself to be a symptom of madness” (p. 796). You may ask students what they think of this idea today. A “traditional” society’s suspicion about “modern” medicine and about the representative of supposed “progress” and enlightenment who brings it to their town is not a black-and-white subject. The Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz has suggested that “the classic marks of Brazilian backwardness” in Machado de Assis can be seen “not as an archaic leftover but as an integral part of the way modern society reproduces itself, or in other words, as evidence of a perverse form of progress” (*A Master on the Periphery of Capitalism: Machado de Assis*, 2001, p. 3). The Independence of Brazil was negotiated by a combination of promises of abolition abroad with promises to continue slavery at home. The elites invoked Enlightenment and also refused to obey it. Elites who wanted to belong to the modern West and wanted also to own slaves were caught in an absurdity that Machado de Assis, a self-educated mulatto, was well placed to perceive. The full brilliance of his performance in “The Psychiatrist” appears when we see him exposing the craziness of what the psychiatrist is doing, on the one hand, without simply affirming, on the other, the values of the traditional society—and indeed, being equally satiric about many of the psychiatrist’s victims and enemies.

Machado de Assis apparently stuttered and suffered from epileptic seizures, and he spent some time in a spa while recovering from an illness that threatened his sight. Yet these personal experiences are unnecessary in order to account for his story of madness and the madness with which it is treated. A comic philosophical tale in the style of Swift or Voltaire that seems meant to travel across national and linguistic borders (as this one has, more successfully than certain other writings that depend more on local inflections and local knowledge), “The Psychiatrist” is so richly and marvelously literary that the ever-interesting theme of insanity and its historically shifting definition may well be displaced in classroom discussion by other, less time-bound topics. Among these might be, for example, the dazzling multiplicity of Machado de Assis’s targets of satire. Given the apparent simplicity of the situation—a psychiatrist/tyrant who is totally out of control, eventually using the authority of

science to lock up four-fifths of the town—students should be asked to consider how many *other* targets of satire there are in the story, many of them not at all representative of the psychiatrist's worldview. What about, say, the psychiatrist's cowardly Sancho Panza-like sidekick, Crispim Soares? When we see the psychiatrist neglecting his wife in favor of his research and the wife thus becoming "the most wretched of women," we are not prepared to hear the psychiatrist's relatively lucid comment: "How strange is the therapy of the human soul! . . . This lady is wasting away because she thinks I do not love her. I give her Rio de Janeiro and she is well again" (p. 799). You can also ask students to consider the psychiatrist's growing conviction that "the number of persons suffering from insanity . . . was far greater than commonly supposed" (p. 801). Given what Machado de Assis tells us about people's ordinary superstitions (e.g., the "hex" on the money on p. 801), the notion that ordinary society, no matter how normal it appears, is secretly insane doesn't seem so far from our own opinion, and perhaps also that of Machado de Assis.

When Simão Bacamarte expresses his desire "for Lusitanian and, more specifically, Brazilian science to cover itself with 'imperishable laurels'" (p. 796), is the local or national pride that Machado de Assis seems to be satirizing something that distinguishes Simão Bacamarte from the other townspeople or not? The story of the rebellion against the psychiatrist, both in its success and in its failure, similarly takes away any stable normative base from which to measure human folly. Consider also how very normal it seems to the people of Itaguaí when they are deprived of their freedom. Imprisonment is unpleasant, but it does not come to them like lightning out of a blue sky; they do not seem so very used to an absolute and unquestioned freedom. Behind the story, the political context assumed here does not seem one of peaceful democracy. This is surely part of the multifaceted joke on the psychiatrist's version of tyranny. This tyranny is manifestly not based on deliberate self-interest; though the psychiatrist makes a lot of money out of his patients, and his wife is quick to see in their riches the hand of God working in His inscrutable way, Bacamarte also ends up voluntarily moving into the asylum as a patient himself. In the context of actual Brazilian and Latin American politics, there is clearly an extra force in the piece of extravagant imagination that makes displays of self-interest on the part of the townspeople, however ugly and harmful, presumptive evidence of their sanity.

Along with its range of allusions, the narrator's playful, bantering, self-interrupting voice, learned in part from such English predecessors as Lawrence Sterne, is another marker of Machado de Assis's very self-conscious ambition to place himself within world literature. Deliberately taking on the accents of its community and refusing to step outside or rise above that community in order to offer any critique—a paradoxical way of achieving such a place—this voice can be compared with that of Flaubert in "A Simple Heart" (Vol. E, p. 436), though Flaubert's text is of course not comic. "The Psychiatrist" can also be assimilated to a thematic discussion of literature and madness along with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's roughly contemporaneous "The Yellow Wallpaper."

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

In “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper?” (1913), Gilman said the point of the story was to change the treatment of neuresthenia, that is, to “save people from being driven crazy, and it worked.” One quick way into the discussion is to ask how much of the story this stated authorial intention does or does not account for. Getting students to talk about the prescription of a “rest cure” for “prostration” in women is not likely to be a difficult task. (The unfamiliarity of the vocabulary here may help students denaturalize current vocabularies for “mental illness” as well—including “depression” and, for that matter, “mental illness.”) Nor will it be hard to stimulate conversation about the central ambiguities of the ending. Is the narrator/protagonist free or still entrapped? Crawling around the former nursery—a microcosm of the patriarchal world, where women are treated like children needing instruction and discipline, where the windows are barred, and where the protagonist is called a “blessed little goose”—has she regressed to an infantile or even animal state? Has she given way to madness? Is she better or worse off than at the outset, and in what sense? Is the ending a triumph or a defeat? Can we say that the release of rage and excitement at the end is positive even though the heroine is defeated? After all, she who has been treated by her husband as a “silly goose” is now able to reverse the power hierarchy, addressing him as “young man” and expressing the same mock naivete over why he’s fainted. If students are less likely to see the end in positive terms than they once were, that reading can perhaps be put forward as a challenging hypothesis, along with historical reflections on why earlier readers were more engaged with it.

The ambiguity of the ending is already there at the story’s center. When the protagonist begins to find meaning behind the wallpaper, what meaning is it? Whose text is she reading, that of her own inner self, as we might at first assume, or on the contrary, a set of meanings inscribed in her and in the room by her husband and the patriarchal order he represents? Is the woman behind the wallpaper released from patriarchy, or a product of patriarchy? Is seeing the figure the beginning of her liberation, or the beginning of her insanity? How are we to understand the act of tearing off the wallpaper? The prison-like bars she sees in the wallpaper would seem to merge her own identity with that of the trapped woman, thus collaborating in her own escape. If this is a liberation, what exactly is being liberated? Her repressed self? Some readers have suggested that the stain and odor are symbols of her repressed sexuality and/or of her disgust with her body. A line Gilman cut from the original manuscript speaks of a “sickly penetrating suggestive yellow.” Along with sexual suggestiveness, other readers have connected the word “yellow” with immigrants from southern and Eastern Europe and from Asia, by whom Gilman (despite her feminism and otherwise radical views) seems to have felt threatened.

Taken together with the text by Harriet Jacobs, another tale of female embodiment, captivity, and escape, “The Yellow Wallpaper” can initiate a conversation about how much of the “female” condition the story of a white upper-middle-

class woman can be properly taken to represent. For example, Gilman's use of the *metaphor* of slavery does not align itself unproblematically with Jacobs's view of the *reality* of slavery. Notice, however, that in order to express that reality, Jacobs has to use metaphors from the nonslave world. And both Jacobs and Gilman were writing in a familiar Gothic tradition for a white New England readership. Students may be impressed to learn that Gilman was the grand-niece of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and that it was Beecher Stowe whom Harriet Jacobs approached when she was trying to get her book published. What will students make of the words "I've got out at last" at the end? Another obvious segue forward is to Nora in *A Doll's House*. Nora too tries to act in order to change her condition by writing: by secretly copying legal documents so as to repay the loan. And before that, she gets the loan in the first place by forging her father's signature, a very symbolic as well as practical act.

Rubén Darío

In spite of the notorious difficulties of teaching lyric poetry in translation, "First, a look . . ." can allow students to seize on the wing, as it were, the brief but intense pleasures of Darío's verse. It would be a mistake to describe the tableau as dramatic, for the pleasure does not come so much from who the characters are as from *not knowing* who they are, and in particular not knowing who is speaking. In other words, the pleasure here is distinctly linguistic, not borrowed from theater. The poem's first six lines, filled with nouns and the adjectives that qualify them, omit verbs entirely. (We cannot count verbal forms like "rushing" and "overwhelming," which serve here as adjectives.) As the verbs are missing, we cannot tell our own relation to these objects: a look, a touch, rushing blood, a kiss. The temptation, therefore, is to surrender to their immediacy, to project ourselves into the position of the one looking and being looked at, touching and being touched, kissing and passing on to the "pleasure" of the night. Yet all this is a kind of trick. For the poem's last four lines tell us that we, like the "you" whom (we learn only now) the poem is addressing, have been deceived. The addressee has been deceived by a seducer. And we have been deceived by the poet, who allowed us to enjoy the seduction as well, whether as seducer or as seduced (the absence of the verbs again opens the door to both identifications). "Didn't I tell you?" makes us cry out against a certain felt injustice, for the seduced addressee may indeed have been warned, but we the readers have not been warned. It's as if we were being punished by the stern moralist speaker for our vulnerability to poetry itself. Perhaps the sense of systematic self-frustration here can be related to the project of poetry articulated (again as a kiss) in "I Pursue a form. . . ."

The figure of the swan at the end of that poem also makes a possible segue into "What sign do you give . . .?", which links Darío's thoughts on his vocation as a poet to the historical and political themes of the "Other Americas" section. It is as a poet of Latin America in particular, not as a poet in general, that Darío asks

about his continent's future: "So many millions of men, will we be speaking English?" (line 34). As their titles suggest, the poems "Walt Whitman" and "To Roosevelt" are both aimed at the influence of the United States in the region. Here you can ask students to observe the embrace of Whitman as in effect the best face of the growing North American power. Darío's Whitman is so antithetical to what the United States is doing in Latin America that in the following poem Darío can imagine Whitman's verses, as powerful as those of the Bible, "get[ting] through" to President Theodore Roosevelt. Yet it is also worth pointing out the mystery of what exactly Darío finds to celebrate in Whitman. Perhaps it is nothing more than the fact that Whitman *does* so little, has so little effect! If he is presented as a kind of "emperor," bearing "dominion and mastery," there is also much emphasis on his age and weariness. More important, in telling the eagle to soar, the sailor to sail, the worker to work, Darío's Whitman seems to leave everything very much as it is—which from the point of view of a Latin American neighbor might be eminently desirable.

Students will also be interested in following the exact contrasts between the United States and its Latin American neighbors that are developed in "To Roosevelt." What are the Latin American virtues? What are the region's strengths, which Darío sets against those of the United States? How do these strengths and virtues fit within the single term "God" with which the poem ends?

Henrik Ibsen

Much of the shock value of *A Doll's House* has clearly dissipated, if only because of widespread changes in the situation of women. The time is over when the play could be seen as the dramatization of a simple thesis about women's liberation in which the misunderstood wife is clearly the uncontested heroine and her clueless husband is an equally simple model of all that women needed liberation from. The characters of both Nora and Torvald have been discovered to embody a certain complexity, thus giving rise to controversies that can be profitably played out in the classroom. And minor characters like Mrs. Linden, Krogstad, and Dr. Rank, foils and parallels to them, have also been discovered to complicate the play's issues in various intriguing ways. The play is indeed almost rich enough to be asked, as this *Anthology* asks it, to represent all of the nineteenth century's drama after *Faust*.

That said, identification with Nora seems inevitable, for male as well as for female students. If there is no dissent on this—and it's always worth asking—then the capacity of male students to identify might itself serve as a useful entry point into the mysteries of literary identification and identity in general. What is it about Nora's story that overlaps with issues a man might see as his own? Those students who might resist the idea of following in Nora's footsteps and/or feel critical of the irrevocable step Nora takes should also be allowed their chance to back up their reading with evidence from the play (e.g., about the fragility of Nora's character and how ill-equipped she is to move away from the door she has slammed) or with

evidence from history (about the likely result of a woman alone, exiled from the limited respectable roles that society made available to her).

You can ask students how the play would have been different if it had ended with Nora's suicide. That is of course the traditional fate of the nineteenth-century's "fallen woman." Much in Nora's character and in the play itself prepares for it. The question is what Ibsen added, both about Nora's character and about the play's themes, by frustrating this expectation and instead giving Nora a second chance. It is worth adding that Ibsen seems not to have been absolute about the ending. In response to the plea of a German actress who refused to play the part unless Nora elected to stay with her children, Ibsen reluctantly agreed to modify the final act. In the revised ending, Torvald forces Nora to look at her sleeping children, and she finds herself unable to leave them. So hypotheses about what happens after the famous slamming of the door—does Nora find freedom, or does she fail and fall?—are not to be ruled outside the bounds of legitimate discussion. There is evidence that Ibsen imagined "despair, struggle, and ruin." On the other hand, a major source for the play, though not one that Ibsen followed to the letter, was the life of Laura Kieler, a talented young dramatist who had the husband with tuberculosis, the secret loan, and the trip to Italy, among other details. In real life, however, Kieler had a nervous breakdown, spent a few weeks in an asylum, and was finally reunited with her husband. It is arguable that by omitting these facts Ibsen did feminism a sizeable favor. Yet as a person rather than a playwright, Ibsen seems to have reacted to Kieler much as Torvald reacted to Nora.

Ibsen's friend and champion Georg Brandes himself was unsympathetic: "The ending is impossible," Brandes wrote. "There must be a lover. No woman goes off to the country in search of self-improvement." How would the play have been different if there had indeed been some more understanding and attractive man available, if only one who was waiting distantly and innocently in the wings? This question may lead to discussion about the role of Dr. Rank. Dr. Rank is of course not Nora's lover, but he is the one character who is not strictly necessary to the play's plot, and the only man Nora has ever been able to talk to—which makes it ironic in the extreme that he is also the one who never learns her secret. He experiences an isolation like Nora's own. The silk stocking scene is only one (a good one, however, on which to focus class discussion) in which there is more than a hint of a hidden bond between him and Nora. Why is he there at all? Perhaps for the independent assurance he offers the audience of the value of Nora's character, well before her heroic final speeches, when some will be tempted to see her as manipulative, overly theatrical, and somewhat childish. Perhaps, assuming that there is a kind of unconsummated and unconscious love between them, as an anticipation of the higher sort of marriage Nora will seek once he is dead and she is gone. Dr. Rank's departure scene of course anticipates Nora's own, as his courage in facing his own inevitable end (which though a doctor he is helpless to avoid) also anticipates the courage Nora will have to show. The physical illness of Dr. Rank, which he has inherited from his father, also offers a parallel to the moral corruption that Nora faces as a result of her father and, as some will point out, that she risks passing on to her own children as a result of her own action.

For some readers and spectators, the play's major flaw is the abruptness of Nora's transformation from a coddled, spoiled child-bride into a heroic and articulate champion of individual freedom. The greatest challenge for actresses playing the role is often thought to be how to bridge the chasm between Nora before and Nora after, making them seem to belong to the same person. You can ask students what evidence we are given, along with Nora's macaroons, lies, and somewhat infantile playacting, that she has the potential to become what she does become in the ending. A scene that clearly repays reflection is the one in which Nora dances the tarantella. In terms of its place in the action, it is merely a delaying tactic. Yet it is also a piece of flamboyant theater. As such, it seems to exaggerate the very principle by which Nora has been living, her willingness to perform tricks for her husband like a pet. Yet it also suggests depths of character, hysterical wildness, passion, and incipient revolt that have not yet found any adequate way to manifest themselves in her everyday life. In the first draft of the play, Ibsen had made Nora impersonate a dancing slave girl. In the final draft, Nora's dance is more one of self-expression. And this is the first moment in the play when she visibly escapes from Torvald's commands. Torvald's motives for staging this performance and dressing Nora up as a Neapolitan proletarian are also worth exploring.

The sensuality that the tarantella brings out in Torvald, so distinct from his earlier cool appreciation of Nora as an aesthetic possession as well as from the rationality he claims as his major motive, raises the question of how far he remains the play's simple melodramatic villain and how far, on the contrary, he seems a character with a potential for redemption. What do students make of the fact that, for at least a brief moment after Nora leaves, we see Torvald on stage, hoping for a miracle and trying to understand? Are the faults of his character those of principle—for example, caring too much about money, status, and respectability—or of insecurity? Is he capable of change? You can ask the class to formulate the case as he would see it, just to see how plausible his view can be made.

Another important line of discussion concerns the way the two major characters are aligned, for comparison and contrast, with the minor ones: Torvald and Dr. Rank, Torvald and Krogstad, and so on. Note that Mrs. Linden is strong without resorting like Nora to submissiveness. Yet Mrs. Linden is also ready to choose dependence on Krogstad at the very moment that Nora is choosing independence from Torvald. The emptiness of the life she has been living, which in this sense resembles the life of the maid, can also be seen as foreshadowing what Nora may have to put up with. Another parallel with Nora is Krogstad, also a forger and, like Nora if she is caught, a criminal in the eyes of the world. Yet like Nora he too is devoted to his family. Do we have the right to consider him a villain? If so, would we have to do the same with Nora? What are the extenuating circumstances? Are they different in these two cases? How much do they extenuate?

The Archer translation presented in the *Anthology* will perhaps strike American readers as British and a bit archaic in flavor. Another class experiment you could try, with or without help from other translations, would be to rewrite visibly alien passages in an American idiom, testing the different reactions to, say, Nora's character. Archer's

Nora says, “I saved Torvald’s life,” for example, where the Norwegian says, “It is I who saved Torvald’s life.” The translation plays down Nora’s delighted pride. Or, as Thomas Van Laan points out, Archer takes away Krogstad’s “elaborately careful, overprecise, labored wordiness” (“English Translations of *A Doll House*,” in *Approaches to Teaching Ibsen’s ‘A Doll House’*, ed. Yvonne Shafer, 1985, pp. 6–16). The original has “You know, naturally, just as well as all the others, that I one time a few years ago happened to commit a thoughtless act.” Archer takes out much of the complicated, evasive syntax: “Of course you know, like every one else, that some years ago I—got into trouble.”

Higuchi Ichiyo

Higuchi Ichiyo’s concentrated, heartbreaking story “Separate Ways” teaches beautifully along with Ibsen’s *Doll’s House* as well as with the fiction of Chekhov that follows it, and with modernist short stories such as the selections from Joyce’s *Dubliners* early in Volume F. Like Ibsen’s Nora, Ichiyo’s heroine Okyō is making her way as best she can in a world of rigid and unequal relations of gender and of class. And as in Ibsen, our heroine is observed by an uncomprehending man (here, the boy Kichizō) who just can’t understand how his beloved could sink to such depths of depravity. Finally, as in Ibsen, the story ends with an open-ended resolution, a moment of rejection. Yet unlike Ibsen’s play, Ichiyo’s story resists full narrative closure: No door shuts firmly, and perhaps by the next day Kichizō will have accepted Okyō’s choice as a reasonable one, given her limited options.

Though the story seems to be an almost unshaped moment comparable to a Joycean “epiphany,” the mystery (as Kichizō sees it) of Okyō’s sudden choice of a sugar daddy is subtly prepared earlier in the story: The unnamed sugar daddy may well be the pawnbroker who is “head over heels in love with her,” as Kichizō himself notes, insisting that she never gives him the time of day (p. 893).

Ichiyo’s understated narrative techniques present a world that is at once paralyzed and in radical flux, symbolized by Kichizō’s orphan status. Okyō has become his sole point of reference in an ephemeral world, and at the story’s end he loses that one security. No love suicide will take place, as it might easily have in earlier Japanese romantic fiction; there aren’t even any grand speeches, Ibsen-style, to draw the moral for us. Even the closest thing to a moral conclusion—“The boy was unyielding in his notion of integrity” (p. 894)—is presented almost as a throw-away line, with no clear indication whether we should adopt his view or regret his immaturity. The tragedy of this story is that there is no grand tragedy to play out.

Anton Chekhov

It has been said that love, as Chekhov portrayed it, is most often an illusion and rarely works out to the satisfaction of either party. Disillusionment seems the most frequent ending, as in Gurov’s nightmarish relation with his wife. “The Lady with

the Dog” may have earned its special place in the Chekhov canon by resisting, with some success, his impulse to unfulfilment. It’s as if the story is poised on this brink but never quite falls over.

The situation is banal; it is clearly not the plot that has made so many readers proclaim the story a masterpiece. But what then? Small touches, of course, like the melon that Gurov slices and the silence of half an hour that follows. Or like his son’s question about why there are no thunderstorms in winter: a wonderful error, if we take it allegorically as a reference to the thunderstorm of love that suddenly explodes in the winter of Gurov’s life. And perhaps the melancholy irony of Chekhov’s vision. Though the protagonists have found romantic love, they still can’t fuse it (because each is married) with companionship, which involves a well-lighted place in the real world. The real life, it seems, is the secret one, and one that will have to remain secret or will suffer from not being allowed to escape from secrecy. Is that the story’s own secret?

You may encourage students to reflect on the mode of the narration. They can consider, for example, the passage beginning “At Oreanda they sat on a seat” (p. 899). Note the blurring between what Gurov thinks and what the narrator thinks: Which are Chekhov’s thoughts, and which on the contrary may be only Gurov’s, that is, thoughts from which we are supposed to be able to take some critical distance? Everything is beautiful here except man: This thought is explicitly tied to Gurov as the first part of the passage is not. Are we supposed to feel he is making a mistake? Often Chekhov seems to see nature on the contrary as cold and hostile to man. The lovers blame fate, not society. But this could just be the limits of their vocabulary, not what Chekhov wants us to think. How much distance does he take from his protagonist? Perhaps Chekhov himself sympathized with Gurov’s view, and only in a masterpiece like this was he able to suggest a distance from it.

A question of a very different kind might lead in the same direction. Why does it matter so much to Anna Sergeyevna that her husband is “a flunkey” (p. 899)? She says that she knows this even without knowing the work he does. Does the work he does matter to her in some unspecified sense? Why in that case is no mention made of the work that Gurov does or of her attitude toward it? Chekhov seems to take great pains to make this love obscure and mysterious. What if we substitute Chekhov himself for Gurov? Gurov is the same age that Chekhov was when he wrote the story. Chekhov too was married (though unlike Gurov he had not married young), and when he wrote the story he too was about to begin a powerful affair after a series of extramarital relationships that did not involve great emotional involvement. One conclusion to be drawn from the biographical parallels is that, if the story were about Chekhov himself, the well-known aphrodisiac qualities of social prestige would have to be factored back in. Chekhov was obviously no flunkey. He was a famous writer whose celebrity no doubt drew people to him. Yet the story offers no clear contrast in this respect between the husband, for whom Anna Sergeyevna has no respect, and Gurov. Other than the fact that Gurov is at ease in the company of women, we are told only that “there was something attractive and elusive which allured women” in his “appearance” and in his “character” (p. 896).

We are not told what this elusive something might be. Chekhov comes close to tautology here: Women are attracted to him, it seems, because he has “something attractive” about him. It is clear that Chekhov is not interested in explanations.

Or we might say, turning this statement around, that he is interested in making love seem totally inexplicable. Is Chekhov failing to register the facts about himself that would make the story explicable? When Gurov thinks about the words Anna Sergeyevna has used to describe him, words like “exceptional” and “lofty,” he thinks merely that she has been deceived about him. Should we take these as traces of his own experience that Chekhov has failed to erase? Another possible way to explain a love Chekhov presents as inexplicable is in terms of “the angularity” (p. 897) of Anna Sergeyevna’s inexperienced youth in contrast to Gurov’s age. His age, which suddenly hits him on the last page of the story as he looks at himself in the mirror, might help retrospectively to make sense of a bond that, as he actually experienced it in the present, left him coolly irritated by Anna Sergeyevna’s youthful naivete and remorse. Often it is the context of meaningless routine, like the “idle, well-dressed, well-fed people” (p. 900) passing before them at Yalta or the man in Moscow who says, “the sturgeon was a bit too strong” (p. 902), that by its contrast unexpectedly bestows special significance on a relationship that might otherwise seem to have nothing so special about it. Alternatively, we might see Gurov as a sort of unremarkable Everyman, in this respect very much like the woman he somewhat arbitrarily loves. The suggestion would thus be that genuine love, which remains totally inexplicable, has the ability to transform those who feel it, changing their moral attitudes and separating them from their ordinary lives. Inflecting this argument a bit differently, we might also say that the love expresses their loneliness, seen here as a human universal, and that it is love as a response to loneliness that’s moving about them.

But the strongest line of argument here is perhaps the yearning for “a new and splendid life” (p. 906), a yearning both protagonists share for a life that has not yet begun. Such a life could perhaps only be shown as a desire, not as an achievement. The story’s last sentence suggests a certain skepticism about how realistic this project is. By stopping where he does, however, Chekhov might seem to have chosen to protect this desire, to keep it alive, rather than submitting it to ironic disillusionment. It is clear that Chekhov avoids pointing any single moral and leaves the ending open to multiple interpretations.

As a class exercise, the story will benefit from comparison with tear-jerker films.

Rabindranath Tagore

As a story of how the love between a young man and a young woman finds its way to a classic happy ending, “The Conclusion” carves out a special place for itself by virtue of the extra steps along the way to that conclusion. Rather than merely delaying the inevitable, each step adds immensely to its meaning. You can lead students into the story’s heart by asking them to note how very early in the story Apurba and Mrinmayi

are married, yet how little the marriage resolves. What then is the challenge? In this story, the courtship proper begins after the marriage, not before; it's not about the legal status of marriage, in which the young woman appears to have no choice, but about the state of her feelings. In other words, the question is not whether a woman from a humble family, like Mrinmayi, can be prevailed upon to submit to the wishes of a more prosperous and higher-ranked neighbor. The question is how or whether she will choose of her own free will the young man who has first chosen her.

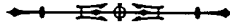
Like many marriage stories, this one could be read as somewhat allegorical. The couple unites a figure from higher in the social scale with a figure who begins below him. For some analysts, it would thus be seen as rehearsing or enacting the logic by which an Indian nation might be forged out of very different social strata and collective identities. It would be significant, then, that we first see the prospective lovers in a moment of social reversal when Apurba, the young man who has just passed his BA examination in Calcutta and is returning, a bit proudly, to his village, slips in the mud of the ghat and finds himself the object of Mrinmayi's laughter. Yet he is attracted to her precisely because of her independence, as we see in the well-developed opposition between her and the "trembling creature, painted and polished" (p. 909) who has been picked out for him. When the latter is asked what she has read (an important question for those men who saw themselves as building the new India), we get the following sentence: "The dumb-founded ornamented bundle made no response." Mrinmayi acquires much of her significance for Apurba and for the story by implicit contrast with this picture of traditional femininity.

Mrinmayi is described as "like an unbroken pony" (p. 911). Does that mean that her eventual submission to marriage is like the breaking of the pony, a story about which we ought perhaps to be somewhat ambivalent? Perhaps—this is certainly a question worth asking students. By way of answer, mention should be made of Apurba's crucial gesture, after the marriage, of taking her to visit her father. On the one hand, this might be described as a re-enactment of patriarchal order. On the other hand, it is what Mrinmayi most desires. And the boat trip on the river, which you might ask the class to pause over, reveals marriage as more interesting and unexpected than life in Mrinmayi's mother-in-law's house: "what freedom what delight!" Yet note that even the visit to her father does not win Mrinmayi's heart. Why not? What finally does? How can students explain the sudden shift in feeling in section 7 (p. 915)? Is it important that the change happens in Apurba's absence? Consider the metaphors offered to explain the transformation: the "mature leaf ready to detach itself," and then the "weapon keen enough to slice a man in two without his feeling a thing." To what extent are we supposed to adopt Mrinmayi's own view of things when she thinks, "Why didn't you make me go?" (p. 916). Why does the story not allow the issue to be settled by letter-writing, as Tagore seems to have prepared, but instead makes the lovers' reconciliation the work of Apurba's mother?

The story's use of shifting narrative point of view might also become an interesting focus of class discussion. The reader at first follows the viewpoint of Apurba. At what point does the point of view switch to Mrinmayi? Why? What happens to the viewpoint at the end of the story?

Volume F

The Twentieth Century



It may be the lack of historical distance as much as the intricate tangle of technical innovation, aesthetic experimentation, revolutionary verve, and obsessed succession of novelty. Or it could be any combination of these that make walking into the classroom with the twentieth century as your teaching material an extraordinary challenge. One of the most compelling questions that teachers of twentieth-century literature may have to disentangle for students is the degree to which all this innovation and its attendant cult for making it new could be a symptom of what we designate with the shorthand term *modernity*. Alternatively, teachers are obliged to explore with students the degree to which modernity itself may be an object of a willful and deliberate project of the writers and artists who lived and worked during the course of the twentieth century. Alert students may well ask, what if these two are not alternative possibilities but function, rather, in indeterminate degrees of simultaneity and combination?

Your class may come to the readings selected for this volume during the second half of a yearlong course that has already examined the historical antecedents of the century. Or your students may take up this volume in the context of a course on modernity, or on the twentieth century as a period in the life of literary culture that recently found closure, at least in terms of the historical calendar. Whatever the case may be, the material itself forces the question of continuity and innovation on the pedagogical occasion. You may inevitably have to countenance the question of the nature of this counterpoint between change and constancy, between disruption and permanence, or between tradition and rebellion. As we see from the century's very first declarations that referred to themselves as "manifestos," the whole twentieth century evolved, with almost predictable continuity, to be the century of rebellion, a time of rebels with a cause, even when they claimed to have none. The relationship of espoused or denied causes to the claims of those who espoused or denied them is itself a compelling question that students might anticipate in the teaching of the materials in this volume.

The twentieth century is defined not only by local and individual self-interruptions. By virtue of scientific, political, and technological transformations, the century is also marked by interpersonal, translocal, transcontinental, and international disruptions. These dislocations have their correlative manifestations in the literary cultures of the century, as deliberate aesthetic experiments and innovations and, also, as inevitable outcomes of altered technical capabilities that overtake

everyday practices of composing, producing, and distributing literature. Literacies across languages and cultures, translations of specific works and of cultural practices, economic linkages, and connectivity through revolutions in communications have brought about changes not only in reading literature but also in making literature and in defining what literature is. The issues raised by these disruptions become the subject of literature itself, as with poetry that deals with the writing of poetry, or prose works that have come to be known as *meta-narratives*, that is, narrations that tell the story of their own making in the writing or in the telling.

While such self-reflective awareness has always been part of literary traditions, the particular ways in which such self-confrontations occur become most revealing about the specificity of literary cultures and their historical contexts. The present *Anthology* gives you ample opportunity to explore these phenomena and their multiple significances through the numerous examples from divergent and interlinked cultural contexts. There is, then, a very rich conversation going on here that you and your class can walk into at any point of entry and become part of the colloquy. The ratio between observation and participation will obviously depend on the particular constellation of students, on your pedagogical goals, and on the level of literacy of the readers. The world of these literary works is infinitely pliable; the parameters can be pushed in all sorts of directions, and the level of productive engagement with these works can be calibrated variously at your discretion. As with any human endeavor, the level of reward in the experience is commensurate to the degree that the readers, whether students or teachers, or both together, can rise to the challenge.

While history may judge the twentieth century harshly with regard to its wars, cruelties, and human-induced calamities, the literature of the century may furnish some margin of redemption. This collection of literary output may hopefully assuage somewhat the judgment that the twenty-first century's students will pass on the twentieth. Even more importantly, what the teacher may impart to the new century's students through these works may, hopefully, mitigate the chances of history's repetition in the less felicitous aspects of the twentieth century.

PERSPECTIVES

The Art of the Manifesto

To call the manifesto an art form may be as tendentious as the polemics manifestos themselves tend to engage in. Yet it would be productive for students to appreciate the inherently artistic nature of the manifesto. When we speak of a manifesto as an art form or as an artistic genre, we do so because of the internal contradictions that characterize so ardent a form of expression. The irony resides in the manifesto's earnestness and in the self-conviction of those who make such proclamations. Often believed to be literal expressions of their authors' emphatic statements, manifestos can and, in fact, should be read as figurative language, like any

literary expression, precisely because they mean more than they say, even if those making such proclamations do not mean for them to say as much.

The most basic paradox that turns a manifesto from the literal into the figurative is the fact that the manifesto intends to be a break and ends up being a link. It aims to be a breach between past and present but ends up as a bridge from the past to the future and back. In the case of the manifestos presented in the *Anthology*, the student can read their declarations of a new beginning that, despite its claims, emerges as the latest step or chapter in a long tradition. The manifesto is the turning over of a new leaf to start a new book that proves to be just as much a last page in a book it would close shut. The Futurists end by manifesting this ironic relationship to the past, as much as the Surrealists do with regard to the real. The revolutionaries end by revolving through the past, and the cannibalists are sustained by what they devour, ultimately confirming the old saw that you are what you eat. In terms of time, in terms of motion, and in terms of the metabolic, the ultimatum, which is the manifesto, paradoxically would like to be a new history's first instance but also ends by being its last word. Like all movements that would see themselves as unique in time, the very uniqueness they seek leaves them suspended while teachers and students debate whether that point in time is the end or the beginning of something, or whether it might be both at once. In the classroom, your reward may well lie in eliciting how such instances are the end and by virtue of what they may be beginning. Read as anthologized objects, of course, these manifestos are historically dense, sufficiently so to be collectible in an anthology. Inasmuch as they embody both what came before them and what subsequently issued from them, they might not make the teacher's task any easier, but they certainly provide ample evidentiary material for exploring their status in history and the continuity of literary traditions as they lurch through cultures' leaps and lapses.



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti

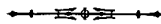
In the Romance languages there is a suggestive resonance between the noun *manifesto* and the verb *to manifest*. A *manifestación* in Spanish, *manifestation* in French, or *manifestazione* in Italian is a public event, a protest, a political demonstration, and a spectacle. It's a "happening," usually staged, aimed to make a point or make evident an agenda or program. Marinetti was a master at staging the *manifestazione*, and he did so in more than one language simultaneously, Italian and French in the case of the Futurist Manifesto.

The text of the Futurist Manifesto is in two parts, the "foundation," or circumstances, and the declaration. The staged circumstances are as significant as the declared principles. The setting identifies the kind of space and the particular time appropriate for the art of the future. The time is early morning and the setting is the space of the city bustling with technology and industry. It is a world in frenzy, engineered, artificial, constructed, huge, fast, noisy, furious, smelly, impatient, irra-

tional, and rude. The present and future time of Futurism as portrayed here is decidedly apocalyptic. The announced new time and new world vibrate with unprecedented energy and revolutionary change. Viewed in retrospect, the 1909 Manifesto is one of the most accurate prophecies of the twentieth century. It is expressed with prophetic urgency and apocalyptic impatience. As today's students look back at the recently concluded twentieth century, they could consider just how visionary Marinetti's Manifesto really was. They may well have some unique insight into the brazenness of the tone, the impatience with the past, the relationship of nature to technology and industry, and the glorification of what we now identify as environmental destruction. The counterpoint between destruction and construction, the undoing of the past as foundation for the creation of a future, not only resonates with prophecy but also echoes mythologies of remaking the world and delivering humanity. Prometheus and Lucifer may be invoked as precedents for the enterprise Marinetti sets for his Futurist generation of rebels with a cause.

Each of the declared principles of the "Manifesto of Futurism" can be read as a step, a precipitous step, in the project of rebellion and innovation. Students should easily identify agony, or contest, and victory, including the speed with which even the statue to the Victory of Samothrace, the goddess Nike, is superseded by the Futurist speed demons. Today's students could easily read this in the swoosh sign on their shirt or shoes. The eleven principles declared by the Manifesto can serve in turn as points of discussion of twentieth-century history as it evolved technologically, industrially, environmentally, and politically. It might prove productive to explore the emancipatory verve of these declarations that would overthrow the past and start the new century with a clean slate. It might prove just as instructive to read some of these declarations in terms of their less happy political consequences, since it is the same verve and energy that produced numerous revolutions, two world wars, multiple local wars, millions of casualties, the ravages of the Holocaust, and the Cold War. Marinetti himself gravitated progressively toward fascism.

Students might find it interesting to engage the question of sacking museums and archives, which the Futurists see as equivalent to cemeteries, in light of the Taliban's destruction of the monumental Buddhas in Afghanistan, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and of Iraq by the most advanced technologies of war, the environmental depredations that ensued, and the plundering of the national museum in Baghdad. A comparative discussion of the prophetic nature of the Futurist Manifesto for the twentieth century and the way in which the twenty-first century has begun may interest students as well.



Tristan Tzara

Ten years, a world war, and vast ideological and aesthetic differences separate Tzara's "Unpretentious Proclamation" from Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto, and one of the most important tasks in teaching the two texts is to have students grasp

clearly what these differences are. While Marinetti's manifesto emphasizes the newness of its form and ideas, Tzara clearly writes out of an awareness that the manifesto itself has already become an established tradition (the *artistic* manifesto, that is—the *political* manifesto had of course had a long prehistory in the nineteenth century already). As Tzara mocks conventional notions of art, he also at the same time parodies what had by 1919 become the established forms of the avant-garde manifesto: its grand declarations about life, culture, and art; its proselytizing impulse; its desire to shock and irritate the bourgeois audience; and even the tendency to self-contradiction that is already evident in Marinetti. The result is a curiously hybrid text, both manifesto and meta- or anti-manifesto: a manifesto that does spell out a certain aesthetic project but does so in the midst of so much nonsense, play, and parody that it's very difficult to be sure what Tzara wants his audience to take seriously and what as a joke.

Tzara the Dadaist shares with Marinetti the Futurist and the other avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century the conviction that art as it has come to form part of Western middle-class culture is bankrupt. But while Marinetti still inveighs against specific forms of art that he considers obsolete, for Tzara it is the notion of art itself as an idea and an institution that becomes suspect. It is not a particular style of art or group of artists that Tzara wants to do away with, but the very notion of art as a form of pursuit that is separated from the practices of everyday life; as a consequence, as German theorist Peter Bürger has pointed out in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974), Dada did not give rise to any distinctive style of its own, as did Futurism. If it is the fundamental concept of art itself that is being put in question, a mere revision of style will clearly not make any substantial difference, and this is why Dadaist works and texts often hover on the border of the nonsensical and the unintelligible.

They are also often quite funny, and this sense of humor distinguishes Marinetti and Tzara on one side from the seriousness of Breton and Loy on the other. With regard to both Marinetti and Tzara, it's interesting to discuss with the students what they did or did not find funny, which passages were meant humorously by the authors and which have become so only due to the passage of time. How does the obvious humor in a manifesto affect our sense of how important its message is? To what extent does the humor in Tzara's text support or detract from his sense that art itself should be treated with less respect and more innovation?

One of the most striking aspects of Tzara's manifesto is its typography, and it would be very useful to discuss with the students what the point of the unorthodox combination of font sizes and styles is meant to accomplish. If you have computer access in the classroom, it would be interesting to change the type fonts in various ways so as to ask students what difference it might make: Is "Unpretentious Proclamation" the same text when typeset in uniform and linear font? What about putting different passages in bold, or making large words smaller? As you explore these possibilities with students, you can slowly guide them to an understanding of how the play with typography foregrounds the medium of print and draws the reader's attention to the way in which the material shape of a text guides our understanding of it. But,

since this manifesto was first performed rather than read, it is also important to discuss the ambiguous nature of the typographical experiment here: Is the printed appearance of different words meant to give a clue as to their volume and intonation, that is, is the printed text a score for the oral performance (e.g., are words in large font size meant to be screamed and those in small print whispered)? Or does it in a different context function as a bridge between text and image for the reader?

It is easy to move from a text such as Tzara's to the many modernist and avant-garde artworks that integrate text and image, from the synthetic cubism of Picasso and Braque to the collages of Kurt Schwitters. If there is enough classroom time, such visual illustrations might help students understand the fluid boundaries between performance, text, and image in the art and literature of the early twentieth century. The music and poetry of John Cage from the later twentieth century also offers itself as a good example of how the Dadaist legacy has been carried forward over several decades and exerted a crucial influence, especially in music, from the 1960s on.



André Breton

When Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* was published on November 4, 1899 (the publisher rounded off the publication date to 1900), a window was opened to the twentieth century through which any number of scientific and artistic/literary movements would survey human nature. For the Surrealists, Freud's treatise became the handbook for describing the processes and goals of the movement; hence Breton's acknowledgment, in the first paragraph of the Surrealist Manifesto, of Freud for the new era of human understanding. Breton foregrounds the importance of the imagination, of the unconscious, of dreams, and of those states of human life that are not subject to the prior strictures of rationality and what he calls "the reign of logic." It is important for students to understand that Breton and his fellow artists are not illogical, anti-reason, or disorderly. What Breton is advocating here is the capturing of the human mind "unawares," recovering, as he says, what prior logic and rationality prohibit from surfacing in human consciousness and creativity and, once recovered, and only then, "submit them, should the occasion arise, to the control of reason." Breton and his colleagues feel that a disproportionate importance has been attached to "waking moments" and not sufficient attention paid to those moments that may be more accurately defining and more emancipatory of human creativity, namely, the dreams and subconscious states of human existence.

Dreams have their own organization (see Section 1, p. 29) and continuity, usually edited and reorganized by memory and conscious will. With wry irony, Breton addresses the "sleeping logicians" and philosophers, whose wakeful slumber, he implies, is out of touch with the reality of human consciousness and life's material. In Section 2, Breton would like to make a gift of the possibilities of the dream to "the waking state." This, clearly, is what he sees as the role of art and of the

artists as liberating of human life from the editorial conventions and censoring mechanisms of rationality. The Surrealist program is optimistic that the contradictions between conscious reason and unconscious potential as manifested in dreams will be resolved, once the capabilities of the artist to articulate what is not pre-censored is made possible. Hence, Breton's example from his own experience and from experiments with his fellow poet Philippe Soupault in exploring the possibilities of automatic writing that is unmediated by reason and technical decisions. Breton refers to this process as "pure expression," or "the new mode" of artistic production code-named Surrealism. The definitions offered in this document continue to be the dictionary definitions of the movement.

The programmatic declarations of the supplement to the original Manifesto, the Declaration of January 27, 1925, intended as a corrective to the way critics and literary scholars mistook the original Surrealist program, have ended up being institutionalized as literary procedures, despite their counter-literary proclamations. It would be instructive for students to explore how the Revolution proclaimed in this Manifesto has indeed turned into the literary conventions we now identify with self-reflexive writing, experimentation, and perpetual renewal.



Mina Loy

Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" revolves around concerns about gender relations that are likely to seem quite familiar to most college students today, unlike some of the issues that dominate other manifestos. Indeed, students may be startled to find that Loy not only pronounces what are now familiar revindications of women's rights but already reacts to existing feminist thought. Her call to reject the idea of mere "equal treatment" in favor of an emphasis on what is specific and different about women quite strikingly anticipates discussions between first- and second-wave feminists in the later twentieth century: between those who saw the road toward women's emancipation in their being treated just like men, and those who emphasized women's difference and the importance of not assimilating women's identity to men's. College-age students today quite often believe mistakenly that women's rights have only become a matter of public debate very recently, from the 1960s onward. Loy's manifesto will come as a perhaps surprising reminder that the idea of women's emancipation is much older than that. To set up the historical background out of which Loy writes, it is probably necessary to give students some idea about the state of public debate on female emancipation in the early twentieth century—even though in this context, it is also noteworthy that Loy does not engage with the suffragette movement and women's political rights, which constituted one focus of the public debate then.

Instead of political, legal, or financial rights, Loy mostly foregrounds issues of marriage, sexuality, and maternity that have traditionally been considered "women's issues." Her pronouncements on these questions echo Marinetti's Futurist texts in their radicalism, and it's worth emphasizing to students that Loy knew Marinetti and

was well familiar with the Futurist movement; in many ways, this manifesto is her attempt to translate the dynamism and energy of the manifesto genre to a set of concerns that was for the most part ignored by the dominantly male avant-garde groups of Western Europe. Marinetti, of course, is usually associated with a rather virulent kind of antifeminism, which is quite overt in some of his better-known texts. Yet it is also worth noting that Marinetti and Loy actually agree to some extent in their critique of marriage as an outdated bourgeois institution, and Marinetti writes in one of his texts in almost feminist terms about women's need to be freed from its shackles. Much of the pedagogical task in dealing with Loy's manifesto therefore consists of disentangling the interlaced movements of rebellion and adaptation in her text: the use of discourses and ideas that already existed in the revolutionary movements of her day, and the attempt to subvert some of these discourses at the same time.

Loy's manifesto lacks the sense of humor, the irony, and the penchant for self-contradiction that are so evident in Marinetti, yet a discussion of her proposals can easily be made to amuse as well as engage students. Most of them will have no trouble relating to Loy's critique of a social system in which men are accorded value in terms of their work but women only in terms of their marriage, and they will most likely find her call to strip sexuality of any connotation of impurity unproblematic. Her call to grant all women the right to maternity may strike students as more ambivalent, not only because it once more places great emphasis on motherhood as an important part of feminine identity but also because it is associated with ideas from the realm of eugenics and innate superiority in her rhetoric. The idea that the genetic stock of a community could be improved over the long run by encouraging its "best" members to breed most was of course not uncommon at the time (even as well-reputed a scholar as Margaret Mead endorsed it), and eugenics did not yet have the negative political connotations it acquired during the Nazi period, when it was used to legitimate programs for disabling "undesirable" citizens from procreating. But precisely for this reason, Loy's appeal to this rhetoric will need to be contextualized and explained to students, as well as her use of the term "race"—in her day, a much more diffuse concept than it is in present-day North America, whose meaning could range from "species" ("the human race") to "nation" ("the Italian race") and "ethnicity." Her suggestion that all women be surgically deflowered during puberty as a matter of public policy will seem both absurd and funny to students—but again, it may be worth spending some time discussing why this is so, and why Loy would bother to make this suggestion along with other much more practicable and seemingly reasonable proposals.

The style and typography of Loy's manifesto, finally, also deserves some attention. Obviously, Loy's use of typographical experiment is much more limited than Tristan Tzara's, and the question is how much it contributes to the effect of her manifesto: in her as well as Tzara's case, you may want to discuss with students to what extent the play with type is mere gimmickry, and to what extent it actually fulfills a serious function in conveying the substance of their arguments. In Loy's case, punctuation may in the end prove the more interesting part of the experimentation: Her use of dashes to replace most other kinds of punctuation, which

evokes faint echoes of both Emily Dickinson and Gertrude Stein, contrasts strikingly with the exclamation marks so common in other avant-garde manifestos. The fluidity and indeterminacy it introduces into a kind of text that is usually assertive, didactic, and declamatory is well worth a discussion with the students.



Yokomitsu Riichi

Yokomitsu's manifesto will without doubt be the hardest piece for students to read and understand among the ones in this section. When you teach this text in conjunction with the other manifestos, it may be most important to give students a sense of how the form and substance of Yokomitsu's manifesto compare to those from the European and Latin American traditions. In this comparison, the difficulty itself is a marker of style: Yokomitsu's argument is an earnest and scholarly one, meant to draw fine distinctions and to persuade the reader (in this case, unquestionably the reader, since this is not a text that could possibly be performed orally) in a manner quite unlike the stories and declamations of Marinetti or the linguistic and typographic somersaults of Tzara. But it's probably necessary to keep students from drawing any hasty conclusions about Western and Eastern avant-gardes from this fact: Japan had its own versions of Dadaism and Futurism in the 1920s, and some manifestos, such as Takahashi Shinkichi's "Assertion Is Dadaist" (1923), are much more similar to the European counterparts than is Yokomitsu's New Sensationalist manifesto.

Once such issues of genre and form have been discussed, students can begin to grapple with the substance of Yokomitsu's argument, and this will obviously require a close reading of at least some passages in this rather dense philosophical text. As it is unlikely that any of the students will have any knowledge of the tradition that Yokomitsu aspires to overcome or the specific works it had produced, it might be easiest to ask them for similarities and differences that they perceive with the aesthetic agenda of some of the European and Latin American avant-gardistes. Certainly, the search for a new literary style that would convey the essence of things through a shock of intuition does have affinities with Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis's imagism and vorticism, as well as with Marinetti and Tzara's dissatisfaction with established styles of literary expression. But the argument about how direct apprehension intermeshes with, on one hand, the writer's consciousness and, on the other, with linguistic representation in a literary text is of course much more differentiated and nuanced in its philosophical sophistication than anything that is offered to the audience in the other manifestos.

The more general question that arises out of the comparison of Yokomitsu's manifesto with the others is how he perceives cultural tradition and history in its relation to the present. While Yokomitsu is clearly dissatisfied with the conventions that he finds (quite a few of them not really very old ones, but the conventions of the Japanese novel as they had established themselves in the late nineteenth century), there is nothing in his rhetoric to suggest the wholesale

iconoclastic onslaught on literature, culture, and its institutions that leaps to the eye in most of the other selections in this section. The discussion might return, then, to the general question, already mentioned earlier, how the manifesto functions as both break and bridge in the chain of cultural transmission.



Oswald de Andrade

The term *cannibalism* entered the English language through such works as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and their misappropriation of the term *Carib*, which referred to the indigenous peoples of the island chain of the Caribbean, the site of Europe's first encounter with the transatlantic hemisphere. By the beginning of the twentieth century, and certainly as part of the avant-garde movements of American modernism, *cannibal* and *cannibalization* underwent a cultural reevaluation. The connotations given the terms now served the new generation of writers, in Oswald de Andrade's case those who came out of modernist movements such as Brazil's 1922 "Week of Modern Art," a lexical instrument with which to come to terms with the European cultural legacy in the New World. The modernists identified themselves with Shakespeare's Caliban and, in that role, identified their appropriation and accommodation of Europe's cultural patrimony in graphic terms of ingestion, metabolization, and transformation. Consumption became a cultural alchemy by which metropolitan, that is, European influences were subjected to the fire of the American experience, with a specific outcome identified as American culture. Andrade proclaims this process with straight-faced irony and solemn iconoclasm, certainly with a great deal more humor than one finds in the manifestos of the Futurists and the Surrealists.

A discussion of the Cannibalist Manifesto might begin with the proverbial truth, "you are what you eat." But, unless one is feeding on oneself, what is the nature of self-identity when what one eats is not oneself but somebody else? Andrade sets us up for this sort of discussion by stringing a series of proclamations, now paradoxical, now ironic, but invariably founded on New World history and its cultural way stations, in his native Brazil particularly. While the outcome of this metabolic cultural process may be specifically American, students should be alert to the first two proclamations, namely, that cannibalism alone is the sole universal commonality among humans.

This, clearly, can be a point of departure for discussion, a counterpoint to the institutional modes of socialization, acculturation, and establishment of conventions that are addressed in the declarations that follow, whether these be clothing, laws, or catechisms. The Cannibalist Manifesto encodes this reversal through what Freud had identified in his 1913 treatise *Totem and Taboo* as a movement from the authority of norms to the stricture of prohibitions. Andrade's Manifesto would have American culture elevate all that's prohibited into the norm, instead.

A series of discussion topics might issue from the Manifesto's claim that all human societies are bound by cannibalism. If cannibalism is indeed the only com-

monality among humans, the compelling question might then be, where does one, or one's culture, fit on the food chain? And does this common fate not leave one's own self and one's culture susceptible to being consumed by someone else? While Andrade claims that his culture is exceptional and unlike the European culture it has made possible through cannibalization, is Brazil's own culture, or American culture generally, immune to the cannibalism that binds all humanity in a common fate? How does Andrade exempt Brazilian culture from the fate that binds all other human cultures? Is Andrade being inconsistent in his logic, or does he succeed in rejecting the rationality that would have him be logical and logically consistent in his proclamations?

The dateline of the Manifesto, "In Piratininga, in the 374th Year of the Swallowing of Bishop Sardinha," dates the birth of Brazilian culture from the historical event of Bishop Sardinha's killing and cannibalization in 1556 by the Indians of the region that is now São Paulo. Thus, Andrade forces the interesting question students of New World culture might explore: To what degree is the historical record of Brazil, and of the New World in general, a record of cannibalization of the indigenous cultures by the European conquerors, and vice versa, and a correlative of the Cannibalist Manifesto?



André Breton, Leon Trotsky, and Diego Rivera

When three of the most intense people of the twentieth century hit the road together and engage in protracted conversation, the air is bound to be electrified. The Manifesto advocating the founding of the International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art is symptomatic of their urgency and of a time that may bear some comparison to our own twenty-first-century urgencies at this moment. You might begin the discussion by reviewing what dangers were so imminent in 1938 that they gave such a feeling of crisis to these intellectuals and what parallels and differences might exist between their time and ours.

The twentieth century began with tremendous optimism and almost blind faith in humanity's capacity to build a New World, to construct a new political order, and to create a revolutionary in the service of humanity and its future. Breton, Trotsky, and Rivera were among the most optimistic in this regard. How does this optimism manifest itself here? How is the reality of historical events reflected in this road-trip conversation and its resultant Manifesto? How are the enthusiasm and sense of exhilaration that launched the century and the artistic and political careers of these intellectuals still evident in the Manifesto? You might ask students to identify current public intellectuals analogous to these three and compare the nature of public discourse in our time to theirs.

What is the relationship of art to public life as it emerges in this Manifesto? What is the nature of this relationship between art and civil society in our own time, and how does this compare to the relationship between art and social life im-

plicit in the Manifesto? What is the social role of the artist or writer as depicted by the Manifesto, and what role does the writer or artist play in today's society? How might any similarities and/or differences be explained? Does the university and its students and professors have an implicit role in the Manifesto, and how does this compare with the role today's university community might have in society? What is the scope of the concerns expressed by the Manifesto? What are the geographical parameters of these concerns? Are there any parallels between the internationalism of these artists' scope and today's forms of globalization?

Taught as the record of a road-trip by three intensely committed intellectuals at a watershed historical moment, the Manifesto may well resonate with the concerns of today's students. Whether in harmony or in dissonance, the parallels and divergences between then and now have much promise for an eminently teachable occasion.

Joseph Conrad

In both formal and thematic terms, Conrad is an ideal author to lead off a discussion of the twentieth century. His Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* is an artistic manifesto that links well with the manifestos with which this volume of the *Anthology* begins, introducing students to issues of vision and the artist's construction of reality that will figure prominently in *Heart of Darkness*. Here the key question to explore with students is: In what ways does Conrad's novella illustrate the emphases of the Preface-manifesto, and to what extent does it complicate them to the point of undercutting them entirely? If you invite students as they read to underline each instance of language of vision, sight, and light, they'll find them again and again on every page, most often fading into fog, darkness, and impenetrable obscurity. Just what does Conrad expect us to see as Marlow fades before his listeners' eyes aboard the *Nellie*?

Do we see Africa, or do we only see Marlow's hallucination of a dark night of the soul, projected outward? Do we see the essential corruption of European imperialism, or more ambivalently the failings of an imperialism gone wrong, or are we being shown a primitivism so unrestrained and unredeemable that Conrad reinforces the racist bases of imperialism even as he criticizes its goals and methods? This last is the viewpoint advanced by the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, whose *Things Fall Apart* figures prominently later in this volume of the *Anthology* (p. 768) and can be read as Achebe's effort to give the other side of the imperial story. He set out his case against Conrad in a lecture delivered in 1975 and published in 1977 under the title "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." Anthologies now sometimes actually include Achebe's essay along with *Heart of Darkness*. We've chosen not to do this, on the grounds that we don't pair works with essays directly attacking them, but Achebe's influential essay provides a good opening for discussion in class. A set of selections from Achebe's essay appears on page 216, convenient for photocopying and handing out.

A fascinating follow-up to Achebe's article can be found in an interview with Achebe by the black Caribbean novelist Caryl Philips, who says that he's never read

Conrad's novella as a racist work. He goes to see Achebe and they discuss the issues in detail. (The interview, published by the *Guardian Review* on February 22, 2003, under the title "Out of Africa," can be found on the *Guardian's* Website at <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,900102,00.html>.) In the interview, Philips makes the point that it's unfair to assess Conrad by contemporary standards: "But is it not ridiculous to demand of Conrad that he imagine an African humanity that is totally out of line with both the times in which he was living and the larger purpose of his novel? In his lecture, even Achebe wistfully concedes that the novel reflects 'the dominant image of Africa in the western imagination.'" To this, Achebe replies that there were some Europeans in Conrad's day who did see beyond that dominant image, and he argues that "you cannot compromise my humanity in order that you explore your own ambiguity. I cannot accept that. My humanity is not to be debated, nor is it to be used simply to illustrate European problems."

One way into this debate is to historicize Achebe's own perspective, crystallized in the 1940s and 1950s as he began to find himself as a writer, changing his name to Chinua from his Anglophilic baptismal name, Albert. As late as the mid-1970s when he delivered and published his lecture, Conrad's novella was widely read as the story of Kurtz's (and Marlow's) psychic struggles. To the extent that the book was seen in political terms, it was celebrated as a denunciation of the European imperial project, and few European or American critics gave much thought to Conrad's representations of actual Africans. At the very least, Achebe's lecture was an important corrective to this glossing over the text's treatment of Africa and the African people who serve to provide so threatening a backdrop for the Europeans' adventures. Even so, as Philips indicates, Achebe's bracing critique need not be the only optic through which to read the novel. One way into the novel is to invite students to look in detail at the narrative ambiguities that Achebe touches on but doesn't finally take seriously: Why *does* Conrad wrap Marlow's story inside the frame-tale of an anonymous narrator aboard the *Nellie*? How closely are we to identify Conrad and Marlow? Just what horrors are evoked in Kurtz's famous last words?

If students trace the imagery of light and dark through the novella, as suggested above, they'll find that Marlow himself is wrapped in growing obscurity even as he wrongly supposes of his listeners that "you fellows see more than I could then" (p. 79). Mocking Kurtz and the other Company employees for setting up ivory as an idol to worship, Marlow sets himself in the pose of a Buddha, bringing enlightenment to his benighted friends, in "the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower" (p. 63, an image repeated at the very end of the story, p. 115). Conrad is doing something tricky with his hero, who thinks of himself as some kind of Humphrey Bogart figure but who is shown rather to have the illusion that he's lost all his illusions.

Marlow's residual imperial machismo is subtly satirized throughout the novella, beginning with his early embarrassment that "I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work—to get a job. Heavens!" (p. 65). At the end, when he goes to see

(continued on page 203)

Chinua Achebe
*Selections from "An Image of Africa:
 Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'" (1977)*

Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as "the other world," the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. . . . It is clearly not part of Conrad's purpose to confer language on the "rudimentary souls" of Africa. In place of speech they made "a violent babble of uncouth sounds." They "exchanged short grunting phrases" even among themselves. But most of the time they were too busy with their frenzy. . . .

It might be contended, of course, that the attitude to the African in *Heart of Darkness* is not Conrad's but that of his fictional narrator, Marlow, and that far from endorsing it Conrad might indeed be holding it up to irony and criticism. Certainly Conrad appears to go to considerable pains to set up layers of insulation between himself and the moral universe of his story. He has, for example, a narrator behind a narrator. The primary narrator is Marlow but his account is given to us through the filter of a second, shadowy person. But if Conrad's intention is to draw a cordon sanitaire between himself and the moral and psychological *malaise* of his narrator his care seems to me totally wasted because he neglects to hint, clearly and adequately, at an alternative frame of reference by which we may judge the actions and opinions of his characters. It would not have been beyond Conrad's power to make that provision if he had thought it necessary. Conrad seems to me to approve of Marlow, with only minor reservations—a fact reinforced by the similarities between their two careers.

Marlow comes through to us not only as a witness of truth, but one holding those advanced and humane views appropriate to the English liberal tradition which required all Englishmen of decency to be deeply shocked by atrocities in Bulgaria or the Congo of King Leopold of the Belgians or wherever. . . .

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked. Students of *Heart of Darkness* will often tell you that Conrad is concerned not so much with Africa as with the deterioration of one European mind caused by solitude and sickness. They will point out to you that Conrad is, if anything, less charitable to the Europeans in the story than he is to the natives, that the point of the story is to ridicule Europe's civilizing mission in Africa. A Conrad student informed me in Scotland that Africa is merely a setting for the disintegration of the mind of Mr Kurtz.

Which is partly the point. Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as a human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the breakup of one petty European mind? But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot.

(continued from page 201)

Kurtz's Intended and tells her the "lie" that Kurtz said her name at the end, he is far from the commanding figure of bitterly disillusioned knowledge. Indeed, he seems to be feminized, weak and shrinking from the power of the Intended's searching inquiry: "I felt like a chill grip on my chest. 'Don't,' I said in a muffled voice" (p. 114). Here Marlow sounds more like the victim of a rape attempt than like the voice of authority, and having forced from him exactly what she wants to hear, the Intended gives a cry of triumph and dismisses him.

The ambiguities of Marlow's situation are compounded by the outer frame of the self-satisfied good fellows aboard the *Nellie*, most notably the unnamed narrator, who slyly mocks Marlow even as he retails a purer form of imperial romance. Through these shifting frames, Conrad is parodying the imperialist discourse amply seen in the Resonance following the novella, Henry Morton Stanley's astonishing speech to the Manchester weavers (pp. 117–121), which combines the highest moral rhetoric with pounds-and-shillings calculations of how much money the weavers will make if they can sell wedding dresses and burial clothes to the Congolese. Conrad's use of a stereotyped Africa contrasts sharply with his devastating portrayal of the ideology and the effects of European imperialism. King Leopold's turning the Congo into a private, for-profit colony epitomizes, for Conrad, the essence of all imperial adventurism, from Roman times onward: Marlow's opening evocation of Roman Britain makes this point clearly (p. 63). Marlow himself tries to see imperialism as redeemed either by "the idea" behind it or, more modestly, by the concrete practicalities of manly work, but the novella progressively undercuts both rationales, in the increasing absurdity of the ideas everyone advances and the ultimate viciousness of Kurtz's scrawl across the bottom of his essay on civilization, and through the increasingly grim parody of work itself, from the sunken river boat steamer to the planting of skulls on stakes around Kurtz's compound. Henry Morton Stanley's seductive mix of high moral purpose and commercial practicality is deconstructed from the ground up and from the head down.

The applause punctuating Stanley's speech and the pompous commendations by his hosts at its end provide a further contrast for the uneasy relations of speaker and listener throughout *Heart of Darkness*: Kurtz becoming reduced to his resonant, eerie voice before a horrified, entranced Marlow; the rambling monologues of the string of half-insane characters Marlow encounters on his journey upriver; Marlow's own faltering efforts to speak to the Intended and then to his friends aboard the *Nellie*, famously described by the anonymous narrator as a yarn whose meaning "was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze" (p. 63). These faltering yet hypnotic efforts at speech can be compared to the many instances of writing found throughout the novella, from the enticing, mysterious maps that first attract the young Charlie Marlow to Africa (p. 64), to the letters delivered to dying men on a passing ship (p. 69), to Kurtz's high-toned report to the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs (p. 95), to the misplaced nautical manual with its marginal notes in Russian charac-

ters that Marlow mistakes for a secret code (p. 98), and beyond. All of these texts and speeches are carried within the enveloping haze of Conrad's own darkly lyrical narration, a prose text centered on a speech inside a speech inside a speech.

One way to think of Achebe's critique is as reflecting the impatience of a realist novelist with such modernist ambiguities. Conrad forces us to experience Africa through Marlow's eyes, in a kind of literary Impressionism, and at the same time his destabilizing of Marlow's narrative authority deeply undercuts any simple endorsement of the racial stereotyping in which Marlow as well as Kurtz so often indulge. As the magnetic center of the story, Kurtz is both Marlow's great opponent and his uncanny alter ego; and with "all Europe" having gone into his making, he is ours as well. "We" are construed as European in this context, and in his interview with Achebe, Caryl Phillips comes to realize that, as a Caribbean raised in Europe, he'd never found it difficult to accept this positioning as he read the novel, while for an African like Achebe this just wouldn't be an acceptable role to play. Conrad works with the racist stereotypes of Africa in the Europe of his day, not to deconstruct them as Achebe and later novelists will do, but to turn them against the European side of the encounter, showing deep similarities between European self and supposed African Other. Marlow's last illusion, in fact, may be that he told a lie to the Intended at all: far more closely tied to Kurtz and his attitudes than he thinks himself to be, he fails to see how aptly "the horror" really names the Intended, his unnamed friends aboard the *Nellie*, and the inextricable mix of civilization and barbarism in his own soul.

Premchand

Students can readily appreciate the dynamics of this modern meditation on the theme of the ant and the grasshopper: the solemn, self-important older brother who studies all the time but gets nowhere, versus the smart-alecky younger sibling who spends his time at play but nonetheless inexorably gains on his brother. Like many modern works, Premchand's story stages a reversal of the old pattern it employs. Far from starving when winter comes, the grasshopper-like younger brother goes from strength to strength, and the story unfolds the shifting power relations as he begins to catch up to his brother. This is clear by the end of the first part of the story; why then add Part 2? Part 2 shifts the focus increasingly to the older brother, and at the end, Premchand surprises us with a second reversal: Instead of staging the triumph of one brother over the other, the story ends with a new harmony between them, based on a moment comparable to a Joycean "epiphany," in which the younger brother realizes his lasting debt to his older sibling and at the same moment the older brother breaks out of his self-imposed shell to take part in the kite-flying.

This story can be discussed in terms of the wider social frame it builds on. This is a dual frame, counterpointing British imperial education with Indian fam-

ily values. You can ask students to consider just what Premchand wants us to think of the knowledge the colonial system is striving to impart: How important is it for young boys in India to know which King Henry was which? This may well seem an absurd imposition of foreign history, but what of the brother's next example of pointless learning, geometry? Is the correct analysis of a triangle really as random as the order in which one eats rice, lentils, and bread (p. 125), or is the older brother trying to justify his own incapacity? Already the first page of the story slyly raises a similar doubt: Is the older brother really a model of devoted studiousness, or is he in fact a dreamer who can never focus on his work and spends his time doodling and making up nonsense words?

The British colonial system has separated the boys from their parents: They are living in a youth hostel, sent from their parents' village to a large town to attend school. As the story develops, we gain increasing sympathy for the pompous, thick-headed older brother, whose hyper-studiousness is shown to result in part from his own anxiety at being thrust into a quasi-parental role as his young brother's guardian at the hostel. As he says at the end, "If I go off the track myself then how can I watch out for you? That's my responsibility." The brothers' stories reveal the ongoing interdependence of old and new, of Indian and foreign culture, symbolized in the lasting ties of younger to older generations: the headmaster who still needs his mother to manage his house, the brothers' own parents, still the moral center of their lives despite their limited formal schooling. In only a few pages, Premchand beautifully negotiates the intertwined cultural and familial tensions that swirl around as simple a decision as going out to fly a kite.

Lu Xun

As C.T. Hsia observed some time ago, many Chinese intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century shared an "obsessive concern with China as a nation afflicted with a spiritual disease and therefore unable to strengthen itself or change its ways of inhumanity" (*A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 1971, pp. 533–534). Drawing upon a long-established conviction in the culture about the utility of writing as a tool for social change and inspired by the influence of modern Western reformers, Lu Xun was the first of many in his generation to seek a cure for these ills through new forms of vernacular literature that sought to be accessible to a wider audience. He was also one of the first to abandon the project in despair, frustrated by the inability of intellectuals like himself to bridge what appeared to be a yawning chasm separating them from the downtrodden masses whom they sought to serve and to fulfill their mission of cultural change.

The preface to Lu Xun's first effort at effecting social change through literature, his collection of short stories entitled *A Call to Arms*, conveys the uncertainties of the project evident to him from the beginning. It should be clear to both you and your students how, even from the start, his conviction as to the efficacy of

his stories as an agent for change was an extremely qualified one. But the justly famous parable of the iron house suggests how he could not but attempt to overcome that ambivalence.

As the opening salvo in that effort, “A Madman’s Diary” provides an unflinching glimpse of the magnitude of the problem. As Theodore Hutters notes, it is important to pay attention to the complex narrative mode it employs. “The work contains two narrators, an external one who remains undramatized and merely serves to introduce what he says is the diary of an old friend of his, and the internal narrator who is the author of the diary itself” (“Blossoms in the Snow: Lu Xun and the Dilemma of Modern Chinese Literature,” *Modern China* 10.1 [Jan. 1984], p. 61). Indeed, the multiple narrative frames of the story are worth considerable focused discussion. Note how the “madman’s” growing awareness of the evils of society culminates in a horrifying realization of his own complicity in a history of rapaciousness whose justification can be traced to the most ancient and revered texts of the tradition. Pathetic as it is, the concluding advice to “save the children” is, as Hutters notes, “rendered problematically ironic by the depiction of the children in a previous entry” (VIII, p. 136 in the *Anthology*) as sharing the gaze of the cannibalistic adults around them.

An equally powerful irony is lodged in the introduction that frames the narrative. Written in punctilious classical Chinese (as opposed to the vernacular employed in the diary itself), it informs us that the diary-writer has “recovered some time ago and has gone elsewhere to take up an official post” (p. 132). Students should be asked how they, as readers, judge the persecuted narrator, whose understanding of the true nature of society was regarded as paranoid madness. Hutters writes that the reader, knowing of the diary-writer’s recovery,

is confronted with only two alternatives to the madman’s plight: continued total alienation from society or caving in to social pressure, both of which are manifestly unacceptable given the reality the story portrays. The paradoxical process of investing our sympathies in the writer of the diary, even after having been given an objective overview of the writer’s final compromise, mirrors the agonizing reality of the choices for social action—or even the possibilities for significant choice—in the early May Fourth years. (“Blossoms in the Snow,” pp. 61–62)

“A Small Incident,” the second story included in the *Anthology*, reveals where the hopes that Lu Xun could not deny in the Preface to the collection were lodged. Note the contrasting reactions to the plight of the old woman expressed by the first-person educated narrator and the working-class rickshaw puller. The latter’s instinctive compassion and heroic action make him larger than life and literally paralyze the thought-ridden, self-centered narrator. But if, as he declares here, that nobility of the working classes could give him hope, the optimism was short-lived. Beset by doubts about the willingness of his own class to overcome its indebtedness to a corrupt past and about the ability of literature to convey a message of re-

form to the masses, Lu Xun soon abandoned the project of writing short fiction altogether for other forms of social action.

James Joyce

Araby

At the time that Joyce began the stories that became *Dubliners*, he had been writing short sketches he called “epiphanies,” originally a theological term referring to the “showing forth” of God to the world. If you’re teaching this story after having taught Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, your students can compare the ways in which Joyce similarly sets images of shining light (and intellectual or moral enlightenment) against imagery of darkness and even blindness. The subtle pun in the very first line (“North Richmond Street, being blind”) introduces this theme, and a central question is just what, if anything, the young narrator sees and understands as the story progresses and then ends. The almost fetishistic visions of “Mangan’s sister” (never given her own name)—“the soft rope of her hair,” the white border of her petticoat—give way to the encounter with the English shop girls in the darkened bazaar hall. The oriental splendor conjured up for the narrator by the word “Araby” proves to be a tawdry English import, leaving the narrator with a searing vision of futility as he stares into the darkness with burning eyes.

But just what has he seen? Has he achieved a moment of moral clarity, or is he succumbing to petulant self-pity? Do we as readers see more than he does? Joyce intended his stories to represent his country’s “spiritual paralysis”; is this story purely symptomatic or descriptive, or does it get us at all beyond the paralysis it paints? One way to pursue this, in “Araby” and the ensuing *Dubliners* stories presented in the *Anthology*, is to compare Joyce’s own cool, precise narration to the different verbal styles represented in the stories themselves: here, the clipped, minimal lines of actual dialogue spoken by the characters; the uncle’s fatuous recounting of proverbs and snatches of song; the English shop girls’ entirely content-free gossip about some unnamed thing that some unnamed person said. The young narrator’s melodramatic self-assessment at the end is only half the story, whose real force is carried through in the perfect selection of telling details, conveyed by a narrator who doesn’t realize their power: “I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket.”

The Dead

The last, longest, and greatest of the stories in *Dubliners*, “The Dead” leads through a series of tense encounters to its final epiphany, the revelation of Gretta Conroy’s early love affair with Michael Furey. A good way to discuss the story is to have students look at the interplay of conversations and memories throughout the story. The story’s central character, Gabriel Conroy, has disillusioning encounters with three women: the jilted servant Lily, who turns aside his patronizing banter with

the abrupt statement that “the men that is now is only all palaver” (p. 147); the ardent nationalist Miss Ivors, who mocks him as a “West Briton” but then leaves before he can get back at her in his after-dinner speech; and, finally, the climactic encounter with his wife in their darkened hotel room (yet another twilit epiphany).

Vague, troubled memories are interwoven through these present-day encounters, and you can ask students to follow them, from Gabriel’s memory of Lily as a child, nursing a rag doll, through Miss Kate and Miss Julia’s fading memories, to Bartell d’Arcy’s insistence that he can’t remember the words to “The Lass of Aughrim.” This is the song that provokes Gretta’s searing recollection of Michael Furey, short-circuiting Gabriel’s romantic ambitions for the evening and revealing to him his own limitations. Is he himself one of “the dead” the story is about? Or is he shaken out of his self-involvement, brought to a new understanding of his wife and their life together?

Joyce’s own style brilliantly blends the said and the unsaid, the seen and the unseen, cliché and precise description, starting with the opening sentence. You can ask what it means for him to describe Lily as “literally run off her feet,” since “literally” here must really mean “metaphorically.” This is a classic case of what Hugh Kenner has called “the Uncle Charles Principle” in his book *Joyce’s Voices* (1978): We’re given a stock phrase that appears to be the narrator’s own but in fact picks up the language the character might use in conversation or in an interior monologue, represented through free indirect discourse. Joyce weaves into this shopworn, second-hand discourse his own precise, revelatory descriptions, such as of Gabriel taking off his overcoat, whose buttons “slipped with a squeaking noise through the snow-stiffened frieze” while “a cold fragrant air from out-of-doors escaped from crevices and folds” (p. 147). As the story progresses, Joyce moves beyond the “style of scrupulous meanness” that (as he once wrote in a letter) he had employed in *Dubliners*—with “meanness” meaning, first and foremost, a penny-pinching economy suited to Dublin life in his day. The party scene shows a new warmth, and Gabriel’s speech is not merely ridiculous (as speeches in the earlier stories so often are), though it certainly blends many elements that you can ask students to tease out: genuine fondness and good feeling co-exist in Gabriel with vanity and outright hostility, covered over with generous helpings of cliché. The story’s end, though, reaches an eloquence unseen in Joyce’s prior writing, even as we are left to ponder the weight of Gabriel’s “generous tears” (truly meaningful, or finally still patronizing?) and the acceptance—or oblivion—signified by his slowly swooning soul.

Virginia Woolf

Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street and The Lady in the Looking-Glass

These two short stories can readily be taught together, and they compare well to Joyce’s epiphanic sketches in *Dubliners*. Both stories focus on a reflective woman,

and the theme of reflection is literalized in the mirrors that figure in both stories. From the start, “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street” can be thought of as constructed like a mirror: We see in the single figure of Mrs Dalloway an entire world reflected in her thoughts and actions, even though we never see that wider world directly. You can ask students, for example, who Mrs Dalloway might be talking to in the first sentence of the story. We can’t be certain, but given what we come to learn about her class position, it’s most likely that she has considered sending her maid on the errand to replace her gloves but decides she’d better go herself in order to make sure of a good fit. (This is, in fact, made explicit in the opening lines of the novel that developed from the kernel of this story: “Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her.”) As the story proceeds, we catch glimpses of more and more characters, never learning much about any one of them, but collectively they form the social world within which Mrs Dalloway moves.

What, really, is going on in this story where nothing happens? You can ask your students to trace two interwoven themes: sexuality and death. Death frames the story, from Mrs Foxcroft’s dead son at the start to Lady Bexborough opening the bazaar with the telegram announcing her son’s death, near the end. (To the story’s readers in 1925, this would be understood as a flashback to World War I, as is made explicit in the novel’s version of this moment.) Even as Clarissa regrets that “the moderns had never written anything one wanted to read about death” (p. 176), her own life is surrounded with it—as by sexuality. Students, particularly male ones, may not have noticed the story’s references to menstruation: It may be the one day in the month, Clarissa speculates, “when it’s an agony to stand” for the shop girl (p. 178), and her recollection of the adolescent Hugh Whitbread centers on the dratted “thing” that keeps a girl from riding her horse and that also, seamlessly but irrationally, appears to justify her exclusion from sitting in Parliament (p. 175). Sex and death overlap, in fact, in the menopausal problems that have evidently brought Hugh and Milly Whitbread up to London so that Milly can consult her doctors.

For all the charm of the narration and the unruffled surface of the style, Woolf’s story thus centers on ultimate issues of life and death, treating bodily experience—particularly women’s bodily experience—with an understated directness that would have been inconceivable a generation before.

“The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection” opens up a world even more directly through a reflection on the power of reflection itself, “the mirror of art” held up to nature—suggested in the flower garden we glimpse in the distance, reflected by the mirror itself, which fixes into permanence the evanescence of life. We actually seem to be sitting in the room, as what’s reflected is what can be seen from “the depths of the sofa” (p. 179). Whereas “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street” is a portrait of Clarissa and the world she reflects, “The Lady in the Looking-Glass” is more a portrait of the unnamed observer on the couch, always assuming there is such an observer at all, rather than a ghostly emanation of the reader. (The narrator neither greets Isabella when she comes into the room nor seems even to be noticed by her.)

The story's nominal heroine does even less than Clarissa in her story: Having been out in the garden tending her flowers, Isabella returns and looks at the mail that has arrived. The real drama here consists of the observer's increasingly intense speculations on Isabella's life and passions; desire and even hostility come to the fore as the narrator tries to "penetrate" Isabella, to "prize her open" and pin her down. The final revelation that the letters are only bills, not love letters or criminal confessions, is as much a rebuke to the nameless narrator as to Isabella herself—and a rebuke to our own impulse to read possessively, voyeuristically, trying to force Isabella into a romance plot rather than to see her as she is.

A Room of One's Own

Woolf's pathbreaking essay can be read in conjunction with Mina Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" (p. 34) and the other manifestos that open Volume F. This essay is, in fact, Woolf's own artistic manifesto, and like Loy's it assesses women's need for independence both from men and from masculinity. At the same time, though, Woolf's essay is as notable in its differences from Loy's as in the similarities. Instead of using anything like Loy's assertive, even assaultive style and typography, Woolf draws the reader in through a sly game of revelation and concealment. Just as in her short stories, ultimate issues of life and death emerge beneath the limpid surface of the prose, and Woolf's seemingly hesitant narrative voice conveys a sharp critique based in hard material realities.

A good way into the essay is to have students discuss the odd claim Woolf makes at the start that lies will flow from her lips, and that "Oxbridge is an invention"—a statement true only to the extent that "the Ivy League" represents a collectivity and not one single campus. Why would she invite us (p. 184) to call her "Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael" or any other name we please? Far from random, these names in fact structure her essay: Mary Seton is her host at "Fernham" in Chapter 1; in subsequent passages (not included in our selections), Mary Beton is an aunt whose bequest gave her a crucial income of 500 pounds per year, enabling her to become a writer, while Mary Carmichael is a promising young contemporary novelist.

These names, moreover, are not chosen at random but come from a particular source: a sixteenth-century ballad called "Mary Hamilton." This anonymous ballad tells of the forcible seduction or outright rape of a serving-girl by the son of the Queen of Scotland. The woman gives birth to an illegitimate child, whom she drowns. As she goes up to court for her trial and comes back down condemned to death, she admits her guilt and blames the Queen for siding with the prince and not with her. The ballad ends:

Oh little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

Oh little did my father think,
 The day he held up me,
 What lands I was to travel through,
 What death I was to dee.

Last night I washed the queen's feet,
 And gently laid her down;
 And a' the thanks I've gotten the night
 To be hanged in Edinbro' town!

Last night there was four Maries,
 The night there'll be but three;
 There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,
 And Marie Carmichael, and me.

If you give these stanzas to your students, they can discuss their relevance to Woolf's modern situation, as well as to her fable in Chapter 3 of Shakespeare's imagined sister Judith, seduced and abandoned by Nick Greene, committing suicide, her writing career thwarted.

This can lead to discussion of Woolf's complex use of nineteenth-century subtexts, both the Tennyson and Christina Rossetti poems she quotes in Chapter 1 and the contrasting of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë in Chapter 4. Woolf's deadpan criticism of Brontë for the "awkward break" of Grace Poole's laugh in *Jane Eyre* (p. 200) teases us to see the anger that constantly threatens to break out from beneath the quiet surface of Woolf's own Austen-style prose. Grace Poole is, after all, "the madwoman in the attic" so important to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's study of women in fiction, another in the sequence of silenced figures stretching from Mary Hamilton to Judith Shakespeare and on into Woolf's era.

Even as she praises Shakespeare for having the perfectly "androgynous" mind, free from any specific "grudges or antipathies" we can know (Chapter 3), Woolf goes beyond Shakespeare in blending Olympian detachment with passionate engagement, lofty androgyny with an intense awareness of her subject position as a woman, playful fiction-making and unvarnished truth-telling, in a compelling manifesto for an art beyond the limited polemics of any single party, any single sex, any outright manifesto.

Akutagawa Ryunosuke

A logical way to teach these stories is to combine them with a showing of Kurosawa Akira's great film *Rashōmon*, which combined "Rashōmon" and "In a Grove." In his 1975 memoir *Something Like an Autobiography*, Kurosawa recounts how he described the combined story to his three assistant directors, who came to him as shooting was about to begin, complaining that they were baffled by the script:

For their persistence I gave them this simple explanation: Human beings are unable to be honest with themselves about themselves. They cannot talk about themselves without embellishing. This script portrays such human beings—the kind who cannot survive without lies to make them feel they are better people than they really are. It even shows this sinful need for flattering falsehood going beyond the grave—even the character who dies cannot give up his lies when he speaks to the living through a medium. Egoism is a sin the human being carries with him from birth, it is the most difficult to redeem. This film is like a strange picture scroll that is unrolled and displayed by the ego. You say that you can't understand this script at all, but that is because the human heart itself is impossible to understand. (*Something Like an Autobiography*, trans. Audie Bock, 1983, p. 185)

Kurosawa ends his memoir with an epilogue in which he describes his astonishment when the studio head who had opposed the making of this puzzling film changed his tune once the film became an international success; the studio head went on television to trumpet his own clairvoyance in producing the film that, in actual fact, he had tried to have killed. “Watching the television interview,” Kurosawa writes, “I had the feeling I was back in *Rashōmon* all over again. It was as if the pathetic self-delusions of the ego, those failings I had attempted to portray in the film, were being shown in real life” (p. 188).

Clearly Akutagawa himself thought his tales of early times could reflect contemporary concerns. You can discuss with students the compelling mix of ancient and modern themes and strategies presented in “*Rashōmon*”—the opening description, for example, builds on medieval Japanese tales of ghosts and fox-demons, mixing them with a very modern attention to realistic detail: “His attention was drawn to a large pimple irritating his right cheek” (p. 209). The protagonist’s realization of the universal corruption around him can be compared to a Joycean epiphany; but how are we to take it? Is he right to rob the old woman or wrong? As for the pimple on his cheek that becomes a leitmotif through the story, is it a sign of essential humanity or of inner corruption?

Akutagawa takes the ambiguities farther still with the multiple testimonies of “*In a Grove*.” Is the bandit Tajomaru justified or not in his ironic claim that his accusers—who have been torturing him to confess—“kill with power and money” and with honeyed words, but “when you think about it, it’s not so easy to tell who is guiltier, you or I” (p. 213)? And just how great is Tajomaru’s guilt? Has he killed a gentle, innocent man in cold blood, or did the man’s own wife kill him, or did the man himself commit suicide? Who might be taking the husband’s knife from him at the end of the story, and with what motive—to save him, or to finish the job? Kurosawa’s interpretation, quoted above, is that even the dead husband cannot be believed; students can debate how the story reads differently if we see it as progressing toward the truth or as circling among endless, self-dramatizing lies.

 PERSPECTIVES

Modernist Memory



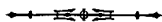
T. S. Eliot

Inevitably, *The Waste Land* will prove a challenge to college students' reading abilities. In the context of a series of classes focusing on the relationship between modernism and memory, it might be most useful to approach its density and diversity as an attempt to grasp the present through bits and pieces of cultural memory, some of which date back almost three millennia. To do this, students should learn to see and hear the multiple sources and voices that are echoed in the poem, some of which are foregrounded in Eliot's notes. Sections of the poem can be read line by line, with students color-coding, highlighting, or bracketing off the different voices that make themselves heard. The result will be a kind of textual collage, and given the prominence of collage techniques across a wide range of modernist art forms, visual analogues might help convey a sense of Eliot's lyrical procedure. Juxtaposing *The Waste Land* with synthetic cubist paintings by Picasso or Gris, or with the collages of Kurt Schwitters, provides a comparatively easy way into understanding how an artwork made out of fragments might work, whether these fragments be "found objects" or texts from the contemporary world (such as the pub dialogues at the end of Section II) or allusions to historical facts, objects, and stories.

A discussion of the poem's epigraph and apparatus of footnotes would logically follow from this approach. Obviously, Eliot did not assume that many of his readers would be able to identify the origins of some of his lines on their own—although in some cases (such as that of the hermit thrush's sound), his footnotes seem to mock the very idea of explanation and identification of sources. Still, the question arises exactly what kind of cultural memory Eliot constructs, or what research into the cultural heritage he tries to encourage if the audience does not in fact remember and recognize many of the sources to which he refers. How readable is *The Waste Land* without footnotes and knowledge of sources? How does its meaning change without this background, especially at a moment decades after its creation, when the knowledge of the classics and of several European languages that Eliot might have presupposed is much less available to an average audience? How should we read a poem that integrates into its own text so much of the information we would usually expect from a critical analysis? Raising questions such as these will lead students to consider what comes to form part of the cultural memory of a community at a given historical moment, and how this memory changes. It's worthwhile pointing out, in this context, that T. S. Eliot was principally responsible for resurrecting literary interest in the Metaphysical Poets, a tradition

that had not been integrated into the standard canon earlier but that has now become a mainstay of the Renaissance canon of British literature. At the same time, this consideration of cultural memory lends itself to comparison with “Prufrock”: What is the difference between the kind of cultural memory evoked through the women who “come and go / Talking of Michelangelo” and the kind of use Eliot makes of the cultural past?

While taking *The Waste Land* apart in this way makes it easier to explain what Eliot’s contemporaries found so shocking and disturbing about its perceived incoherence, the collage technique also raises the question as to what, finally, ensures the coherence of the work as a whole. Of course, it is possible to point out to students some of the overall structures and themes of the poem, such as the mythological groundwork Eliot himself mentions, the use of musical procedures or of recurrent metaphors. But to some extent, the fragments that come together in *The Waste Land* may owe some of their aesthetic impact as much to the shock of incongruous juxtaposition as to underlying harmony. For several avant-garde movements that were roughly contemporary to *The Waste Land*, such as Dada and Surrealism, the lyrical charge of a text was defined precisely by the way in which it forced together remote or even incompatible realities and languages through chance encounters or surprising metaphors. Eliot clearly participates in this broad project of modernist poetics to startle the readers’ perceptions into new awareness by way of the strange, the exotic, and the incongruous. At the same time, incongruity is not an end in itself for Eliot as it was for some of the avant-gardists, but rather a means of unearthing layers of significance. As the self-referential ending of *The Waste Land* hints, the search for coherence may well be the end rather than the means of modernist art and may be the formal translation of the substantive questions about the spirit of the modern age that form the thematic crux of the poem.



Constantine Cavafy

An alchemy takes place in language and its reality when language turns into a poem. Cavafy’s poetry tends to be a succinct dramatization, not just an enactment, of this process we have always called poetry. The alchemical transformation in Cavafy tends to follow a timeline that converts a retrospective event into a promise whose prospects will never run out. And so it is that, whoever you are and whenever you may be, in “Days of 1908” a human figure will always shed its mundane shabbiness and crumpled “cinnamon-brown suit” and stand before you, impeccable, in the perpetuity of the “summer days of nineteen hundred and eight” (lines 24, 22). This is not memory or recollection. It is a remembering of the future, which is another name for desire, in which the days of 1908 will always yield up their unending “miracle” in its unadorned nakedness.

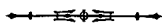
Cavafy's poem "Ithaka" may be the best demonstration and, like its subject, the most enduring metamorphosis of retrospective place turned prospective topography, the mutation of memory into desire. Cavafy would rather we emulate Odysseus's wandering in lengthy, if not perpetual, postponement that defers the homecoming for as long as possible. Keeping Ithaka, Odysseus's home, always in your mind is not merely a remembrance or a reminder. It is the promise of a voyage, of "harbors seen for the first time" (line 17), of rich ports, and of way stations of knowledge that will guarantee one eventually arrives "wealthy" at the destined homeport. The dangers en route may be inevitable because they are within you, like the long-awaited barbarians that have always been within the city, in another Cavafy poem ("Waiting for the Barbarians"). But these monsters and perils are incidental, even nonexistent, "as long as you keep your thoughts raised high" (line 7). After Homer, Ithaka is everyone's homeport, and the possibilities of each one's odyssey, rather than a final homecoming, could well be the prospects along the way.



Claude McKay

McKay's poems dramatize what could be explained to students as counterfactual memory: The poet tells us what is unbearably painful to remember ("The Tropics in New York") and what he remembers that he has forgotten ("Flame-Heart"). The first poem is clearly a record of displacement—the tropical elements of McKay's native Caribbean in New York City, and the exile of the poet himself from his home in Jamaica. The enumeration of forgetfulness across the time span of a decade-long absence from home in the second poem is an affirmation of memory across distance and time. The list of things remembered in what the poet claims to have forgotten reaffirms in recollection the unforgettable. These two poems, then, can be read as counterpoint between the pain of separation and the self-salvaging, or at least assuaging, of homesickness that poetry itself can offer the exiled poet.

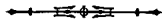
"Outcast," the third of McKay's poems in the *Anthology*, has no such hopeful salvaging for the poet, who not only is exiled from his native geography but also feels "out of time" (line 14). His birth, the poem tells us, is far from a native land that is even farther in geographical distance than the Caribbean and in someone else's time, which is as alien as this other geography of a historical destiny of slavery and dislocation. Whereas the first two poems locate their yearned-for native land in a geographically specific area of the world, the Caribbean, the third poem evokes a mythological region farther back in genealogical memory, a region from which the Western world's intrusion has left the poet and his culture "a ghost / Among the sons of earth, a thing apart" (lines 11–12). As the descendent of African slaves captured and brought to the Western Hemisphere, McKay distills the racial history of the transatlantic Middle Passage in his poetic persona's fate, designated by the title of the poem.



Federico García Lorca

Like T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, García Lorca's "Unsleeping City" is constructed with the jarring images of an urban landscape. Both poets exemplify modern art's program to shock the reader or art viewer out of complacency and the comfort of normality. The jolting images and strained metaphors of García Lorca's poem should be taken as part of the poet's deliberate attempt to awaken the reader through the clanging of grating sounds, garish color, abstract forms, distorted imagery, and irrational juxtaposition of objects and life forms. The cityscape depicted by the poem violates predictable reality and logic—the surreal overtakes the real.

García Lorca's poem can be read productively in conjunction with Surrealism's most notable painters, such as his friend and partner-in-scandal, Salvador Dalí. The dreamscape of this insomniac nightmare harks also to the ominous images in the paintings of Henri Rousseau and René Magritte, as well as to the psychoanalytic obsessions of Freud, whose formulas for the interpretation of dreams were at the center of Surrealism and the object, often irreverent, of a number of avant-garde painters and poets. Clearly, García Lorca's poem resonates with all of these elements in a serious fashion and with deadpan irony all at once.



Carlos Drummond de Andrade

As a deliberately accidental poem, "In the Middle of the Road" captures the paradox, self-contradictions, and anxiety in the face of unpredictability—all elements that characterize the avant-garde modernism of the twentieth century. William Carlos Williams's own famous "accidental poem" keeps telling us how much depends on a "Red Wheelbarrow." Just as much seems to depend on the critical and philosophical discourse generated by Drummond de Andrade's ten-line poem as on Williams's red wheelbarrow. In "In the Middle of the Road," metaphysicians have seen the surprise of contingency, positivist logicians the inevitability of necessity, historians of science the stochastic randomness of motility, and social scientists the principles of chaos theory. Traditional folks who first read the poem in Brazil took it as a scandalous affront to literary good taste. Drummond de Andrade expressed his amused agreement with all of them. In fact, each response became a stone in the middle of the author's poetic itinerary, a stone he converted into many other poems.

While the limited lexical range of this poem makes it perfect for beginning Portuguese language classes when taught in its original words, experience in teaching prosody has also proved the poem's usefulness for literature classes when exploring issues of translation. The midstream beginning, or the poem's own dramatization of a start *in medias res*, the anaphoric lines, the insistent repetition, and the periphrastic turn in the last verse of the two stanzas make the poem an ideal illus-

tration of these poetic techniques. No less promising is the insistence on memory and second sight despite the poet's weary eyes, the remembrance of the poem and of the event in it. Drummond de Andrade's poem can serve as a most economical demonstration of poetry's value as a crystallization of the incidental and its eventfulness into the plurality of refracted possibilities.



Emile Habiby

The first Arabic text in this volume, by the Palestinian writer Emile Habiby,¹ is a very good example of the complex, cross-cultural interplay of influences in modern Arabic writing. Structurally as well as conceptually, his novel *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* owes a great deal to Voltaire's *Candide*, but its lasting appeal and depth of impact on its readers would not have been possible without its rich dialogue with a host of classical Arabic narrative forms. Equally important is its accurate reflection of the contradictions and absurdity of the life of the Palestinians whose country has been taken from them.

The novel consists of three parts, each devoted to a major phase in the recent history of Palestine. Each part is entitled with the name of a woman who is both the beloved of the hero and a symbol of Palestine at the time: the first, "Yu'ad," represents the early period before the loss of Palestine in 1948; the second, "Baqiyah," embodies the spirit of the Palestinian resistance to the eradication of their national identity after the creation of the state of Israel; and the third, "Yu'ad al-Thaniyah," signifies the new stage of Palestinian consciousness that emerged after 1967 and the armed Palestinian resistance. The technique of constant inversion is provided here with a multilayered structure aimed at inscribing the cyclical history of the Palestinian tragedy into the very fabric of the novel. The inevitability of resistance, the main theme of the novel, is confirmed through both the structural development of the novel and the impossibility of collaboration, for no matter how subservient and accepting the Palestinians become, their only fate in Israel is oppression and annihilation. Yet the resistance is seen in the novel in its widest sense; it is not confined to overt acts of defiance, for every measure that preserves the Palestinian presence, identity, and culture is an act of resistance, even if it appears as a form of submission and capitulation. In this respect the novel foreshadowed the Palestinian *intifada* long before it took place.

Unlike most novels, *The Pessoptimist* is full of footnotes, creating a secondary text that serves as the cultural context of the novel and roots every aspect of the narrative in the historical and geographical reality of Palestine. The detailed information provided in these notes generates an elaborate internal memory, which serves as a counter-argument against any denial of the existence of Palestine and its identity.

¹Habiby died in 1996 and not in 1998, as wrongly appears in the table of contents and the headnote in Vol. F, p. 244.

One effective way to teach this work is as an episodic, life narrative in the picaresque tradition. The picaresque has been considered a social mirror reflecting the protagonist's times and tribulations. Often historically grounded, the biographical narrative traces the itinerary of its hero (its antihero, more properly), and it does so in ironic, often caricaturesque ways that end by being more truthful than historical truth itself. Unlike history, romance, or the epic tone of some novels, picaresque narrative takes the individual as its subject. The focus on the particular itinerary and on the way stations of its protagonist's adventures makes the picaresque a specific individual's life story, which often carries greater truth than other forms of narration. This certainly is the case with *The Secret Life of Saeed*.

The particulars of Saeed's life are indeed grounded in the history of Palestine, whose actual events are often more incredible than the deliberately exaggerated and ironic episodes of Habiby's novel. As captured in this narrative, irony may well be the greatest coping mechanism in the face of an often surreal history. The protagonist's life story, then, dramatizes the circular logic of a catch-22 predicament in which a community is invaded and occupied, and then held responsible for its further conquest and occupation for daring to protest or engage in acts of resistance against occupation and territorial dispossession. The epithet—Pessoptimist—for the protagonist personifies that ironic equivocation and the contradictions of Palestine's historical predicament since 1948. As is the case with the picaresque genre, the episodes of the narrative enact serially a number of coping strategies whose successes and failures keep the tale moving along.

Students might find it rewarding to tease out these strategies and the alternately hilarious and tragic character of human nature when faced with the absolute necessity to look after its own survival in the face of overwhelming odds and the callousness of other human beings. Subterfuge is certainly one of the most common tactics of survival, and strategic self-subterfuge is often the only recourse. Students will find many instances of these strategies in Habiby's work, which may be more revealing about historical paradoxes that are contemporary with the students' own lives but often missing from other forms of narrative—journalism, documentary, official information, and news releases. The timeliness of Habiby's text should prove provocative and certainly relevant to the students' historical awareness of their own moment. Historical authenticity is problematic in reality and in the literary dramatization of that reality. Despite the picaresque genre's tendency to forge a correspondence between tale and the historical moment it tells, narrative is a construct. It might prove productive for your students to think of historical reality as artificially constructed, with paradoxes and contradictions, as is the case with the history in Habiby's text. The question then becomes, what happens to reality when, as a construct of vested interest and propagandistic language made right by might, it becomes subjected to the subterfuge of survival strategy by those it affects, especially when part of that survival strategy consists of ironic and self-ironic works like Habiby's?



Octavio Paz

“A Wind Called Bob Rauschenberg” and “Central Park” are works through which Paz weds poetry to painting. An avid student of modern art, Paz was a friend of many painters, including Robert Rauschenberg and Pierre Alechinsky. Both inspired Paz’s ekphrasis, or painting with words, and both form part of that genealogical tree of twentieth-century modernity that was the poet’s family tree, as documented in his 1987 collection of poetry, *A Tree Within*. Both poems are a record of Paz’s reading of modern painting. The precipitous falling of ordinary objects and sliding landscapes in the first poem captures the dynamics of the downward brushstrokes in Rauschenberg’s canvasses. In class, reading the poem while showing slides of Rauschenberg paintings (*Canyon*, 1959; *Tracer*, 1963; *Estate*, 1963; *Harbor*, 1964) would graphically illustrate the suspended reality of landscapes and common objects and their insistent depiction as in a state of free fall.

With the poem’s opening line, “Landscape fallen from Saturn,” Paz reverses the force of gravity. The reference is to Rauschenberg’s 1969 lithograph on paper, *Stoned Moon Series: Earth Crust*. The series is based on the launch of the Apollo XII lunar mission, which landed a Saturn rocket on the moon. On that rocket was a small ceramic of drawings titled *The Moon Museum* (1969) by a number of artists, including Andy Warhol and Rauschenberg. The wind, as embodied by the painter in the title of the poem and in similes throughout the poem, becomes the medium of a universal conversation between the cosmos, its objects, and the human inhabitants. As the wind, the painter connects all of these parts of the universe, dramatizes their enigmas, and depicts their interlinked movements in multiple colors of light, shadow, and the murmur of elements that make up the atomic structure of the universe. Reading the painter’s canvasses as a tableau of the universe in motion, the poem itself takes on the same dynamic strokes in its language—its repeated verses, the stream of enumeration of phenomena, human sentiments, emotions, voices, and visions—as what the poem calls “the interminable conversation of the universe” (line 56), which keeps the cosmos in motion and intact. It would be instructive to focus on the verbs and their actions in each verse for understanding movement as juxtaposed to the human senses, the connective faculties that link humans to the larger universe that envelopes us. Paz’s poem, then, can be read as a vehicle of action through language, just as the paintings of Rauschenberg are read by the poet as a medium of transport that keeps planetary objects in motion and in “conversation,” which is to say, in wind-swept harmony.

“Central Park” refers to the famous park in New York City. The Guggenheim Museum sits on one side of the Park, and the Alechinsky mentioned in the poem’s second stanza is the painter Pierre Alechinsky, whose painting was on display in a retrospective show in February 1987. Octavio Paz wrote the preamble for the catalog of that show, and this particular poem, “Central Park,” was part of that preamble. The title of the poem is the title of one of Alechinsky’s best-known works that dates from 1975. The original “Central Park” is a color lithograph, succeeded by a series of four

color etchings and lithographs the following year. Alechinsky's work originates in the painter's purchase of a co-op apartment on Central Park West and the warnings from his friends about the dangers of entering Central Park, warnings that the Belgian-born painter translated into the threatening monsters that border the lithograph, including the cobra in Paz's poem that threatens to swallow the central figure in the work. The verse in italics, repeated at the end of each stanza, "*Don't cross Central Park at night,*" is written in English in Paz's original Spanish poem, and it harks to the warnings dramatized by Alechinsky in his lithograph. Paz's "Central Park," then, is a translation of Alechinsky's "Central Park" into verse form. The poet, in the end, disappears into the painting, carried by a yellow cab across the "land of flames" of the lithograph and the lurking dangers of Manhattan's "green and black thickets."

Franz Kafka

The transformation of a human into an animal is a standard narrative theme in literature across the world. It appears in the indigenous oratures of Africa and the Americas, in fairy tales, and in the mythology and texts of Western antiquity. The tradition runs all the way from such classics as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Apuleius's *Golden Ass* to contemporary texts such as Arno Schmidt's *Egghead Republic* and Julio Cortázar's "Axolotl." One way into Kafka's text is to explore with students which of these stories they already know (almost all of them will surely have encountered fairy tales that feature human-animal transformations) and how Gregor Samsa's story differs from them. Such a comparative approach highlights the way in which metamorphosis in Kafka functions as an absolute for which the text itself delivers no explanation of any sort: It takes place in a modern city otherwise deprived of any signs of magic, does not point to any transcendental scenario of divine justice and retribution, is not the result of science gone awry, and does not in any obvious way stand in for social and political transformation.

To get an even more focused approach to Kafka's project, the comparison might also zero in on a more contemporary context. Many students will likely be familiar with at least one version of the film *The Fly* (either Vincent Price's 1958 camp classic or David Cronenberg's 1986 remake), and this conversion of a human into a bug can provide a useful foil for investigating what is particular to the insect metamorphosis. Clearly, Gregor's beetle body (not cockroach body, as it's sometimes misunderstood), which is hidden and unveiled again and again in an elaborate series of stagings throughout the novel, evokes some of the same reactions of revulsion and disgust that the transformation from man to fly triggers in the movies. This disgust is not anticipated in most traditional versions of metamorphosis and has at least in part to do with the perceived alienness of the insect body. But it may also be related to the underlying questions of gender that are persistently foregrounded in Kafka. In one of the novel's climactic scenes, Gregor leaves his hiding place under the sofa to cling to the image of a woman in furs that his sister Grete is about to remove from his room, and the sight of his body on the wall makes his mother faint; the question of the perception and representation of

male and female bodies could hardly be highlighted in a more focused way.

By reading Kafka against the tradition of literary metamorphoses, it would also be easy to direct students' attention to the way in which Gregor's transformation from human to animal is a gradual one. While we encounter his body already completely transformed at the beginning, he clearly retains human intelligence throughout the story. His ability to speak in a manner that is understandable to others deteriorates gradually over the course of the first day, but his ability to understand humans' language remains unimpaired, even though it isn't recognized by those around him. Students might be assigned the task of tracing some of his other abilities and experiences: his changing tastes in food and eating habits; his sense of his own body and ability to navigate, hide, and display it; his experience and use of space (which changes quite radically as he starts to climb up the walls and upside down along the ceiling); his perception of music; or his expressions of consideration, shame, or anxiety vis-à-vis his sister. Tracing such developments in the protagonist allows students to understand the framework of social conventions and concepts of self within which Gregor's transformation occurs and the types of alienation from them that Kafka aims to capture.

This analysis also leads easily to a discussion of one of the most surprising elements of Kafka's story: the way in which Gregor himself, his family, and his manager react to his metamorphosis. They are dismayed, indignant, or disgusted, and they confront Gregor's condition as a deplorable illness, an affront to good manners, a violation of professional discipline, or a social tragedy—but none of them really seems to grasp the way in which this event transcends all the normal parameters of social, scientific, or even religious rationality. One would expect them to bring in all conceivable scientific experts, to try various possible cures, or to consult spiritual authorities in order to come to terms with so extraordinary an occurrence. Instead, they react to it as if it were either a shameful family secret or a tragic accident to which one simply had to resign oneself. The extraordinary aggression that Samsa Sr. displays against his son deserves special attention in this context because it is obviously meant to point to tensions that existed in repressed form even when Gregor was human; it is easy to see that the bankrupt, discouraged father might harbor latent resentment against the son who has replaced him as a breadwinner. Getting students to think about why Kafka has the characters react the way they do makes it easier for them to understand the kind of human condition the author is attempting to portray.

As the father's reaction already indicates, one of the most insistently foregrounded implications of Gregor's metamorphosis is its impact on the social and economic status of the family. Losing the principal breadwinner brings some financial hardship for the Samsas but then forces them to assume responsibility for themselves and reintegrate themselves into the labor market, a reintegration that seems to imply their descent from middle-class to lower-class status. But for Gregor's father and sister, this change also appears to bring about greater independence and self-confidence, which raises the question to what extent their exclusive reliance on Gregor and his income had been an asset or an obstacle. At the same time, Gregor learns from an overheard conversation that his father had in fact not been left as penniless by his business bankruptcy as Gregor had been led to believe. This detail raises

several interesting questions as to why the father had kept this fact from Gregor, and whether the family was silently exploiting Gregor's work when it could have simultaneously relied on other means of subsistence. In this context, it seems promising as well as ominous that on the day Gregor dies and the three remaining family members excuse themselves from work, the idea of a future son-in-law—manifestly the replacement for Gregor—occurs to the parents for the first time. Since, in any case, Gregor's work and income is clearly crucial for his parents' and sister's survival until his transformation, one must wonder to what extent this responsibility limited his own possibilities for starting a family. Considering these economic and social details of the Samsa family's situation after the metamorphosis, therefore, leads to an analysis of the complex relations of mutual dependence that structure the family.

In this context, it may be worth focusing on the character of Gregor's sister Grete in more detail. As feminist critics of *The Metamorphosis* have pointed out, the novel is in some sense as much about her transformation as about Gregor's. As she takes exclusive care of her brother, accepts a position as a sales clerk, and finally becomes the parents' hope for a reconstituted family and finances, Grete takes over Gregor's own central position in the household. Indeed, it gradually becomes obvious that her evolution is made possible only through Gregor's deterioration and death—and Gregor himself, partly for this reason, resigns himself to the necessity of his own disappearance toward the end. Seen from this angle, Gregor's discovery that he is caught inside the body of a beetle becomes a complex metaphor for a masculinity that he is no longer able to assume. (From a biographical viewpoint, it may be no accident that Kafka wrote *The Metamorphosis* during one of the periods in 1912 when he was assailed by doubts over the relationship with his fiancée Felice Bauer; in letters to her, the "little story" he was working on is frequently mentioned.)

Depending on the main themes of the course, other avenues of interpretation can obviously be explored: for example, Gregor's metamorphosis as an allegory of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 1986) call a "minor literature," that is, the literature of a minority group, a context in which the beetle's body could be read as a metaphor for the alienation Jews experienced in Prague society. Conversely, a broader existentialist reading would interpret Gregor's transformation not so much as the predicament of a specific social group as that of humans more generally, who find themselves thrown into a form of existence they have not chosen and cannot easily give meaning to. The possibilities of interpretation, once philosophical and religious concerns are taken into account, are manifold, as the vast amount of criticism on *The Metamorphosis* demonstrates. This enormous scope and depth of interpretation of what is a relatively slim text is in itself worth pointing out to students; when modernist literature is taught today, students tend to associate it mainly with writers such as Joyce, Woolf, and Proust. But for some of the most prominent theorists and critics of the early twentieth century—Theodor Adorno among them—the paradigm of modernist writing was neither Joyce nor Proust but Kafka, and *The Metamorphosis* has remained one of his most lasting achievements.

A discussion of the many different avenues of interpretation into *The Metamorphosis* can also naturally lead into an exploration of the parable as a genre be-

cause *The Metamorphosis* itself has often been classified as such. Often in short narrative form, the parable describes an unusual occurrence as an image for a more abstract set of ideas; unlike other tropes, the parable usually does not spell out what its intended meaning is but relies instead on the audience's expectations and knowledge for its decoding. Its implicitness can lead to great ambiguity of interpretation, especially when the ideas it points to are complex and when the original context of reception shifts; Kafka himself comments on this ambiguity in his meta-parable "On Parables."

Kafka's parables, usually designed to comment on complex dimensions of human existence, can be particularly challenging for students—and many of his parables have received quite divergent interpretations by critics. The best approach to such stories perhaps is to make their difficulty the first topic of discussion: What is it that makes their meaning difficult to decode? In what ways are normal interpretive processes blocked? You might begin with a very short parable such as "The Trees," which gives a clue to its metaphorical meaning in the first sentence comparing the speakers to tree trunks in the snow. What aspects of human existence might correspond to the deceptive mobility and fixity of the tree trunks? Or are "we" the letters of type themselves, black against the white page like tree trunks against snow? What does the parable imply about processes of perception and self-perception? You could approach a more complex parable such as "The Cares of a Family Man" through the question of what the odd half-animate, half-mechanical creature Odradek might represent for Kafka. (Critics have variously interpreted this text as a reflection on the materiality of human existence in the face of death or as an artist's meditation on the nonfunctional artwork that will outlive him and his more instrumental pursuits.) Discussing the possibilities and limits of interpretation that the short parables point to can also easily take the discussion back to the possible meanings of a much more extended parable such as *The Metamorphosis*.

Anna Akhmatova

One of Russia's most distinguished twentieth-century poets, Akhmatova's work ranges from poetry that invokes (she has written five poems to the Muse), eulogizes (as in the *Requiem* series), protests ("I Heard a Voice," "I am not one with those"), praises ("Boris Pasternak"), and takes stock ("Why is this century worse"). The fates willed that she would live in interesting times, as the Chinese curse would have it. In approaching her poetry, the texts offered in the *Anthology*, nonchronologically, correspond to the spectrum of her repertoire. Students can trace in this sequence the thematic range of Akhmatova's career. The sequence starts with "The Muse" (1924) because the classical poetic tradition, which she knew well (especially Dante, whom she could recite in the original Italian), begins with an invocation to the muse. Poetry is a lifeline for Akhmatova, and the significance of all else in this troubled world pales by comparison to the visitation of the poetic muse.

Requiem is a long cycle, written principally between 1935 and 1940, the darkest days of Russia's history under Stalin, but not published as a whole until 1963 in Munich, Germany. The quatrain printed in the *Anthology* is the preamble to

that cycle and was published first as a fragment in 1961. “Requiem” is the first word of the mass sung for the dead, and the term has given the mass for the dead its generic name. Traditionally a grieving and a song of praise at once, a requiem for Akhmatova is a declaration of solidarity as well. And no matter how precarious her circumstances, she lives in reality the constancy and steadfastness she declares in her poetry. Thus she remains stoic in the face of difficult odds and stands her ground in solidarity with the Russian people.

As early as 1917, she made a conscious decision to follow her conscience and stand firm, as she declares in another poem, “I Heard a Voice,” which becomes prophetic of the Soviet purges that hounded her own family for the next thirty years. All the while, her determination to stand her ground as a Russian woman and as a poet is distilled in the 1922 poem “I am not with those.” A discussion of her sentiments with regard to exile vis-à-vis the decision to stay home and confront difficulty might engage students, especially on the comparative context of other twentieth-century writers, both Russian and from other parts of the world, who opted for exile or were left with no choice but to seek refuge for survival’s sake. Another Russian poet who deliberately stayed is Boris Pasternak, who, twenty years after Akhmatova wrote her poem “Boris Pasternak,” about him, would forego the Nobel Prize rather than risk going to Stockholm to collect his prize and not be allowed to return to Russia. This poem should be read as one poet’s portrait of another poet and, once again, you should encourage students to look for the prophetic elements in this portrayal, where the characterization might echo.

“Why is this century worse” is a dark poem, a diagnosis of Russia’s unhappy twentieth century held in counterpoint to the West. Some students might be tempted to emulate the triumphalism of those in the West who see the demise of the Soviet system as a victory of the capitalist, free-market West. To foreclose on such reductionism, it might be prudent to ask students whether they detect something prophetic even in this poem, as in many of Akhmatova’s works. The sun’s “shining in the West” (line 5) might indicate a twilight, a threshold to the dark of night, just as traditional lore has always considered the rising of the sun from the West as an apocalyptic sign of an end time rather than a triumph over history. The end of history has indeed been declared by some in the West following the demise of the Soviet Union. Ask students to reflect on whether such a supposed end of history at this moment might spell a triumph or a passage into the darker side of a sunset.



RESONANCE

Osip Mandelstam

The Russian Revolution found its most eloquent antagonist, and its most damning victim, in Osip Mandelstam. His 1931 poem to fellow Acmeist Anna Akhmatova, “To A. A. A.,” is a paean to language and an indictment of the atrocities language has to attest to through society’s mouthpiece, the poet Akhmatova with whom Mandelstam

identifies as "I, your outcaste brother, my people's black sheep" (line 6). Reality obviously does not take kindly to the realism of its depiction. This is the bottom line in the fraught relationship between the revolution of literature and political evolution. Poetry would clearly have it no other way, and the vested interests of politics have little imagination by way of alternatives to dealing with poets who shine the light of truth upon them. You might encourage students to explore the role of poetry in today's political environment and the fate of literary dissent in our own society.



William Butler Yeats

Yeats's poems can be taught together with varied combinations of other works in this part of the *Anthology*. The strong emphasis on memory in his poems also suits them to be considered along with the works in "Perspectives: Modernist Memory," his poems on the Irish revolution follow well from "Perspectives: Modernism and Revolution in Russia," and the self-reflexive Byzantium poems and "Under Ben Bulbin" work well with "Perspectives: Poetry About Poetry." Yeats and his influence can be found everywhere in the twentieth century, even if he himself comfortably fits nowhere.

The first two poems in our selection show the early Yeats establishing his voice against the double backdrop of English Romanticism and Irish folklore and history. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" can be considered as a personal reworking of themes found in Romantic poems like William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (Vol. E, p. 21). As in that poem, the city-bound poet recalls the distant, welcoming countryside. Yeats actually wrote this poem in London, so that he was literally imagining his home countryside from Wordsworth's city, and yet it's hard to feel that the deeply urban Yeats really shares Wordsworth's longing to *be* in the country. Yeats, living in a wattle-and-daub hut, tending nine rows of beans? Surely not: What he really wants is to be in the city, inwardly hearing the country's sounds, registering them "in the deep heart's core" (line 12). Similarly, Yeats doesn't expect the young man he addresses in "Who Goes with Fergus?" to literally get up and go anywhere: Fergus is a mythic resource, an inspiration for mastering "love's bitter mystery" (line 8)—giving an explicitly Irish framework for the imaginative recreation of the world.

"No Second Troy" extends Yeats's mythic frame of reference, to both posit and paradoxically reject a Greek epic parallel for modern Irish struggles and his own romantic conflicts. You can ask students what affirmative assertions emerge from this poem structured in the form of questions; and if you've been tracing the heritage of Romanticism, you could have students compare this lyric to Blake's similarly question-filled poem "The Tyger" (Vol. E, p. 59). The unnamed Maud Gonne here seems a tiger-like force of nature, sublimely attractive and destructive at the same time.

Like "No Second Troy," "Easter 1916" concerns the extremism accompanying the Irish independence movement. Often recited in commemoration of the Irish revolution, "Easter 1916" is as much a cautionary tale as a celebration: The violence

needed for revolt turns hearts to stone. The result is at once beauty and terror—a version of the Romantic definition of the sublime. The poem is also a poem about the writing of poetry itself (“I write it out in a verse,” line 74), as Yeats fashions himself as a disillusioned observer, celebrating and mourning at the same time.

The ensuing poems on “The Second Coming” and Byzantium unfold Yeats’s full-scale historical vision. Yeats saw in Byzantium the fullest expression of late classical culture, closing one of his historical cycles at the end of the first millennium A.D. For all its mythic resonance, students can also discuss how it carries on Yeats’s early themes of voyage to a distant, artistically viable realm like Innisfree (or Lady Gregory’s Galway estate in “The Wild Swans at Coole”). Now it is an artificial paradise, rather than a natural one, that Yeats evokes. Even so, human emotion is shaped and preserved, rather than denied, as fresh images are begotten of “that dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea” (“Byzantium,” line 40). Finally, “Under Ben Bulbin,” Yeats’s poetic testament, not only gives the actual epitaph that Yeats ordered inscribed on his grave but also enters his name in the register of the world’s dead poets and sculptors, in a final blending of world mythology with a specifically Irish emphasis in the poem’s closing exhortation to Irish poets to “learn your trade” (line 68).

PERSPECTIVES

Poetry About Poetry

This set of poems is designed to guide students into considering one of the most striking features of twentieth-century literature: self-referentiality. One form this self-referentiality has taken is what critics have come to call *paratexts*, that is, the kinds of texts that authors themselves produce (or co-produce) to explain their own artistic practice. From the prefaces that accompany Henry James’s and Joseph Conrad’s novels and the manifestos that celebrated avant-garde art in the early twentieth century to the innumerable interviews given by French *nouveau romancier* Alain Robbe-Grillet and the “poetheory” of late twentieth-century American lyricists, literary texts have increasingly been delivered to the reader embedded in theoretical and critical reflections. The poems selected for this section exemplify a second form of self-referentiality, in which such reflections no longer stand apart but are integrated into the creative text.

This fusion of creative and critical expression is of course by no means unique to poetry; John Barth’s “Dunyazadiad,” in the “Perspectives: The 1001 Nights in the Twentieth Century” section later in Volume F, provides a good illustration of what shape similar procedures can take in a narrative text and might well be assigned along with the poems in this segment. More generally, the “1001 Nights” section throws up questions of literary influence that are discussed by the poets in this section in more theoretical terms, so the two sets of texts lend themselves to being read in sequence or combination. You might also want to point to historically earlier examples of self-referentiality, from the *Thousand and One Nights* itself to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, Diderot’s *Le neveu de Rameau*, and Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. Still, com-

pared to the poetry and fiction of the nineteenth century, and the kinds of literary texts most college students are likely to be familiar with, extremely self-conscious poems like the ones in this set will strike most of them as unusual.

Students who are not intensively trained in literary analysis tend to approach both poetry and fiction as basically realistic reflections of the nonliterary world: They assume elements of a poem are there because the poet felt, saw, or experienced something in a particular way. Poetry about poetry is especially well-suited to unsettle this default assumption and to sharpen students' awareness that literature is not only or even mainly shaped by the author's "reality," but also by literary models and predecessors, by constraints of particular genres, by conscious and unconscious selections and transformations of the real, and by the poets' broader perspectives on what roles they and their craft are meant to play in the culture at large. From Wallace Stevens's conception of the poem as an autonomous artwork (represented by the jar) all the way to Nazim Hikmet's aggressive engagement with the contemporary technological world, the section offers a wide range of choices within which to explore these questions.

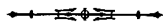
The drawings of Dutch artist M. C. Escher, one of which accompanies the section (see Vol. F, p. 328), provide a convenient visual aid with which to teach students the possibilities of paradox and playfulness that arise from the conflation of "being" and "representing" that occurs in self-referential texts. But you could also approach these possibilities by way of simple linguistic examples (e.g., the difference between self-referential sentences such as "This sentence has five words" and nonself-referential ones such as "This sentence has six words"), possibly even by challenging students to come up with their own analogous examples. A wonderful source for examples and games with such forms across different fields is Douglas Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (1979), which explores self-referentiality in language, music, mathematics, and the visual arts. Escher or Hofstadter can lead directly to an analysis of Daniel David Moses's poem "The Line," which most explicitly plays on the logical paradoxes and tautologies that arise from a poem doing what it says it does even as it says so.

But while the exploration of the logical and linguistic features of self-referential texts can introduce a genuine element of fun and playfulness into the class discussion, it would seem equally important to pursue a historical line of questioning with the students. Poetics, as an inquiry into the forms and functions of lyrical expression, is common across historical periods and cultures. But you may want to ask under what circumstances poets feel a particular need to reflect on the origin, legitimation, and future of their craft, and what might have prompted so many poets in the early twentieth century to raise these questions. Political and social upheavals such as wars and revolutions obviously contribute to unsettling ideas about appropriate subjects and forms of poetry (an idea you could pursue by linking with the "Perspectives: Echoes of War" section), as do innovations in science, technology, and media. (This connection is obvious in Hikmet's poem, inspired by his encounter with Russian Futurism during a visit to Moscow in the early 1920s, and you might well want to tie this poem back in with Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto at the beginning of Vol. F and with works in "Perspectives: Modernism and

Revolution in Russia.”) But changes in ideas about art and literature that are more “genre-internal,” that is, less obviously tied to sociopolitical developments, also play an important role. To understand the poems in this section, students need to know something about the way in which poets in earlier periods understood their “vocation” in relation to appeals to a “muse” or “inspiration” that were conceived along pseudo-religious lines, and about how this legitimization of poetry became increasingly suspect in a more secular society. Stevens’s conception of poetry as a substitute for religion in a secular culture should be discussed in this context, as well as the role of the poet as a secular prophet as it appears in Pablo Neruda’s work.

Later in the twentieth century, this conception of poetry itself became questionable, and you might want to explore with students why this might be so and what they see as the reasons for writing poetry in the contemporary age. For many of them, some of the cultural functions that were traditionally associated with poetry—the expression of intimate feelings and experiences, the play on the rhythmic and acoustic qualities of languages in addition to its semantic ones—may well be associated not with printed poetry so much as with the lyrics that accompany pop music. From the prophets and rebels included in this section, you could point to the connections with Bob Dylan or hip-hop; not to argue that pop lyrics are simply equivalent to poetry, or that the cultural functions of poetry have shifted to pop music wholesale, but to explore in what way the forms and functions of poetry might change in response to new cultural forms that arise alongside traditional ones and in partial competition.

Specific comments on most of the authors in this section follow.



Eugenio Montale

Rhymes are hard to resist in the making of poetry. If objects line up to clamor for their life as poems, as we see in Neruda’s “Ars Poetica” (p. 320), those elements that have traditionally been identified with poetry—the predictable and always expected rhymes—are no less pesky in making their claims on the poet and on the poem. And like Neruda’s resistance to those objects, Montale fights back, hindering the invasion of his verses by the clamoring rhymes, which in “Rhymes” he compares to sisters of charity pounding at his door. The classroom discussion at this point could turn to some of the technical characteristics of modern poetry—its rejection of traditional forms of versification, the devaluation of formal elements in favor of what Pessoa calls in his “Today I read nearly two pages” the “prose of my poems” (p. 316, line 22).

In “Poetry” Montale adduces some of the reasons for this turn away from the formal elements and their predictably anticipated privilege. The lyrical language of poetic inspiration now, Montale tells us, is a matter of physics and of “importunate words” (line 7) that rush out to question the author as much as the reader, rather than sending them into reverie. And you should alert students that they too are indicted in this interrogation, as much as the author. But, while “Poetry / rejects with horror / the glosses of commentators” such as students and their professors,

“it’s unclear that the excessively mute / is sufficient unto itself” (lines 13–17). Clearly, the implication is that poetry needs its readers and commentators as much as it needs the “man who’s stumbled onto it, / unaware that he’s / the author” (lines 18–20). The luxury of the irony in this self-absolution from the responsibility of the author is not one you and your students can afford. We are always accountable where the poem is concerned.



Fernando Pessoa

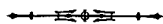
“Autopsychography” is self-conscious self-writing in the extreme. The first quatrain portrays the poet’s vicissitudes of faking it to the point of duping himself out of the pain that drives him into writing the poem about the pain that drove him to write in the first place. A diagram of frames of consciousness would be most helpful for students, no doubt. The second stanza is devoted to the reader’s compounded predicament wrapped inside the poet’s redoubled layers, where he or she feels not the “double” pain of the poet, but yet another frame, what Pessoa refers to as “completely fictional” (lines 7–8). This is the fiction that is the poem the reader has before his or her eyes as the enactment of that fiction in verse form. In this frame-in-side-frames, self-awareness circles back on itself, “on its track goes round and round” as the entertainment of “reason,” which Pessoa assimilates to “That wound-up little train / We call the heart of man” (lines 9–12). A juxtaposition of this stanza to Wallace Stevens’s “Of Mere Being” (p. 322) might prove interesting.

“This” is a self-contradiction on the order of “all Cretans are liars” as spoken by someone from Crete who wants us to believe him. You should encourage students to consider the possibilities of irony in the poet’s claim that he is being “Serious about what isn’t” (line 16). His redemption lies in his claim to be operating in imagination, “Steeped in things not readily / At hand—free of emotions” (lines 14–15). This is the imaginative detachment students have to consider as one of the keys to understanding any modernist literary text and the claims on behalf of modernism by the poets. In other words, as readers, we must heed the prompting of the poem and learn to suspect and question the “lot” allotted to us by the poets of modernism such as Pessoa—“Feelings? That’s the reader’s / Lot” (lines 17–18).

“Today I read nearly two pages” could be read as a twentieth-century modernist manifesto against eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romanticism. It is a poem about what poems should be about and how the world should be read by poets, according to Pessoa. The two pages read by the poet provoke a belly laugh. The “mystic poets,” whom Pessoa characterizes as “sick philosophers,” and, therefore, “mad men” (lines 4–5), are laughable because they render nature in their own image; they anthropomorphize stones, flowers, and streams. They do so to the point that no stones, flowers, or streams are left for the modernist poet’s “prose of my poems,” as Pessoa biting refers to his poetry (line 22), in contradistinction to the poetic lyricism of Romantic nature poetry. In echo of an-

other modernist poet, Gertrude Stein and her “rose,” where Pessoa is concerned, “a stone is a stone. . . .”

“The ancients used to invoke” burst another bubble of the poetic tradition. Left Museless by modernism, the poet says, “We invoke ourselves” (line 2). The Muses may have come, but, says the poet, “I know we don’t appear” when invoked (line 5). They don’t appear even in echo when called in a well. The only thing “Down there in the uselessness at the bottom” is “vaguely, a face, . . . a thing almost invisible . . . [i]n the silence and the false light at the bottom” (lines 11–18). Typical of modernism’s iconoclastic irreverence toward the myths of Romantic and classical lyricism, Pessoa leaves the poet to his own devices, and the reader is left to the critical demands of finding the poetry in the poem.



Pablo Neruda

“Tonight I can write the saddest lines,” one of Neruda’s most popular and most often recited poems, is a counterfactual poem. In other words, it’s a poem about the poem that the poet could have written but did not. What we have before us is what he wrote instead, a confession about the impossibility of writing “the saddest lines, / Write, for example, ‘The night is shattered / and the blue stars shiver in the distance’” (lines 1–3). Reading this in the context of Fernando Pessoa’s poems, students should understand why writing the poem that would consist of the lines Neruda gives as example is impossible, even for a belatedly romantic soul like Neruda’s poetic persona in the throes of an impossible love. The impossibility of that love translates into the impossibility of the romantic poem, a lyrical effusion that shatters the night and makes the stars shiver in sympathy with or as the proxy of the poet. That infelicity, according to Pessoa, and Neruda since he does not succumb to that, would mean stars would no longer be stars and the night would not be night. A poem about the impossibility of the poem it displaces proves more legible work for the modern reader and a more efficient expression of the poet’s predicament. The people who recite the poem by heart may not be aware of this intricacy, of course, but one of the reasons students might consider for the popularity of the poem with so many modern lay readers uninitiated into the intricacies of the meta-poetic could well be the fact that the poem is what it ended up being. What the poem could have been is the option discarded by the poet who gave us the lines we have, instead, though these be “the last verses that I write for her” (line 32).

“Ars Poetica” is itself a venerable genre, of course, dating from the poets of classic antiquity who felt the urge to address themselves to and on their craft. This whole Perspectives section could properly be called an “ars poetica.” You could direct students’ attention to the enumerations in each verse—the long list of elements that could well become a poem in their own right. In the end, each of these elements makes its claims on the poet, begging “of me this prophecy I

have” (line 21). As with the previous poem, however, Neruda’s poet does not easily succumb to the demands of these elements to be made into poetry. These elements are left, instead, in “a lurch of objects calling without answers, /with a truceless movement, a name I can’t make out” (lines 22–23). The opacity of that name and its resisted call end by being the poem we read. Once again, we are delivered an impossible poem, an impossibility defined here by the title as the art of poetry.

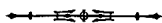


Wallace Stevens

No doubt, students will be fascinated by the “Anecdote of the Jar” as a doubly self-reflective artifact—as verbal performance and as manufactured object, as anecdote and as jar. The poem comes about by their artificial conjunction and by the narrative produced through their introduction into a natural terrain, a hilltop in Tennessee. The hill will never be the same again, nor will the wilderness, its “bird or bush” (line 11). Stevens intrudes the poet’s artifice into an environment that may have never been “natural,” anyway, not since it was demarcated and called Tennessee as a territorialized domain of political, geographical, and national apportionment for human habitation or state ownership. Students might consider how it is that the intrusion of the poetic (which in Greek means literally “made”) object into the world alters that world irrevocably. And they may wish to discuss how the poem itself is a symptom or dramatic example of the process of *poesis*, a making through the artifice of arraying language into a formation of three quatrains on top of each other, not so tall as the jar, perhaps, but certainly “a port in air” (line 8).

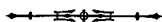
“Of Modern Poetry” is a searching poem about the search for a modern poetry obliged to find something that “will suffice,” a search wholly unnecessary, according to the poem, when “the scene was set” and the “script” could simply be “repeated” before the modern and its modernity (lines 2–4). What used to be scripted and wholly there, now is the domain of the poet as agent and of poetry as instrument. Critics have often read this compensation through poetry as Stevens’s substitution of poetry for religion, where the poet serves a priestly role after the office of priest can no longer do what it once did. And so this poem before the students’ eyes goes on its seeking mission, no longer capable of relying on “a souvenir,” on a memory, obliged instead “to face the men of the time and to meet / The women of the time” (lines 5, 7–8). Left with nothing that is sufficient, “it has to find what will suffice. It has / To construct a new stage” (lines 9–10). That sufficiency, that stage, the acting on it, and the words spoken are embodied by the “metaphysician” (line 19), the poet as actor acting out “The poem of the act of the mind” (line 26) the student is in the act of reading and, if reading “through sudden rightnesses” (line 21), acting in turn to realize the sufficiency that is a poem “Of Modern Poetry.”

Being is never “mere,” and “Of Mere Being” is a poem by virtue of that quality. The teaching of poetry can awaken in the student an awareness of this predicament and an alertness to his or her own being more than “mere being.” That alertness should awaken the student to what might lie at the end of the mind, whether a palm or the palm of one’s hand with one’s life all scripted in one’s life lines and waiting to be read. Stevens’s poem, then, in its full potential, can be taught as the poet’s teaching us how to read a poem while we are making one in the act of reading it. Students might then be asked whether the title of the poem could be ironic, a self-contradiction, a paradox, the unreason of reason when the reader comes to understand that “You know then that it is not the reason / That makes us happy or unhappy” (lines 7–8). Beyond reason, then, is where poetry sits like a bird on “The palm [that] stands on the edge of space” (line 10). “Of Mere Being,” then, is not only the poem we are reading but also the enactment of our being at the edge, at the edge of reason, but not so far beyond that it becomes impossible to understand what makes or does not make us happy. To be “merely,” then, is to be aware of reason’s boundaries and of poetry’s possibilities where the space of “human meaning” edges the space of “a foreign song,” that is, one that might not have any meaning by virtue of its foreignness, were it not for “human feeling” (lines 5–6). You might enjoin students to contemplate the relationship between being and language, or its “song,” that is, its poem, as an instrument that redeems the human from “mere being” and makes it possible for the reader of this poem to be merely human, in other words, a creature capable of poetry.



Nazim Hikmet

“Regarding Art” moves poetry to the realm of the industrial muse. You should alert students to the series of antitheses between stanzas (as between the first and second) and within them. Attention to the adversative conjunctions (“but,” “though”) and to optative syntax makes the counterpoint between the traditional lyrical, which Hikmet is not condemning necessarily, and the material quite clear. As a proponent of Marxism and its social materialism, class awareness, and focus on economic production, Hikmet would clearly have us “regard art” as part of daily life and its commonplace tools, instruments, and objects. This links the notion of modern poetry back to the Russian modernists and the Russian Revolution.



Bei Dao

“He Opens Wide a Third Eye . . .” refers to the opening of what in Western poetry is often called “second sight,” here, “the star above his head” (line 2). Below is the landscape traversed by “the expressway . . . through the setting

sun,” whose traffic collapses the archway of mountains into blackness, “into a layer of coal” (lines 5, 8). Alert students to this vertical axis that structures the poem and to the downward thrust as the poem moves into the second stanza, by the end of which the poetic persona sits under water in his cabin watching the long line of people “waiting to enter the emperor’s / memory” (lines 15–16), just as the expressway in the first stanza, which in the Western tradition would have been threaded through “the third eye” of the needle, collapses under the weight of its traffic instead. These are powerful images for making poetry, for threading vision through landscape and human masses into official memory. The embodiment of these images into language makes the poem. This poem is defined in the last verse as “The exile of words,” an exile begun in the writing, in the hope of finding a safe haven in the reading, perhaps.

“Old Snow” is the exile of words at the end of the first poem, waiting in their faraway hideout for news that never comes, as in the coda “the postmen’s strike drags on / no news of any kind.” The final verse of this poem distills the dramatic action, or the hopeless expectancy that there may be anything outside of language or beyond its poem, punctuated here by the subtle progression from “heavy snow” to “old snow” to “new snow [that] comes not at all,” leaving poetic art and its creation suspended as “. . . five magpies fly past.” The incidental, the contingent, the happenstance, like these five magpies flying by, is all there is and all that makes the poem, or poetry in general for Bei Dao, just as “Unexpected sunlight is an event.” This is the event of the poem itself for the alert reader.

Bertolt Brecht

The premiere of Brecht’s play *Mother Courage and Her Children* is often considered to be his own staging of the play in Berlin in January 1949, with his wife, Helene Weigel, playing the role of Mother Courage. In reality, however, *Mother Courage* had already been put on stage twice before: once in Zurich, in April 1941, and for the second time in Konstanz, Germany, in June 1946. The eight years between the Zurich and Berlin stagings brought about crucial changes of historical context. Brecht had originally thought that his play would first be performed in Scandinavia, where he spent several years in exile, and it is easy to see how in such a context the play could have been interpreted as a warning against any attempt to stay neutral in a war that is bound to sweep up everything and everybody. For the hypothetical Scandinavian as well as for the actual Swiss audience, the parallels between the Polish campaign discussed in one of the play’s first scenes and Hitler’s attack on Poland in 1939 would have been obvious. In 1949, by contrast, Nazism and World War II had come to an end, and Brecht was staging *Mother Courage* in a newly formed socialist state, the German Democratic Republic, where it was understood to highlight a somewhat different set of questions about the involvement of individuals and social classes in national politics in general and war in particular. In addition, it is worth noting that Brecht was dissatisfied with some of the

reactions the play had triggered in Zurich, and he made several significant changes for his own *mise-en-scène*.

The Berlin staging is unquestionably the one that caused the greatest controversy, pitting those East German critics who acknowledged Brecht's genius but considered his methods fundamentally incompatible with the goals of socialist art against those who saw his procedures as crucial for a revolutionary theater. Brecht's adversaries claimed that his theatrical procedures were not suitable for the common people and asked for plays that conformed more closely to conventional (i.e., fundamentally Aristotelian) drama. In addition, they accused Brecht of portraying Mother Courage's powerlessness and ultimate capitulation to the historical machinations of capitalism, a message they considered unwelcome in a newly founded socialist state. The playwright's defenders, by contrast, pointed out that drama, precisely if it intended to be realist, could not be fixed to one set of conventions and that the reaction of the protagonist is not one that the audience is invited to share. This discussion took place in the context of the governing Socialist Party's gradually increasing efforts to implement the directives of the Soviet cultural official Andrej Shdanov, a close associate of Joseph Stalin's, with whose guidelines regarding theater Brecht found himself in increasing conflict in the early 1950s. Much of the discussion replayed arguments that had already been articulated in the debate over realism and expressionism between Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht in the 1930s.

While many of the issues in this debate about how literary texts mean and should mean given specific political goals are fascinating, they cannot easily be conveyed to students unfamiliar with basic Marxist assumptions about culture or untrained in the basics of aesthetics and the philosophy of language. Nonetheless, at least one of the crucial questions that emerged in the controversy over Brecht's play, namely, how Mother Courage's relationship to the historical events surrounding her should be understood, is so important that no discussion of the play can do without it. Some early reviewers of the play saw Mother Courage in a sentimental or even heroic light, as an impoverished mother beaten down by war who attempts to save her children but has no power or choice in dealing with the war other than to try to survive. This is exactly the opposite of what Brecht intended; he wanted the audience to see her continued efforts to make money off the war as the result of a choice that could have been made otherwise, and as an ultimately deeply misguided one. In reaction to some of these first reviews, Brecht emphasized Mother Courage's mercantile side for the 1949 staging: In the first scene of the Zurich staging, for example, Eilif is drafted while Mother Courage gets a drink of liquor from inside her wagon for the sergeant, who is badly rattled by the prediction of his death; but for the Berlin staging, Brecht changed the scene so that now Mother Courage is in the process of selling the sergeant a belt while Eilif is persuaded to join the army, a change emphasizing that it is her business that distracts Mother Courage from looking after her children. (The pattern repeats itself with her other children—when Swiss Cheese and Katrin die, Mother Courage is also in the process of doing business.) While changes such as this one make it more difficult to

cast Mother Courage as the desperate mother, students may still consider her an admirable figure with whom they sympathize. Brecht's insistence that Mother Courage's choices need to be approached critically will lead students to consider one of the most fascinating problems in the play: Mother Courage's persistent appeal as a dramatic character, with her self-confidence, humor, sexual appetite, and savviness in dealing with complex situations, as against the "alienation techniques" Brecht deploys to distance us from her and make us look at her with a critical eye.

One of these estrangement techniques is Brecht's choice to call the play a "chronicle," a genre that he considered to be related to Shakespeare's "histories," rather than a tragedy. The central importance of this choice is, of course, that even with the title Brecht wanted to block any perception of Mother Courage as a tragic character who is driven into poverty, misery, and the loss of her family by forces beyond herself that cannot be humanly resisted: The word "chronicle" shifts the audience's perception of Mother Courage's life from the register of destiny to that of history. But the genre designation also provides an important clue to the organization of the play. It is divided into twelve scenes rather than conventional acts, and while the plot generally moves from Mother Courage's relative prosperity and intact family to her utter poverty and solitude at the end, this development does not take place in a straight chronological line or by means of tragic reversals; rather, Mother Courage's fortunes move up and down over the twelve years covered by the play (1824–1836), and sometimes the leaps between scenes, chronological as well as situational, are deliberately abrupt. Rather than on Aristotelian unities, then, *Mother Courage* relies on *montage* as its central technique, bits and pieces of dramatic action that gradually add up to a portrait of how one of the socially disenfranchised deals with continuing war. The point of this technique is to foreground that while some of the characters may delude themselves into believing that their fate is pre-ordained (which is the gist of the lots drawn in the first scene), in fact such a belief is mainly a way of excusing themselves from the moral responsibility of making their own decisions. Again and again, Mother Courage is confronted with choices that are hers to make and that can turn her own and her family's fortunes in different directions.

That the connection between individual scenes is loose does not, however, mean that they are random or incoherent. On the contrary, the play is structured around scenes strategically set up to be compared with each other in order to reveal important facets of war and its rhetoric. The scene in which Mother Courage haggles with the cook over the price of a capon, shrewdly raising the price when she realizes the general has guests, and insolently justifying the raise by the fact that the guest is her own son, is eerily echoed later in her haggling over the price of her second son's life, in a scene that pits her desire to save Swiss Cheese starkly against her desire to retain her wagon. Similarly, the two scenes in which the audience learns about Eilif's "heroic" deeds, one of which leads to praise and the other to execution, show up the absurd morality of war, in that actions that are considered worthy of death in peacetime are the occasion of praise in wartime. Katrin's affection for children, and particularly the scenes in which she heroically rescues a

baby from a burning house and saves the children of a city under attack at the price of her own life, foreground who the true mother figure in the play is through the contrast with Mother Courage's own much more compromised commitment to her children's well-being. It would be easy to design an assignment whereby students track such parallels and contrasts in the play to show how the scenes echo and respond to each other across the shifts and leaps between them.

In relation to Brecht's choice of the "chronicle" as his genre, you might also want to explore with students why he focuses on a seventeenth-century war to comment on a contemporary one. The fact that Mother Courage is not a figure entirely of his own invention but one who is already mentioned in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* (1670) does little to explain this choice, since Brecht's portrayal doesn't have much in common with Grimmelshausen's. But the considerable historical distance between the events in the play and Brecht's audience would make the reasons that motivate the various participants in the thirty years' war seem remote, and indeed perhaps indistinguishable, to the spectators. Unlike military conflicts in one's own time, which always tend to be covered by a veneer of legitimating ideology, a conflict that took place three hundred years earlier is more likely to be stripped of any such justification and to reveal the bare bones of its realities. That Mother Courage herself has this kind of distance to the official discourses that surround her and changes her allegiances several times in the interest of survival and business highlights this fact even more, and enables some of the play's funniest and most biting moments of satire: Mother Courage's comments on how war is "a continuation of business conducted by other means" (as Brecht once put it), how the conquered should not have meddled in the affairs of their own country as they were being invaded, how an emphasis on the necessity of virtue among common people reveals fatal flaws in political and military leadership, and how the death of a hero is unimportant because there will always be more, to name just a few, most clearly reveal Brecht's own savage critique of any politics that justifies continued human misery and slaughter. Given the intense ideological rhetoric that accompanied both world wars, this point could only be made in terms of a conflict that at first sight appeared very different due to its historical remoteness.

As already mentioned, the ending of the play was controversial among the play's initial critics and may be so among students who might find depressing the lack of any insight on Mother Courage's part—signaled in the play itself by her ignorance of her oldest son's death, which the audience is aware of—and the prospect of continued war and misery. Some critics argued that the play would have been more effective if Mother Courage's occasional shrewd comments about the true nature of war had in the end translated into some tangible consequence in her behavior. But Brecht responded that "It is not the playwright's duty to give Courage insight at the end; what matters to him is that the spectator gain insight." You might want to explore with students what other endings to the play might have been conceivable and to discuss why Brecht wrote the last scene as he did. In this context, it will be crucial to remind students of one of the fundamental premises of Brechtian "epic theater": namely, that the spectator's engagement with

events on the stage should take place not via identification with the central characters but through the spectators' critical reflection on these characters and by extension on themselves. This implies that Brecht's goal was precisely *not* to attribute a fundamental insight to *Mother Courage* that the spectators would be able to identify with and to take home as the play's didactic "message" but to invite a critical response to her behavior that might lead to an equally distanced look at their own entanglements with ideologies of war and state. This is Brecht's central innovation in thinking about the relationship between the audience and the play, though it was one rejected by his socialist critics, who wanted to see *Mother Courage* as a representative of the working class take action against capitalist militarism in some way. It would seem crucial for students' grasp of twentieth-century theater to understand this basic innovation.

Mother Courage can be taught easily in conjunction with texts in the "Perspectives: Echoes of War" section and with a range of texts that explore the predicament of women in general and mothers in particular, whose care for their families takes place under conditions of historical transformation.

PERSPECTIVES

Echoes of War

Reading a series of texts on war from across different cultures and from distinct historical moments and writerly perspectives is a profoundly exciting task, but it also poses important pedagogical challenges. Perhaps the most important of these concern history and culture themselves, and the way students encounter them through selections such as the ones presented in this Perspectives section. Reading a combination of poems and short stories about the Russo-Japanese war, World War I, World War II, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to name a few, may tempt students to look above all for universal features of the experience of war and violence. Crucial cultural and historical differences in how such violence is perceived and what meaning is attributed to it may appear secondary to them as compared with overreaching concerns such as suffering, death, fear, or loyalty. While it is of course legitimate to focus on such shared concerns, students will also need to be given a sense of how some wars assume a particular historical significance that others don't: World War I, for example, was perceived by many Europeans as not just a horrifyingly bloody conflict but also an event that marked the end of a certain historical era and of nineteenth-century European self-perceptions involving dignity, decency, and fair play. Fighting enemies that one often no longer saw eye to eye and annihilating them by technological means rather than in direct man-to-man combat was felt by many to represent not so much a repetition in humanity's unending history of violence as a historical caesura of the first order of magnitude. The Russo-Japanese war, by comparison, implied a severe blow to Russia's national self-consciousness—Russians felt that they should have easily won this war—but not

quite the kind of epochal upheaval associated with World War I. Making some such differences clear to students is important, even as some of the texts in the section—Carpentier’s short story and Herbert’s poem, above all (explored further later in this entry)—tend to emphasize the transhistorical nature of military conflict. Indeed, one of the first approaches to the texts in this section might be to explore to what extent they view the conflicts they address as historically specific and locally particular, or whether they portray them as part of a human condition that transcends such specificities. Such a first approach could draw on students’ own knowledge about some of the conflicts involved and lead to a reflection on why certain ones are perceived and remembered across cultural and temporal boundaries while others are ignored and forgotten.

The introduction to this section in the *Anthology* already spells out some of the most important thematic concerns you might subsequently explore with students. Themes such as loyalty and potentially conflicting obligations to nation, city, region, religion, or family; the direct experience of pain, suffering, and death and the memory and mourning of those left behind; the question of how “normal” everyday life can be lived in times of war; and the kind of language that is appropriate for such themes are all important issues that can easily be pursued throughout the texts. In the analysis of individual texts, it would be useful to reflect first of all on the different types of viewpoints they start from: the perspective of the soldier in the middle of a battle or undergoing serious conflicts of conscience (as in the selections by Brooke, Owens, and Mishima), the view of those who witness others go to battle and either fear for them or only dimly understand their situation (as in Yosano’s poem and Bachmann’s short story, for example), or a standpoint that is more difficult to define in relation to the events (Celan’s poem and Carpentier’s story are interesting test cases for discussing who is speaking or observing in these texts, and out of what situation they write).

Such an investigation will lead almost automatically to questions of literary form and its relationship to the often painful content it conveys. While detailed close readings of the poems in translations are somewhat limited without the presence of the original language text, some basic issues of form can nevertheless be brought up without any difficulty. The question, for example, of what aspects of war poetry as a genre tend to make one foreground, in comparison with those aspects that are easier to address in narrative form, should be discussed in some way. Almost automatically, this may also lead to one of the most central formal issues war literature raises: To what extent does *any* representation of conflict and violence by literary means by default imply what we might want to call an “aestheticization of violence”? War may be horrifying, but reading about war also implies some sort of pleasure; this problem is, of course, as old as the *Iliad*, which students may have read in Volume A. It would be worth discussing to what extent the individual texts in this section are conscious of this problem and deliberately try to aestheticize violence or on the contrary to avoid the beautification of suffering through literary means.

Discussing what is enjoyable about such texts may also help in dealing with what is one of the more difficult pedagogical problems in teaching them: Reading

texts about war, pain, and death can easily become daunting or discouraging for young students whose awareness of such conflicts will in most cases be highly mediated and who may simply find the portrayal of such situations depressing. It would be important here to emphasize both the emotional charge that these texts undoubtedly come with and the fact that they are not simple reproductions of realities, but complicated, stylized, and fundamentally aesthetic engagements with them. The latter fact is obvious to any teacher and scholar of literature, of course, but particularly in this thematic section it may be easy to overlook for students whose first reading reaction often is to treat literary texts as “documents” of reality. Reflecting with your students on what is involved in translating an experience in the trenches into a short story, or expressing one’s anguish for a loved one in poetic form, may be the key for their experience of these texts as literature.

Mishima’s chilling story unfolds the logic of Rupert Brooke’s description in his poem “Peace” (p. 387) of Death as simultaneously the soldier’s “worst friend and enemy.” Much as in Brooke’s poem, Mishima’s young lovers find peace in embracing death. Mishima goes far beyond Brooke, though, in developing an eroticism of suicidal self-sacrifice. Surprisingly, Mishima’s tone is calm throughout, as are his protagonists. You can ask students to consider how Mishima’s style works to make believable the extreme events he describes. Notably, even the characters themselves remark on the disjunction between their words and their planned actions: “And supper. . . ?” The words were delivered in such level, domestic tones that the lieutenant came near to thinking, for the fraction of a second, that everything had been a hallucination” (p. 396).

The calm of the narrative surface reinforces Mishima’s insistence that the double suicide is an act of supreme rationality and self-control. Students can look at the imagery of reflections and self-reflections that run through the story, from the wedding photo that seems in retrospect to show the lovers gazing on their deaths, to the lieutenant studying his reflection in the mirror as he shaves, to the intense concentration with which the lovers look at each other’s bodies first during sex and then during death. When Reiko begins to write out her suicide letter, the ink spreads across her tablet like a dark mirror. Mishima’s story seeks to serve as just such a mirror for the reader.

As a survivor of the most outrageous inhumanities of war, Levi had an insight into the ravages of dehumanization that should prove relevant for students at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a century that begins no better than the beginning, middle, or end of the twentieth. “The Two Flags” is a tale that speaks from somewhere else, distant enough from its point of origin to be safe, close enough in its admonition to be relevant. The allegory is a cautionary tale for the human species, which historically, despite such admonitions, continues to repeat the same atrocities and their variants time and again. You could ask students to relate this selection to what is occurring presently in their country and other parts of the world and the roles they themselves might be playing in these events.

As with most allegories, the places and persons are contrived, but they are forged with sufficiently recognizable elements as to contain some element of self-

recognition for those reading them. Lantania and Gunduwia are contrived nations in name and geography, but they don't differ so extravagantly from nations, ethnicities, and races and the ways in which these relate to each other. The flags are merely emblematic, literally and figuratively, of ingrained attitudes of territoriality, prejudice, historical delusion, political blindness, and the human capacity to transform difference, even when difference might be insignificant, into grounds for hatred, greed, war, stereotyping, and self-righteousness. How each flag signals these infelicities of human folly by the elements inscribed on it might make for a sobering lesson in the history of the ridiculous and in the mirror of historic self-recognition.

A mirror to each other, Lantania and Gunduwia could well reflect your students' own moment in history. In this regard, it might be well to look at the ways Levi's piece deals with institutions—public and private, the church, the media, sports, languages—and their roles in the reinforcement or demystification of national, ethnic, racial, and cultural myths that perpetuate the dynamics of otherness and its attendant fears and ferocities. The ultimate fate of the protagonist, Bertrando, could be related to attitudes and actions of friends, relatives, political leaders, public personages, and media ranters who populate the historical present.

As mentioned earlier, the selections by Herbert and Carpentier emphasize the perennially recurring, transhistorical nature of military conflict. Zbigniew Herbert's "Report from the Besieged City" is a poem not only about war but also about the making of poetry about war. This is clearly signaled by the chronicler in the poem, whose assigned role, even if ironically considered "inferior," is to leave a record of the siege. In fact, his chronicle is both what leaves the historical memory of the event and what creates the poem we read.

The procedures of chronicling the siege make this an even more self-reflective composition. The exact nature of the detail gives way to the significance of the event and of its being chronicled, with the events themselves depicted in quick brushstrokes, as is the case with the events recorded for each day of a whole week in a matter-of-fact way the chronicler knows "is monotonous I know it can't move anyone" (line 20). This is ironic, of course, because this is precisely what is moving. What Herbert's chronicler tells us, again, ironically, is precisely what the poet Herbert does: "I avoid any commentary I keep a tight hold on my emotions I write about the facts / only they it seems are appreciated in foreign markets" (lines 21–22).

Herbert's chronicler expresses another key change, more ironically than with the "pride" he feigns: "yet with a certain pride I would like to inform the world / that thanks to the war we have raised a new species of children / our children don't like fairy tales they play at killing" (lines 23–25). This is obviously not a game, much less a child's game, as Herbert's and Levi's historical memory tragically demonstrates (as does the history unfolding now in the lifetime of the students reading these texts). The dehumanization of war, like child abuse, perpetuates itself through the inhuman acts of those victims and their children who were subjected to the horrors of war's inhumanity. In what is bound to result in a timely discussion, students might examine the current conflicts in areas such as the Balkans, central Africa,

Palestine and Israel, and other unhappy places where past victims victimize others, thereby creating new victimizers in interminable cycles of terror.

The stanza around line 40 gives us a glimpse of the outside world looking on as the siege takes its toll and the war runs its course, which for those under siege is “as long as eternity” (line 46). Not only the process but also the principals seem to remain constant between the time of the chronicler’s record and the time of the students’ reading this: “those struck by misfortune are always alone / the defenders of the Dalai Lama the Kurds the Afghan mountaineers” (lines 47–48). In the end, when “the cemeteries grow larger the number of defenders is smaller,” when the City falls and the “single man escapes,” he is the man we read, the chronicler, “he will be the City,” and in him we now read “the face of hunger the face of fire face of death / worst of all—the face of betrayal” (lines 52, 54, 56–59). Once again, the poet Herbert forces us to oscillate in our understanding of the role of the poet as chronicler, who is at once indispensable, on whose face the history of war is written, but whose words are not only the testament of that struggle. His are also the face and words of betrayal to the extent that the experience cannot be conveyed through the record of the chronicle, except by suggestion and by degrees of approximation. And while war takes its toll, the only thing that is immune to war’s humiliation are a people’s dreams, and those dreams survive in the chronicle, in the verse that is the bottom line of poetry and of this poem—“and only our dreams have not been humiliated.”

Turning now to Alejo Carpentier, the focus of war shifts from the besieged to the besieging, from those trapped by anonymous forces of war, to those who set out to make war. Thus, Carpentier’s “Like the Night” in its five parts is similar to a five-act play, with each of the five acts re-enacting the same plot in a different place at a different time. War, Carpentier’s story seems to suggest, is perennially the same in its illusions, travesty, lies, and human self-deceptions. Starting with the Western tradition’s primal war epic, *The Iliad*, which gives the story its title, Carpentier traces humanity’s perpetual history of war through the ages, down to the twentieth century’s first World War, which was to have ended all wars. In each episode, the individuals may vary, yet as characters in the theater of war they are the same. The motives for war are just as hidden, the reasons given just as bogus, and the young soldiers always as naive and deluded. The outcome fares no better, since the end of any war serves as a platform or pretext for the next war. Living in a time of war, students may well explore the ways the war has been sold to the public, executed, justified, and, in the end, the ways its outcomes, which never seem to correspond with its initial justifications, are rationalized by the war makers. Motives for war seem to be no more variable or original, and you might ask students to compare the rhetoric of justifying war in each instance and in the particular case of the war(s) in their own time.

Being old enough to go to war and, in some cases, themselves soldiers, the issues dramatized by Carpentier’s story are bound to resonate with students. And it may be instructive to compare the wars narrated here, which in all cases were considered history’s last war, with the war being waged now, which is a self-declared

perpetually lasting and open-ended war. How does this make the present war qualitatively different, and what might be the consequences of this difference in the lives of those fighting the war, those enduring the brunt of the war, and those who always stand to gain from war?

Issues of gender and class are inalienable parts of wars and soldiering, and Carpentier's five acts of perennial war are deliberately gender inflected. Students will no doubt pick up on the question of gender in each episode. They will also be alert to the question of who does what on behalf of war, who is sent to war, and who is most often imperiled and killed in war. Again, some attentiveness to the list of casualties, the ethnic and racial origin of those casualties, and the ways the media, the government, and the military portray those fallen may be instructive.

In the end, the discrete episodes conflate again in Part V, returning the action to the Trojan War and Homer's *Iliad*. The cyclical structure of the story may be explored in terms of recurrence, repetition, and the vicious cycle that eternally destines humanity to a fate of war from which it does not seem to be able to extricate itself. The story, then, ending where it began, closes on itself not as finality but as the start of yet another cycle fated to endless repetition. You might ask students to explore whether this has to be this way or whether there may be possibilities for breaking the cycle and what these might be.

Art and artists inevitably figure among those who bear the brunt of war, and Nazim Hikmet's "Gioconda and SI-YA-U" links the disappearance of the Renaissance masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci from the Louvre to the fate of his friend, the Chinese poet SI-YA-U. Thinking him executed by the Chinese authorities, Hikmet dedicates this in memoriam, a form of poetic epitaph and eulogy, to SI-YA-U. It is an ironic and somewhat irreverent poem for a eulogy, but Hikmet knew his friend and his iconoclasm toward the official world of Chinese. And while SI-YA-U turned out not to have been beheaded after all, both the Turkish and the Chinese poets, whose humor was not shared by the ideological zealots of China, were burnt in effigy during the Cultural Revolution. It is not common to have humorous poems about war, and Hikmet's send-up of the official world of art museums, governments, even his own daily "prayers" as a non-practicing Turkish Muslim, interjects a knowing smile, not unlike Mona Lisa's, into the weighty subject of war and art.

War and its dark destructive force is the obverse of creation and light. The two opposites would appear to be inseparable in human history, and in "Seven Laments for the War-Dead" Yehuda Amichai echoes the seven-branched candelabrum of the menorah, the ceremonial source of light in the Jewish temple that symbolizes the seven days of the creation (Exodus 37:17-24). It's an ironic allusion by an anti-war poet who saw the history of Israel, as we see in the last of the "Laments" in this poem, as a trilingual narrative that spoke, and continues to speak, in the country's "three languages: Hebrew, Arabic, and Death" (line 116).

It should be noted, however, that in each instance in these seven "Laments" the war-dead are seen and felt through the living as living memory, often embodied by the very corporeality of the living—the father in the first, the child in the sec-

ond, a public monument in the third, the poet himself in the central fourth, the poet's memory in the fifth, the light of hope in the sixth, and, again, a father, who "walks up the street / like a woman with a dead fetus in her womb" in the seventh (lines 121–122). The last verse of this last "Lament" echoes like the prayer for the dead, "Behind all this, some great happiness is hiding." Amichai is not a poet of resignation but a poet of protest and hope, though one who does not gloss over the ambiguities and contradictions of human history.

Amichai's "Little Ruth" should be read as an instance of one who did not survive, who survived, instead, in the late poet's memory, who survives with her, in turn, in this unforgettable poem. The poem is a good example of how Amichai brings the sublime into conjunction with the ordinary, as is the case in the last stanza of the poem.

Samuel Beckett

Endgame, a play that Beckett called "dark as ink," is also the one that he himself liked best. It is a stark exploration of humans faced with their own deaths, as well as with the extinction of life around them. The title refers to the last part of a game of chess, when few figures are left on the board. Just what we understand the game being played to be depends, of course, to a certain extent on the *mise-en-scène* or the interpretive frame we choose for reading. While it is possible to read *Endgame* in the context of the Holocaust (only a little over a decade past at the time of the play's first performance in 1957) or of Hiroshima and the threat of nuclear annihilation, it is also plausible to read it as a more general meditation on the human encounter with death. Whichever avenue of interpretation you choose to foreground, the play goes well with several of the selections in the "Perspectives: Echoes of War" section. But one crucial difference lies in its typically Beckettian humor: Just how the many jokes and puns and ironic moments in the play should be staged in relation to its dominant tragic themes is a puzzle that has been addressed in very different ways by different directors. After early *mises-en-scène* that emphasized the tragic and desperate dimensions of the play, it took some time for adequate ways of staging its humor to emerge (in contrast to *Waiting for Godot*, which offered fewer challenges in this respect).

Class discussion could approach the play either by way of the text itself or—through video presentations—by way of different stagings. If the text is the basis for analysis, initially, you might want to explore how the space, the character configuration, and the dialogue are structured through symmetries and repetitions: two windows, two ashbins, two sets of two characters, lines that are repeated with little variation (such as Hamm's requests for his painkiller). "There are no accidents in *Endgame*; everything is built on analogy and repetition," Beckett himself said to the actors when he directed the play in Berlin in 1967. The prison- or bunker-like indoor space in which these repetitions unfold has a far more claustrophobic atmosphere than the outdoor scenery of *Waiting for*

Godot, and the fact that three of the four characters in the play are unable to move, confined in trashcans and wheelchairs, reinforces the sense of confinement. Even Clov (whose name should be pronounced so as to rhyme with “glove”), the one character who still can move, ends up being unable to leave the building as he so often threatens. In some way, then, the characters are as existentially locked up in final stagnation as the characters in Jean-Paul Sartre’s play *Huis clos* (*No Exit*, 1944).

Everything in and outside of this confined scenario is set up to signal the terminal stages of an earlier, fuller life. As critic Ruby Cohn sums it up:

High curtained windows, one on each side wall, face earth and sea—the remains of nature. Turned inconspicuously to the foot of the left wall is a picture—what remains of art. Downstage left are two touching ashbins covered by a sheet—what remains of an older generation. In the center is an armchair covered by a sheet—what remains of the prime of life. . . . action begins with Clov’s removal of the sheets. . . . What is unveiled is a family—ordinary in its memories, attachments and quarrels but extraordinary since it is the last of the human race. The words *finish* and *end* punctuate the dialogue. Both Hamm and Clov utter the words of Christ on the cross: “It is finished.” (“Beckett Directs,” pp. 297–298)

We might expect that a play set up in this way would unfold as a Heideggerian exploration of “being unto death” of sorts—a meditation, in other words, on the way in which human life assumes its full meaning and authenticity only in the consciousness of death. Yet nothing could be further from what Beckett presents us with: If death is omnipresent in his piece, so is the human unwillingness to acquiesce to it, the desire to put it off, to think or talk or remember one’s way out of it, and to search for any however minute sign of hope that it might be possible to escape at last. That such attempts are often naive, misplaced, self-contradictory, or simply absurd doesn’t make them any less compelling as theater, and much of the humor of the play arises from the characters’ applications of well-worn platitudes from everyday life to an existential situation from which all the trappings of normalcy have disappeared. These platitudes amount both to a critique of the kind of commonly accepted wisdom that hides rather than exposes the basic predicaments of the human condition and to an admission that there may be no language adequate to addressing such existential questions. In addition, the sometimes self-contradictory thoughts of the characters in addressing their situation shows that it may well be impossible for the human mind to take a consistent view of its own disappearance. While Hamm, for example, freely admits that he hesitates when faced with the possibility of his own ending, he is also comically horrified at the idea that human life might have a future; at Clov’s discovery of a flea on his body, Hamm exclaims, “But humanity might start from there all over again! Catch him, for the love of God!” (p. 449)—which makes Clov run for the insect powder.

One tactic for alerting students to the way in which apparently very simple concepts and sentences accrue meaning over the course of the play is to assign to them the task of tracing certain phrases or themes that reappear (such as “Then I’ll leave you” or references to time passing) and exploring how their significance changes in each context. Examining these contexts also provides an easy way to point out how entirely banal phrases turn into something like poetry in Beckett’s dialogue: the rhymes of “rain” and “complain,” for example, in the play’s first few pages, or the internal rhymes, echoes, repetitions, and meter in lines such as “But that’s always the way at the end of the day, isn’t it, Clov?”—“Always.”—“It’s the end of the day like any other day, isn’t it, Clov?” (p. 440). Similarly, Hamm’s short monologue beginning with “One day you’ll be blind, like me” (p. 450) is structured as a sort of prose poem in five stanzas, with carefully modulated repetitions and plays on central words. What may at first seem like somewhat monotonous dialogue to some students may take on an entirely different appearance when its repetitions are explained to them as passages of prose poetry that emerge out of what appears to be a conversation without any particular goal or depth.

Along with the poetic effects, it may also be important to have students discover the importance of storytelling in the play. Both Hamm and Nagg are prone to indulge in quite lengthy narratives that foreground crucial themes: Nagg’s joke about the tailor humorously highlights concerns of temporality, delay, creation, and completion that obviously are also central to the progress of the play itself, while Hamm’s story about the man who came begging for bread from him on Christmas Eve foregrounds issues of social hierarchy, exploitation, and mutual dependence that manifestly also apply to his own relationship with Clov. Apart from their thematic function, though, the structural function of such stories for the temporality of the play is worth pointing out. Like much of the dialogue, the stories are devices that delay the inevitable ending that is slowly drawing nearer and become a means of dealing with time lived in the awareness of approaching death. In a way, of course, that is one of the *ur*-situations of storytelling, as has frequently been pointed out with regard to Scheherazade’s stories, told as a means of warding off imminent death. (Narrative theorist Peter Brooks, in *Reading for the Plot*, 1984, has argued that in fact this warding off of the ending is a basic ingredient of *all* storytelling.) Unlikely as it may seem at first, a connection with the texts in the “Perspectives: The 1001 Nights in the Twentieth Century” section later in Volume F becomes possible if students are invited to explore how twentieth-century writers understand the basic functions of literary narrative.

A complementary approach to *Endgame* would be to look at it as performance. There are several recordings of different *mises-en-scène* of the play that could facilitate this approach; the Smithsonian Institution has a 1988 recording of Beckett’s own staging, BBC/Open University a different one from 1989. Depending on your inclinations and the available time, you could either use a full-length viewing of one of these performances as a basis for discussing the possibilities of the text or show individual scenes (such as the beginning of the play or the scene involving the toy dog) in different performances to give students a sense for the latitude of

interpretation that the play offers to directors and actors. It is quite possible that even one and the same performance will be read in quite different ways by different students: The complex relationship between the existential darkness and the comedy of the play tends to elicit such reactions. Whichever avenue of approach you end up choosing, however, it would be useful to give students at least a glimpse of how a theatrical text that will appear highly unusual to them looks when it is actually put on stage.

PERSPECTIVES

Cosmopolitan Exiles

Historically, exile and cosmopolitanism have gone together. People of one or another diaspora have often been called “cosmopolitan,” often with less than kind implications, as was the case, for example, of Jews in Soviet Russia during the twentieth century. Those not rooted in the land, or whose blood lines do not correspond to the history of national soil, have been referred to as cosmopolitans in ways that imply racial and ethnic otherness that cannot be identified with those criteria that racialized nationalism considered necessary for “natural,” or native, citizenship, no matter where one might have been born or for how many generations one’s ancestry extended back in the history of a country. This is still the case today in such notable examples as Germany, where guest workers whose habitation of German soil dates back to the middle of the twentieth century and at least two generations of their progeny are still not classifiable as Germans because of their blood lines.

Cosmopolitans, then, have always been “aliens,” as the United States officially designates those residents who are not citizens, or “naturalized citizens,” once they become citizens, which means that they originally were, and always will be, “unnatural.” When the condition of exile is added to this fate of cosmopolitanism, the predicaments of uprootedness, difference, and impermanence become foregrounded. These are simultaneously perilous and liberating predicaments, and writers who have found themselves in these situations throughout the twentieth century—and they have done so in greater numbers than at any other time—have produced a rich literary corpus inflected by their cosmopolitan and exilic conditions. In fact, for some critics such as Walter Benjamin, who reflected on cosmopolitanism as a cosmopolitan himself between World War I and World War II, there is a symbiotic relationship between these conditions and literature. In one of his more famous essays, “The Storyteller,” Benjamin tells us that a teller of tales is usually someone from another place or from another time, or both. The cosmopolitan exiles of his century embodied at least one, usually both, of these conditions as storytellers and as poets. The sample of these writers presented in this Perspectives section gathers some of the best known and certainly some of the most accomplished authors of the twentieth century.



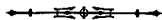
César Vallejo

“Agape” captures the plaintive irony of Vallejo’s poetry. The title of the poem refers to Christian love, a love of brotherly or sisterly concern and commitment, yet the poem chronicles the opposite predicament of abandonment and uncaring. It is interesting to note how the poet dramatizes this through the offering of the poetic persona, to whose offer of love and charity everyone remains oblivious. Conversely, of course, which may well be the poem’s real point, no one seems to care, for receptivity to the caring of others is often an index of one’s own generosity. The title of the poem then becomes truly ironic, since “agape” is precisely what is lacking.

“Our Daily Bread” is likewise religiously inflected, as the title, which refers to the “Pater Noster,” the common prayer, and the verses in the middle of the poem indicate—“Give us our daily bread, / Lord . . .!” How a people laments may be as accurate an index of their culture as any other deeply felt form of expression. In this regard, students might find it interesting to compare Vallejo to Yehuda Amichai and his “Seven Laments” (Vol. F, p. 428). Guilt, the guilt of simply existing, is an integral element of the plaintive expression of the Andean indigenous people and their Catholic descendants. Vallejo, a part Andean Indian, part Spanish Catholic “mestizo” destined by family legacy to be a priest, a vocation that he spurned in favor of a poetic calling, has a double jeopardy in this regard. “Our Daily Bread” is dramatically articulate on his guilt for usurping someone else’s potential existence by coming into this world himself. The poem is an act of atonement—“All my bones belong to others; / perhaps I stole them! / I took for my own what was / meant, perhaps, for another; / and I think that, had I not been born, / another poor man would be drinking this coffee! / I am an awful thief . . . Where will I go!” (lines 17–23). It is also simultaneously a confessional, an offering for a communion in which the poet’s own self is offered as “the daily bread” and as the Martyr’s body: “I want to knock on all the doors / and beg who knows who to forgive me, / and bake him little pieces of fresh bread / here, in the oven of my heart . . .!” (lines 26–29).

When Vallejo left for Paris in 1923 at age thirty-one, he was never to return to Peru or see his mother again. “Good Sense,” a prose poem on the topic of birth and rebirth, departure and return, the passing and the reversal of time, laments the poet’s aging through the eyes of the poet’s mother. The unbridgeable distance that separates Peru from Paris is matched in its immensity by the feeling of vastness surrounding the poet in the alien world of the French capital. The poet’s relationship to his mother was always a very special one and, very much in the native Andean tradition, Vallejo saw his mother not only as the giver of life but also as the determinant of his destiny, expressed here in that otherwise insignificant gesture of turning up a collar: “My mother turns up the collar of my overcoat, not because it is beginning to snow, but so it can begin to snow” (p. 472).

Vallejo, who saw his own life and exile as a form of martyrdom, prophesied the place and circumstances of his own death. “Black Stone on a White Stone” turned out to be the poet’s own epitaph. He foresaw that he would die in Paris (“a day I can already remember,” line 2), where the poet lived in poverty the last fifteen years of his life. Written as a “posthumous” poem, as if the poet had already died (note the transition from future tense to the past tense starting in the second stanza), the foresight of the day, the season, the weather, and the particulars of his death turned out to be as foreseen by the poet and as written in this poem. Once again, Vallejo’s poem has definite Catholic resonances. The poet’s persona is clearly Christological in this sense. Like Christ, who predicted his passion thrice, Vallejo the martyr in this poem predicts his own death three times, and the predicted Thursday, the day on which he actually did die, is not accidental. Holy Thursday is Ascension Day, the day on which Christ ascended to heaven forty days after his resurrection.



Vladimir Nabokov

“An Evening of Russian Poetry” is a send-up of the academic setting for poetry and the poetry reading circuit in American academia. Students should understand that they are the target, and instructors should know that they are the brunt of the parody. Alertness to the gender-inflected spoof would also be in order, as would a wakefulness to the parochial nature of literary study, especially during Nabokov’s salad days as an academic and writer on the lecture and reading circuit in American universities and women’s colleges, as is the case with the setting of this poem’s oblique narrative.

There is a progression in the development of this little drama on and in poetry, starting as it does with everything and everywhere, and winding through the clichéd and predictable heart of Russian poetry stereotypically expected by every college audience, namely, Pushkin and Russian romantic poetry (lines 85 and forward). The title of the poem, “An Evening of Russian Poetry,” is itself revealing, suggesting a genteel soiree in an English department. Nabokov could be wicked, and he is at his wicked best here, beginning with the abc’s of the occasion—the Cyrillic and Greek alphabets, neither of which, or any difference between them, holds any trace of recognition for the young lady fitting the slides into the slide projector. Nor does the poet’s name, or the poet himself, have any particular meaning (see lines 6–10).

Poets and those who teach poetry know that poems are made word for word. Yet words are most often inconveniences, like a plethora of notes in a Mozart composition; hence, the first question by “Sylvia” at the end of the second stanza. Most teachers, especially teachers of language and literature, will recognize what they often have to overcome in the question by “Sylvia”: “*Why do you speak of words / when all we want is knowledge nicely browned?*” (lines 17–18). The

response should also resonate with those teaching this material since, in our own way, these are the responses we rehearse daily in our pedagogical settings. Like the rest of the questions and the poet's responses, students might be asked to engage the issues—cultural, educational, literary—that are implied in this deliberately and ironically staged exchange so familiar to teachers of national and of world literatures.

In unmistakably self-reflective commentary, the poet views his circumstance before this audience in this setting as yet another locus of displacement, part of the inevitable exile of the poet and doubly inevitable for the poet in exile: “But to unneeded symbols consecrated, / escorted by a vaguely infantile / path for bare feet, our roads were always fated / to lead into the silence of exile” (lines 106–109). And when the poet starts talking to himself, we get the self-portrait of a performance artist, an entertainer obliged willy-nilly to betray poetry for the sake of it, yet hoping to keep poetry's mystery intact (line 133), even as he reaches for the hand extending the “smiling envelope” with his honorarium check. And for a goodnight and the predictable pleasantries for the closure of such an evening, the poet betrays the Russian language and the English, giving not a translation of the valediction but an anticipation of his sleepless night, an invocation to poetry, and a begging for forgiveness for the “apostasy.” A good question for the class might be to reflect on how the presentation of poetry in a teaching situation might be redeemed and how the teacher or poet might be redeemable in light of what they have to do to poetry to get poems across.



Czeslaw Milosz

Having experienced firsthand some of the worst atrocities of war and of political regimes in twentieth-century Europe, Milosz never managed to overcome the sense of being a survivor. “Child of Europe” is an eight-part poetic dramatization of having survived and having done so at the expense of those who were less fortunate. There is a guilty irony in the claims of part 1, where the poet either means the opposite of what he says or expresses certain truths that are never included in historical accounts written by those who survive to write history. Part 2 addresses the cultural and philosophical legacy of Europe, those monuments of architecture and learning that dispose the European to feel a sense of natural superiority above other peoples of the world. Part 3 serves as critique of a liberal discourse that hides the force of its triumphalism behind euphemistic language. It is also an exposure of processes of circular reasoning that makes the outcome of hypotheses and of desired consequences inevitable.

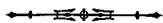
In the series of injunctions that begin with part 4, students can appreciate the twisted logic of the clever and the uses to which wisdom can be and, Milosz implies, has been put. Part 5 is directed at the uses of language and the sophistry of words, used not in the service of reason but as instruments of passion, because

“the passionless cannot change history” (line 67), a reference to the appeal by certain regimes to the affective sentimentality that manipulates people and makes history through demagoguery. And part 6, by contrast, alludes to the dehumanization that has turned people from common cause and mutual support and has made history useless as a guide for the present and for the future. Part 7 dramatizes the consequences of historical amnesia and the human capacity to mold history to purpose and to self-interested ends. In the end, in part 8, neither laughter, nor truth, nor humor, that is, none of the attributes that make humans human, are of any use. All that is done is done for “reasons,” which is to say out of conformity to deadly regimes that have set the world on fire. “Child of Europe,” then, is Milosz’s indictment of Europe’s twentieth-century history on eight related counts that correspond to each of the eight parts of this key poem.

“Encounter” belongs to that venerable genre of the *ubi sunt*, an elegy for the passing of time but, as the last verse of the poem states, the question about where all the flowers might have gone is asked here “not out of sorrow, but in wonder.”

The poem “Dedication” has a two-part focus, the first corresponding to the three initial stanzas, the second to the last two. These three first stanzas echo “Child of Europe” and the implicit guilt of the survivor expressed to the fallen. The last two stanzas are a meta-poetic reflection on the use of poetry itself in the course of human events. The poet can only find salvation in his/her capacity to “save / Nations or people” (lines 14–15). Otherwise, poetry is trite and false. The title of this poem, “Dedication,” takes its significance from the last stanza, where the poet dedicates the book of poems in which the poem is contained as an offering to the dead, to placate their haunting and to assuage his conscience, as the final two verses would seem to indicate.

“Fear-Dream” is also a key to Milosz’s poetic career and to the dynamic that drives him to survive in the displacements of exile and foreign geographies. He assimilates his near abandonment in a place called Orsha to the horrors of historical relocation and wandering of tribes, armies, and forced labor on long marches to his own would-have-been fate had he gotten lost in that forsaken place when he was six years old. Milosz, clearly, has never gotten over the trauma of that close mishap, and his arrival as a “refugee from fictitious States” (line 24) at a cosmopolitan center, “a city of high houses and long streets” (line 18), provokes the same uncertainty and insecurity in him as that childhood trauma. Poetry and exile, then, go hand in hand for Milosz as he continuously traverses the landscape of his “Fear-Dream.”



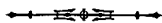
V. S. Naipaul

Through this passage from Naipaul’s “Prologue to an Autobiography,” students stand to learn how a writing career that culminates in the Nobel Prize for Literature begins. The title itself should not be overlooked, inasmuch as it sug-

gests that the true “autobiography” of the author is in his literary works and not in the narrative generically identified as “autobiography,” which Naipaul considers more properly a “prologue.” Naipaul’s rehearsal of his early experiences in trying to become a writer should also prove revealing about the colonial condition, marginality, and circumstances said to be postcolonial by the critical and theoretical practitioners in the academic profession that work under the flag of postcoloniality.

It will be obvious to students that the Naipaul in this narrative is the young would-be writer who came in from nowhere, since Trinidad and Tobago for metropolitan institutions like the University of Oxford or the BBC in London are literally “out there.” The young Naipaul clearly cannot put that feeling of the colonial subject from the periphery behind him, and he still may not be able to do so even after having been knighted by the Queen of England and having had the Nobel Prize conferred upon him for his work as a writer. Supported by a Trinidadian government scholarship at Oxford, at the BBC he is a “freelance,” a position that reinforces his situation as colonial other and marginal to the mainstream of English society—“to me then not a word [‘freelances’] suggesting freedom and valour, but suggesting only people on the fringe of a mighty enterprise, a depressed and suppliant class” (pp. 483–484). A good way to begin discussion of this selection, then, is to ask students to take measure of the distance between the circumstances of the young Naipaul in the BBC newsroom and the circumstances in the first sentence of a would-be novel he writes on the BBC typewriter. How does that Port of Spain morning in this sentence that becomes the refrain in this “Prologue” travel to London, and what does it end up doing for the author, for English society, and for the history and literature of colonialism? How does Naipaul repeatedly reflect in this selection on the first and second sentences of his writing career in the metropolis?

Alert your students as well to the constantly recursive movement of this narrative that takes the author and the reader progressively backward into other transitions—from India to the Indies, from the country side of Trinidad to the city, and from the human relationships of an agrarian existence to the intricacies of city life and the web of displaced family and kin. Recursive movement in narrative is a function of memory, as the author’s narration tells us. Ask students to consider what happens to memory in the process of being transformed from recollection to narrative. When and how does recollection cease to be reminiscence and become a novel? Why is the author constantly anxious in this process? Why is it that Naipaul is perpetually subject to anxiety? How is the memory of the carpenter and his craft, who predates Bogart in the life of the young Naipaul, significant for the art of the aspiring novelist? What other writers and artists are there in the Port of Spain memory of Naipaul? How do they become significant for the aspiring artists? What is the role of “knowledge” (p. 490) in being a writer, and how is knowledge different for an Englishman and for a colonial subject who becomes a writer in English? What about self-knowledge; does it prove sufficient?



Adonis (Ali Ahmad Sa'id)

Adonis owes as much to the French poets as to the classical Arabic Sufi writers, particularly al-Niffari (see Vol. B). "A Mirror for Khalida" can be taught as a fine example of how writing becomes a way to consolidate internal relationships in a situation of cosmopolitan exile, where the word becomes a substitute for the home that is left behind. The cohesive interaction between the poet and his wife, which goes beyond the marital bond to a literary one (for she is also his critic and the elucidator of his work), enables the poet to endure exile and achieve a solid position of equilibrium and continuity despite the geographical gap that threatens to swallow his confidence and his sense of identity. Hence a clear sense of loss, fatigue, and the premonition of death punctuate the poem and structure its different parts. You can use this to justify both the significance of Adonis and his limitations as a poet with very controversial appeal in his own culture.

Jorge Luis Borges

"The Garden of Forking Paths" is not about a garden or the paths in the garden but about a book by that title. The book contaminates the world and the record of its events, namely, history. It is characteristic of Borges to blur the frontiers between literature and reality, between imaginative writing and documentary composition, with the end result that the imaginary worlds of fictitious narrative blend into the real world of historical documentation, making the two indistinguishable. The outcome of this sort of writing, then, leads us to question the nature of what is considered to be real and what is deemed illusory.

The book titled *The Garden of Forking Paths*, it turns out, includes within it the plot of the story our narrator/editor named Borges tells us in this selection with the same title. This, we discover, is not purely coincidental, but the logical or statistical outcome of perpetually multiplying, or forking, possibilities, which end up bringing face to face the progeny of the author of the book *The Garden of Forking Paths* and the one man in the world who has been devoting his scholarly life to deciphering that book. The author is Ts'ui Pen, and the explicator of his book is Stephen Albert. The spy who is the descendant of Ts'ui Pen, and who must kill Stephen Albert, much to his regret, is Dr. Yu Tsun. His antagonist in this spy-versus-spy tale is Capt. Richard Madden, an Irishman working for the British, who by virtue of being Irish has something to prove to his English employers, just as Yu Tsun, a Chinese man, that is, a non-Caucasian, also has something to prove to his German employers who, even in World War I, are concerned with racial purity and the superiority of the white race. Albert must be killed because the town to be bombed by the Germans in France is named Albert and the news of murder will reach the German command by way of the

newspapers, whereupon the German air force will know the name of the target. Yu Tsun also knows that his own fate is sealed, realizing that his capture is inevitable, as is his sentence to hang. What we read starting with the second paragraph is his narration of these events, a narration that students will notice begins in mid-sentence; presumably, all that came before it has already made what is to happen and its outcome inevitable.

Students will also note that the story itself, not Yu Tsun's narrative, begins with a reference to history and the historical record, which Yu Tsun's narrative, as collected and edited for us by Borges, will set straight. What this narrative will clarify is the real reason for a delay in the bombing of Albert in July 1916, which the cited history by the British historian Liddell Hart does not explain properly. Borges's tale, then, is a clear instance of imaginative narrative correcting reality, fiction clarifying and setting the historical record straight with its own "truth." Whether Liddell's history is accurately depicted by Borges's story is not the issue here. The whole question of historical factuality is mooted by the mere highlighting of historical narrative as narrative and as strategy of language. What matters are the strategies and turns of language with which history and the story are constructed. Borges is a master at foregrounding this constructedness of all narrations, whether they claim to be documentary and true, or fictitious and even more revealing of truth than historical truth claims. Students should approach "The Garden of Forking Paths" as a detective case that itself has to be solved. Borges has laid any number of clues throughout the text so that his tracks parallel those of his characters, and students are usually delighted with making those discoveries as readers who simultaneously follow both forking paths, that of the story they are being told, and the story, with all its telltale signs, they are reading and pursuing as reader-detectives.

"The Library of Babel," as the title's allusion to the Tower of Babel indicates, is at once an exaggeration and a commonplace. It is an exaggeration because of its equation of the universe with the library; it is a commonplace because our universe is tantamount to all that we know and the sum total of our knowledge does not exceed the storehouse of knowledge we have accumulated in our collective library. In this bifurcation, Borges captures the over-reaching of human ambition, even as he circumscribes infinity and eternity within our notions of what infinity and eternity might be and as these might be characterized in the unending intricacies of our archival and scientific systems.

Irony is once again central to Borges's story, and students will no doubt be delighted to be reminded that the book they hold in their hands is a microcosm of "the Library" and the basic elements that constitute their assignment are the very same elemental basis of the most extensive and most elaborate library—the 23 letters of the alphabet. For Borges these are the equivalent of the atomic or subatomic particles with which the cosmos, as we know it, is constructed. Within this knowledge, Borges obviously has a great deal of fun, often at his own expense as a bibliophile and man of letters, in more senses than one. The story, then, can be read as allegory of the sum total of our knowledge, as well as a re-

flection of our systematic foolishness that we have built into endless intricacy with no less laughable and damnable ambition than the builders of the Tower of Babel. How we have come to this achievement is what Borges portrays, as he elaborates on the infinite possibilities of repetition and variation—or seemingly infinite possibilities, since we'll never know for sure except through our speculative systems that we call literature, philosophy, history, or any other field whose archives are to be found in some hexagon of the Library. The specifics, whether folly, hubris, self-effacement, or blithe plodding, should be up to the students to lay out, hopefully with some sympathy for their teachers' obsessions identified in the stock characters and their parodic renditions arrayed here across the ages and the Library's stacks and galleries.

"Borges and I" is one of the most frequently anthologized pieces by the author. It touches on one of Borges' favorite themes, one he inherited most notably from the authors he cites most often—Edgar Allan Poe ("William Wilson"), Robert Louis Stevenson ("Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"), and Oscar Wilde ("Picture of Dorian Gray"). Were we to be able to answer the writer's final uncertainty, we would say that this is an "autobiographical" sketch. Well, it is and it is not, in keeping with the bifurcating nature of all paths in Borges. Since the "auto" of this "biographic" squib is the very subject in question, you could ask students to enjoy deciphering whether what we have here is a case of two who are one or one who is perpetually two.

"The Cult of the Phoenix" is certainly a riddle, and the theme of the reproduction of one into multiples continues unabated in Borges. Given Borges's rather staid and scholarly mien, students are usually startled to discover that they themselves are the most obvious evidence of the answer to the riddle. A number of elements Borges throws into the mix may waylay the less imaginative, and some may even startle the most prudish. But there is no point in becoming prurient when teaching this piece since its normality and commonplace inevitableness are embodied as much by teachers as by students. The scholarly apparatus and learned circumlocutions are obviously part of the strategy, and students should have fun teasing each of these out as clues and ruses.

"The Web" obviously does not refer to the Internet but to the intricacies of the inevitable and the mysterious. We know where we are born, says an ancient Arabic motto, but where we shall die is not for us to know. Borges dares inquire, nonetheless, and as we now know, and before we "forget it" (line 23), Borges did indeed die in the very first city he speculates about in the second line of his poem, "Geneva, where revelation came to me / through Virgil and Tacitus [and some say through his father's mistress, an initiation arranged by his father himself], and certainly not from Calvin?" (lines 2–3). What we cannot be certain of is the language ("What language am I doomed to die in?", line 18) and the exact moment ("What time will it be?", line 24), or even whether one dies in a specific time, or passes from one into another in untimely fashion; or whether death has or does not have language of its own that supplants all the languages even a polyglot like Borges might bring to the occasion.

You should inform students that though Borges in this poem does consider these questions to be “digressions” (line 31) and “part of the fatal web of cause and effect / that no man can foresee, nor any god” (lines 33–34), he did indeed manage to allay some of the uncertainty by going to Geneva to die when he knew himself to be dying from terminal cancer in 1986. He is buried there, and his gravesite is a regular destination for pilgrims who ask questions like his but who may have even less certainty about the answers than he did.



RESONANCE

Gabriel García Márquez

This short piece, “I Sell My Dreams,” by the Colombian Nobel Laureate has been placed here as a Resonance selection because it resonates the way dreams and reality resonate and echo each other, at times without disclosing where the original sound of the resonance began, whether in dream or in reality. García Márquez is clearly echoing Borges in this regard, but Borges may be said to have been dreamt in the act of dreaming by Pablo Neruda, who resounds with Borges in anticipation of what he senses is inevitable in Borges’s body of writing, or his corpus of dreams. The enigmatic dreamer with the snake ring with emerald eyes on her right forefinger is no less a resonance of García Márquez himself, who, like her, has done nothing in life but sell his dreams for a living, whether as a novelist or as a journalist.

The anecdote he recounts here, as reportage, is his own “stratagem for surviving,” just as Frau Frieda’s dreams were for her. It is not without some irony that what the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and Frau Frieda share is always a reality for her, while for the Nobel Laureate poet it is an instance of an occasional dream slipping “in that has nothing to do with real life” (p. 513). García Márquez seems to suggest that it is highly unlikely that this could ever be the case, and this may be why he has declared on more than one occasion that reality is more fantastic than fiction. You could ask students to elaborate on this possibility on the basis of this story.



Naguib Mahfouz

This group of works by Naguib Mahfouz is the only independent section of Arabic literature in this volume of the *Anthology*, and it therefore offers the most extended place to consider the development and nature of modern Arabic narrative. The development of Arabic literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries resulted from an elaborate process of cultural transition and a complex

course of acculturation due to the contact and constant interaction with Europe and its culture. The most important outcome of this interaction is the genesis of modern Arabic narrative genres, particularly the short story, the novel, and drama, which did not exist before in Arabic literature. (For a detailed study of this elaborate process, see Sabry Hafez, *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse*, 1993.) It is therefore essential to teach Mahfouz and most of the Arabic and Islamic texts in this volume with this in mind, and to emphasize the intertextual process that informs their creation as well as the dynamics of their literary reception. This means that they should not be taught as echoes of European literatures but as original works emerging from the same world (in Edward Said's worldliness of the text) and similar processes and tensions that informed their European counterparts. This explains how they fit neatly with the thematic organization of this volume of the *Anthology* and how they dealt with and even contributed to issues similar to those of their counterparts in world literature. Their intertextual interaction with their European counterparts is one facet of their complex dialogue with a host of social, political, and literary aspects of their own culture and society. Teachers are dealing here with literature of dual traditions, for it is as much a product of a rich and sustained Arabic and Islamic culture as of a fecund but complex dialogue with the West.

Our varied selections from Mahfouz offer students a glimpse of the rich and fascinating world of this great writer, the only Arab writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature so far. The world of Mahfouz is a vast and extremely rich one, extending from Pharaonic times to the present day. He scans the various changes in the reality, dreams, and aspirations of his nation and provides an elaborate record of its attempts to come to terms with the process of modernization. Although the space of his world is mainly Cairo and predominantly the old quarter of Jammaliyyah in which he spent his childhood, he weaves the urban scene into an elaborate and highly significant metaphor of the whole national condition. His narrative world is peopled with characters from all walks of Egyptian life, from the beggars of Cairo to the aristocrats in its palaces, with a special place reserved for the intellectuals with whom Mahfouz identifies. On the literary plain his career spans the whole process of development of the Arabic novel from the historical to the modernistic and lyrical, and as a result any single treatment on his achievements cannot be more than sketching the map and opening the way for a detailed discussion.

By any standard, Mahfouz is a major writer of the twentieth century, with a rich and varied output: more than thirty novels and twenty collections of short stories that cover various aspects of human experience in the Arabic part of the world and elevate them to universal humanity. Placed in the *Anthology* between selections by Jorge Luis Borges and the various writers inspired by the *Thousand and One Nights* (to this section we could add the work of Rushdie and others), Mahfouz's work offers teachers a fascinating bridge between the worlds of Latin American magical realism and sophisticated modern Western literature. Although he started his major work in the realistic tradition, in the 1960s the need to level the strongest possible criticism against the prevailing political system

and at the same time escape its heavy-handed censorship led to the development of fine and highly sophisticated textual strategies. This sharpened his works' ability to deal suggestively and often symbolically with the most taboo of issues and developed a complex code that heightened the narrative's ability to generate multifarious meaning. Instead of a direct treatment in which the narrative text has one layer of meaning, this complex and suggestive strategy furnished his work with various layers of meaning and enabled it to communicate with the reading public at many levels. The richness of his narrative texts sharpened the readers' awareness of the various shortcomings of the political system and foreshadowed the disaster of the Arab/Israeli War of 1967 long before it took place. It pointed to the growth of national apathy and the forces that thwarted any sincere effort to correct the fraudulent Egyptian political establishment or motivate change. "Zaabalawi" is from this period and thus redolent with suggestive allusions. The futility of the search in the first and the oppressive atmosphere of the second were read as defiance against the prevailing circumstances in which the texts were written. Yet they are still read beyond this specific context as works of great insight into the human condition.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a marked increase in Mahfouz's productivity and a change in the nature of his narrative style, which tends to conduct an intertextual dialogue with the traditional and classical genre of narrative. Among the numerous works of this period, *The Harafish* (The Common Folk) stands out as one of the best examples of the modern Arabic novel. It is a remarkable achievement that rivals his *Cairo Trilogy*, his masterly work in the realistic tradition, in its richness and complexity. It distills the profound tradition of popular storytelling and subjects its textual strategies to the demands of modernistic narrative. Here we have a different form of narrative that creates its own magic modernism without alienating itself from readers highly accustomed to the rubrics of realism. There are ten stories developed in the novel, not consecutively but generatively, with each story generating within its very structure the seeds of the following one, similar to a set of Russian dolls. But unlike the Russian dolls, the stories within this novel are always different, with a great variety of action and characterization and a common thread of similarity going through them only in the deep philosophical level.

This narrative approach is also followed in *The Arabian Nights and Days*, which is an ambitious attempt to inscribe the modern preoccupations of the Arab world into the fantastic world of *The Arabian Nights*. Here Mahfouz endeavors to posit the modern novel as rival to the great classic of Arabic narrative and succeeds in reproducing the magic world of the old classic, but with contemporary slants and relevance. The written text in these two novels should not be taught as fantastic narratives as such, though they are full of fantasy, for each hides beneath its surface a suppressed narrative that relates the destiny of the characters to that of their own nation and opens the fantastic narrative to the complex condition of the modern nation. This is what makes these novels unique and grants them an unprecedented position in world literature.

PERSPECTIVES

The 1001 Nights in the Twentieth Century

The episodic nature of the *Tales of the Thousand and One Nights*, the classic of narrative prose, makes it eminently teachable, particularly in its twentieth-century versions. There is a natural affinity between the *Thousand and One Nights* and the twentieth century's penchant for self-reflective, intertextual narratives. The psychologically grounded literary experiments and tales about storytelling—from surrealism in poetry to stream-of-consciousness experiments in prose narratives to self-referring poetry such as the poems collected in the *Anthology* in the “Perspectives: Poetry About Poetry” section—hark back to the highly self-aware technical devices of the *Thousand and One Nights*. And this is true not only of Western literary traditions but of Middle Eastern, African, and East European literary cultures as well. The legacy of the *Thousand and One Nights* extends around the world, at times unbeknownst to the writers themselves who are working in this tradition, since the origin of these tales themselves extends, as one of the selected texts indicates, “from the land of the Maghrabis [North Africa] all the way to China” (Gün, p. 545).

Thematically and politically, the *Thousand and One Nights* exerts just as much influence in twentieth-century concerns with cultural politics, with narrative empowerment, and with politics of gender. The key questions of social roles and of who speaks, as well as the attendant question of who has a voice in representing hierarchies in social reality, have their dramatized antecedents in the episodes of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The texts selected for this Perspectives section, then, should be studied as self-conscious dramatizations of these issue-oriented modes of narration that not only enact the plots of their stories but also rehearse the social and cultural implications of the issues they dramatize.

Students have to be alerted, then, to what these stories are telling, and they also have to remain wakeful to the implications of the telling and to the significance of who is doing the telling. Students need to know that the telling of the stories in the *Thousand and One Nights* is a matter of life and death and not just a pastime. This should help focus students on the urgency of the language and its strategic use for holding death at bay. The most important lesson of the *Thousand and One Nights* may well be that storytelling, that is, literature, is not a leisure activity for passing the time of day but a series of life-sustaining acts whose creative efforts are imaginative ways of perpetuating life through its narrative recreations. In this sense, you can remind students of the life-enhancing role of literature and literary study. You can use the *Thousand and One Nights*, then, to make the case for the vital role of literature in society and in your students' education as an essential part of life, rather than as an embellishment.



Güneli Gün

The most efficient summary of the *Thousand and One Nights* can be found in Güneli Gün's version of these tales (specifically on p. 545 of our *Anthology*). Gün's text captures some of the most important procedures of this classical antecedent to modern storytelling, starting with the perspectival technique of the spectacle as mirror, the disguised watcher scoping the self in disguise; this is the tale of "The False Caliph" with which the selection from Gün's novel begins. Baghdad has always been a place to watch and continues to bear watching.

From the cross-dressed characters and gender-inflected roles, Gün's text takes the reader to the story of its own composition, in part anticipating the next selection of this Perspectives section, namely, John Barth. Invoking the American novelist and her former writing teacher as the "jinni" of her tale under the orientalized name of Jann Baath, Gün sets up the dialogue with the American master of tales embedded within tales as the main character of that classic. He listens, perplexed, but never at a loss for words, as he tells her, from his Western and twentieth-century vantage point, "Your *Thousand and One Nights*. [. . .] Your work, although not read as much in the particular future I come from, has never been off my desk" (p. 544). In this trespass through narrative and temporal frames, Gün also sets up a conversation between the tale-teller and protagonist, Shahrazad, and her own twentieth-century master of tale-telling. In the process, the students can witness and "overhear" each, telling them about the *Thousand and One Nights* and their respective roles within and through that work.



John Barth

Once students traverse Güneli Gün's text, the tale-teller's next frame is none other than the tale of the teller they have just passed through. We feature John Barth now as author rather than as character-author, and from his own filial redoubling we pass to the familial duo of siblings, one of whom Barth takes as focalizer for his own version of the *Thousand and One Nights*, namely, Scheherazade's (as he transcribes her name from the Arabic script) sister, Dunyazade, who lies in the bunk bed beneath hers, making sure Scheherazade keeps the stories coming and her life going through night after night for 1001 nights. Barth takes us to the 1001st night in this selection from his book *Chimera* (1972).

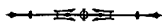


Italo Calvino

Like the *Thousand and One Nights*, Calvino's *Invisible Cities* consist of "overheard" conversations between highly unequal interlocutors—the Emperor of China Kublai

Khan and the adventurer Marco Polo. As with the narrative of *Thousand and One Nights*, we only hear the voice of the lesser of these interlocutors in the court and at the mercy of the ruler. The selections from Calvino's work fall into two categories here—one having to do with memory, the other with trade. In the case of both "Cities and Memory" and "Trading Cities," students will read of exchanges: exchanges of goods, as in trade, and exchanges of times, as in memory, where various pasts become futures traded on markets of diverse presents and on speculative grounds that are tantamount to these "invisible" cities.

You might ask students to look for common grounds on these sites of speculation and to see whether there is any correlation between "Cities and Memory" and "Trading Cities." Where might these loci correlate? Might there be a discernable point of origin for these cities? Obviously, they are foremost cities of language. What sort of language is this? Is it representing the cities it describes, or is it creating them in the representation? If so, how are the descriptions themselves language and representations of language, rather than purely an instrumental language of representation? Why are these cities called "invisible"? Do they take on a visibility that contradicts the adjective used to characterize them? How? What about the names of these cities? Might there be some significance to the names applied to them? Might a dictionary search yield some significance to these names? And how might the geographical coordinates given for these cities be significant in terms of location and positioning?



Assia Djebar

In the work of Assia Djebar, the sister to Sheherazade, the heroine and tale-teller of the *Thousand and One Nights*, is not Dunyazade as in the original classic work or as in the versions excerpted in the *Anthology* from the works of Güneli Gün and of John Barth. For Djebar, Sheherazade's sister becomes generalized to be all women, especially marriageable women or women just married. The sister here is any woman in solidarity who shares the predicament of a woman passing from her father's house to her husband's house in a transaction through which she changes masters. Djebar's is a more overtly political treatment of the topic, and it is inflected by the gender politics of the late twentieth century.

"Nuptials on a Straw Mat" brings the theme from the perennial abstract topos to the contextually specific Algerian case of the wedding and the roles of women as complicit with the masculine power structures that subject women through the rites of marriage. You might ask students to contrast these two selections—"The Sister" and "Nuptials on a Straw Mat"—in the roles women play within these traditions. What are the rituals and customs involved, particularly in the latter selection, and how do these roles and practices reinforce the dominant structures that define the role of women in society, even twentieth-century society?

Léopold Sédar Senghor

Léopold Sédar Senghor's poetry generally offers little difficulty as to the message it's designed to convey, and its lyrical beauty will likely be easy to discern for most students. The challenge in teaching these poems lies in making students realize just how innovative, indeed, revolutionary they were at the time they were first written and published. This is particularly true of Senghor's most famous poem, "Black Woman" ("Femme nue, femme noire"). Directed against an entire Western tradition of literary praise for white-skinned and light-haired women that reaches from Dante to the twentieth century, this poem celebrates the feminine beauty of black skin for its own sake. The poem is not entirely the first of its kind—it certainly had some predecessors in Baudelaire's poetic celebration of a black prostitute and even more so in the works of Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes and Jamaican writer Claude McKay. Nevertheless, such a celebration of the black body was rare enough that the poem was considered by many to be revolutionary in its implications.

As some critics have pointed out, the structure of the poem with its accumulation of metaphors owes something to the surrealist technique of poets such as André Breton and Paul Eluard and thereby connects to one of the most vibrant literary movements of Paris in the 1930s. In contrast to poems that celebrate the body of a particular beloved woman, Senghor's is abstract, directed to a category rather than a particular person. Indeed, the poem may not be addressed to a lover alone, but also to a maternal figure, as line 3 ("I grew in your shadow") indicates. In typical Négritude fashion, it takes a European stereotype about Africans, that their partial or total nudity proves a lack of sophisticated culture, and turns it into a positive attribute: Dark skin is here praised as a vital kind of clothing in and of itself. The metaphors that follow take on a distinctly biblical tone. Not only is the woman explicitly compared to the "Promised Land," but more generally the metaphors likening her to a landscape, to exquisite food and drink, to an instrument, a graceful animal, and the sun invoke the general tone of the Song of Songs. The last stanza brings up a motif that is common in Western lyrical poetry, namely, the idea that the poets' words preserve the beauty of a woman otherwise destined to vanish.

In "Black Orpheus," his famous introduction to the *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* (1948), French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre comments on the profound reversal of cultural values shaped by colonialism that Senghor's poem implies:

Here are black men standing, looking at us, and I hope that you—like me—will feel the shock of being seen. For three thousand years, the white man has enjoyed the privilege of being seen. . . . Today, these black men are looking at us, and our gaze comes back to our own eyes; in their turn, black torches light up the world and our white heads are no more than Chinese lanterns swinging in the wind. A black poet—unconcerned with us—whispers to the woman he loves:

Naked woman, black woman
 Dressed in your color which is life . . .
 Naked woman, dark woman,
 Firm fleshed ripe fruit, somber ecstasies of black wine

and our whiteness seems to us to be a strange livid varnish that keeps our skin from breathing—white tights, worn out at the elbows and knees, under which we would find real human flesh the color of black wine if we could remove them. (*What Is Literature?* and *Other Essays*, Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 291)

Alerting students to reactions such as this one on the part of some of the leading European thinkers of the time may give them some sense of just how new and disturbing Senghor's poetry appeared at the time of its publication.

"She Flies She Flies" from Senghor's volume *Nocturnes* (published in 1961, though many of the poems in the volume had been written years earlier) also focuses on the poet's relation to a female object of desire, though the language here is far more ambiguous. Ostensibly, the poet envisions a hunt for an antelope, though the chase, cast in the future tense, is a projected rather than real or remembered one. At one level, the speaker here invokes the male right to hunt (highlighted in the last line through the reference to his father, whose metaphorization as a "famished lion" points to what the poet perceives as men's natural right to kill animals), and the slaughter of the antelope is portrayed as an event of vital exuberance that transfers the animal's life forces to the hunter. Students may find this scenario fascinating or repulsive; but they will almost surely need some pointing to the underlying sexual tone of the poem. The speaker is clearly identified as male, while the antelope—in the French original, already by its grammatical gender—is designated female. The hunt is described in terms of "desire" and "passion," and the second line, translated as "She takes her chances to the bush," contains the word "*jeux*" or "games" in French, again an unusual term to apply to a hunted animal. Twisting arms (line 5) moves the chase even more overtly into the realm of human interaction, and while the description of the prey as soft and fragile indicates the male lover's admiration, the metaphors of violence and even rape are unmistakable throughout the poem. It may be necessary to remind students that the future tense throughout the poem indicates a fantasy or projection, not an accomplished state of affairs, and this is not unimportant for a discussion of the poem's implicit gender politics. Inevitably, though, students will want to discuss whether the vigor and elegance of the lyrical language ultimately serve to exonerate a deeply sexist scenario, or whether the metaphors of violence and death are principally designed to translate into poetry an intensely felt erotic desire.

While in a poem such as "Black Woman," the critique of white culture is implicit, it is explicitly articulated in "To New York" (Senghor got to know the city when he traveled there as a member of the French delegation to the United Nations). The poem hinges on a spatial as well as temporal and, by extension, cultural opposition between modern white "Manhattan" and premodern black "Harlem," which ultimately leads the poet even further back in time to a prehistor-

ical moment of genesis. The first part of the poem figures Manhattan as a woman who is simultaneously attractive and repulsive; the urban landscape is portrayed by means of anthropomorphic metaphors (eyes, smile, head, shoulders, skin, naked) that assimilate the city to its “huge, long-legged, golden girls” (line 2). But the evocation of the human body here ends up dehumanizing the urban environment, which is described as a resolutely modern and artificial one of steel, nylon, and cash. In its hygienic sterility, this environment excludes natural human bodies, affection, wisdom, and even genuine art. Images of drought and death permeate the last part of section I with its references to falling birds and corpses of babies.

Harlem, which in section II is held up as the contrast to white Manhattan, is portrayed as a site of nighttime festivals that for the poet evoke a return to the sights and rituals of Africa, as well as more generally a return to the natural world. Again, by validating the night, rhythm, blood, dance, and music, Senghor deliberately turns upside down racist stereotypes so as to describe Harlem as the only place in New York that is still truly alive. Harlem is the place where a premodern agricultural world can re-emerge (“green breeze of corn,” line 38) and where the natural world and ancient ritual resurface, eliminating any reference to the city’s modernist façade. Concurrently, the bulk of the imagery shifts from the visual to the acoustic: Harlem, in the poet’s perspective, needs to be not so much seen as heard in the sound of its instruments and the rhythm of its dances. Ultimately, such a renewed awareness of Harlem’s vitality leads the reader even further back in time in section III, to an “ancient age” in which “idea links to action, the ear to the heart, sign to meaning” (lines 56, 58), that is, to an age before alienation and before the separation of reason and emotion. In a final twist, Senghor suggests that this primeval world (which, in the judgment of Genesis, was of course one that God himself perceived as good) was made by a black rather than a white deity. The sources of life, both natural and cultural, are ultimately black, and Harlem is the one spot in New York’s sterile modern landscape that can enable the reader to re-connect to these sources.

Students may object, with regard to both “Black Woman” and “To New York,” that these poems merely invert racism and that they are in their own right just as racist as texts that celebrate whiteness over blackness. This is, of course, an issue that has concerned readers of Senghor’s poetry, and more generally of many Négritude authors’ texts, ever since their publication. You might want to discuss with students to what extent the historical context matters in making such judgments about particular texts. That is, how racist are these two poems given that they were written at a time when the dominant culture celebrated whiteness and was suspicious of blackness? Is inverted racism necessary to shake loose the foundations of such cultural prejudice, or does it merely lead to equally misguided notions about race and racial relations? While it may be difficult to arrive at any definitive answers to such complex and encompassing questions, it is important to alert students to the way in which they are raised by lyrical poetry.

Most of Senghor’s poems in the *Anthology* are built around a poetics of direct address; the two remaining ones, “Correspondence” and “Letter to a Poet,”

explicitly pursue this form of address in a fictional epistolary context. “Correspondence” is a letter that seems to be directed to the speaker’s beloved, but as it turns out, the beloved here is Africa itself. The beloved appears both close by and far removed; she seems to share the night and the train with the speaker, but is on the other hand only reachable through paper and the nostalgia for the “bleeding city” (line 9). The middle stanza with its allusions to the express train, the unknown, and the horizon evokes an uncertain future that both lover and beloved travel toward, at the same time together and apart. A somewhat similar dialectic informs “Letter to a Poet,” in which Senghor addresses fellow poet Aimé Césaire. He praises Césaire’s enormous influence (metaphorized in the first stanza through the “black gulls,” i.e., the younger poets who return shaped by Césaire’s poetic achievement) as well as the way in which he connects blacks to their African ancestry and traditions. Even as Senghor describes Césaire’s body as fused with the landscape that surrounds him and as drawing its inspiration directly from it, students might also detect a hint of criticism in his question, “Have you forgotten your nobility?” (line 12). Césaire was not always as ready to glorify the African past or to celebrate royal ancestry as Senghor was, and Senghor may be expressing an oblique regret here that Césaire takes a more skeptical stance toward such portrayals of black traditions. Exploring exactly what Senghor’s subtle complaint here might be aimed at leads directly into an analysis of *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, in which Césaire claims openly, “No, we’ve never been Amazons of the king of Dahomey, nor princes of Ghana with eight hundred camels, nor wise men in Timbuktu under Askia the Great, nor the architects of Djenne, nor Madhis, nor warriors” (Vol. F, p. 605). “Letter to a Poet” therefore is the ideal hinge text between discussions of Senghor’s and Césaire’s poetry and opens the way for an exploration of the similarities and differences between these two major voices of the Négritude movement and of twentieth-century French poetry.

Aimé Césaire

When students read Césaire’s *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, they usually don’t find it difficult to grasp the overall project of this long poem—a revindication of black humanity and black culture, the indictment of racism and colonialism with its devastating effects on both black and white psyches—but understanding individual sections and stanzas often proves more complex. To help students gain access to some of these details, it may be useful to situate Césaire’s work for them in the context of two broader movements, Surrealism and Négritude. To give students a sense of how Césaire’s work emerges out of the European avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, reading the two manifestos (co)authored by André Breton along with the *Notebook* would provide the easiest path of access. “Négritude” is a term that first appeared in the *Notebook*, and to establish its importance in this

framework, it would be most useful to teach it in conjunction with the poems of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Césaire's friend and fellow-founder of the movement in Paris in the 1930s.

Breton's Surrealism aimed above all at the liberation of the individual human psyche, and psychoanalysis furnished the major tools Surrealists tried out to achieve it. The investigation of dreams and the unconscious or the exploitation of chance and its possibilities for free association served as gates of access to an aesthetic realm that, in however temporary a fashion, was thought to provide an alternative to the constraints of bourgeois existence and a society ruled by means-end rationality. As the fractious history of the Surrealists' association with and breaks from the French Communist Party shows, it was clear that a more permanent liberation of the individual could not be accomplished without a more large-scale revolution in political and social structures; just whether and how this political emancipation could be connected to the kind of liberation envisioned by Surrealists remained an issue of contention and at times bitter opposition. In his encounter with Surrealism, Césaire inherited not only the enormous energy of the Surrealist revolt against a stagnant and outdated society but also the problem of this connection between individual and collective emancipation, which his political engagement on behalf of one of France's colonies made it impossible for him to sidestep. André Breton, the "Pope of Surrealism," hailed Césaire as an accomplished Surrealist, pointing out in a preface he wrote for the *Notebook* that Césaire's greatness ultimately lay in its portrayal of a universal human condition rather than the specific sociohistoric condition of blacks. It is possible to interpret this as an overly eager attempt at appropriating Césaire's poetic project for the movement Breton had founded; but it might be interesting to discuss with students which dimensions of the poem tend to substantiate a universalist reading (the identification of the lyrical subject with Jews and Hindus, for example), and which ones foreground a specifically black condition.

Stylistically, the *Notebook* addresses this problem of geographical, social, and historical conditions in a poetic idiom that goes back and forth between brutal realism and oneiric Surrealism. More precisely, some of the most striking effects of the poem come about through the expression of social and historical realities by means of a language—and particularly of metaphors—that makes these realities appear dreamlike, hallucinatory, or insane. Students may stumble over the meaning of such metaphors, many of which derive their force from overarching metaphoric patterns: Natural landscapes as well as human-made environments, for example, are associated with parts, processes, and movements of the human body throughout the poem. Sexuality and injuries or diseases that are attributed to normally inert features of the environment form two prominent subsets of this overall pattern. Other metaphors, such as "in a jar full of oil a dim light whose flame dances like a fat cockroach" may seem bizarre to students until they are pointed to the connection with Césaire's earlier reference, in the description of the appalling poverty of his family home, to

“the glossy flash of cockroaches in a maddening buzz.” In metaphors such as these, Césaire deploys the legacy of the Surrealists (and further back, ultimately that of Baudelaire: cf. the “venomous flowers / flaring in fury-filled prairies”) to bring repulsive realities to the reader’s awareness by associating them with a lyrical beauty that only makes their real horror stand out all the more starkly. In a somewhat different way, this strategy also underlies metaphors that twist stereotypical images of lyricism into visions of terror, such as the blood lagoon on whose surface float skulls instead of water lilies.

It is true, however, that not all metaphors in the poem will prove susceptible to such decoding; indeed, it may be important to point out to students that one of the Surrealists’ hallmark strategies was the invention of metaphors whose tenor and vehicle are no longer linked by any discernible similarity but that instead force together radically disparate semantic realms. An accumulation of metaphors such as the “torte of the terrifying autumn / . . . where the air rusts in great sheets / of evil glee,” which associates a season with industrial materials as well as human emotions, may remain difficult to decipher with any conventional procedure. Césaire’s oft-repeated leitmotiv, “At the end of the wee hours,” which connects to other references to day- and nighttimes (such as that of the “tepid dawn of ancestral virtues”), points in more general terms to the Surrealist night and its world of dreams as well as to the advent of a new political day.

Surrealist metaphors, then, are used in Césaire’s poem to create a visceral and graphically violent poetic language. It frequently foregrounds details of Caribbean or African landscapes and ecosystems (names of plants, animals, or geological formations) that often seem chosen explicitly because they will make Western readers stumble and recognize their unfamiliarity with the poet’s surroundings. You will probably need to encourage students not to interpret their difficulty with such terms as part of their own ignorance but as part of a poetic strategy that intends to bewilder and alienate readers as much as to draw them in. The use of erudite or arcane vocabulary and neologisms that would be just as unfamiliar to French readers in the 1940s and 1950s as they are to college students today reinforce this procedure. Césaire takes an at least partially aggressive stance toward his readers (in typically avant-gardist manner!), challenging them to acknowledge that the colonial subaltern masters their own language more skillfully than they are able to. This appropriation of a European heritage that is then turned against European colonialism links Césaire’s project to that of other members of the Négritude movement, as well to other heirs of the avant-garde in the Americas. Andrade’s “Cannibalist Manifesto” (Vol. F, p. 38) would make for a fascinating comparison here, especially since Césaire also deploys the metaphor of cannibalism several times in the *Notebook*, though to quite different effect than Andrade. (You may also want to mention to students that Césaire wrote a twentieth-century version of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, *Une tempête*, which features Caliban as the postcolonial subject who rebels against his master Prospero by means of the language Prospero taught him.)

Césaire's passionate advocacy on behalf of Négritude is most clearly articulated in the famous passage celebrating "those who have invented neither powder nor compass / those who could harness neither steam nor electricity." The stanza in which these lines appear mentions Négritude explicitly, and this is one of the passages (including at least the two following stanzas) that would deserve close reading. Its rejection of towers and cathedrals in favor of the "red flesh of the soil" and the "ardent flesh of the sky" beautifully illustrates a rejection of European-bred cerebralism and an embrace of the earth, of materiality and corporeality that Césaire shares with Senghor. This embrace also provides the underlying conceptual justification for the pervasiveness of body metaphors in the *Notebook* that was pointed out earlier and articulates Césaire's political project in very clear form.

Students need to be made aware, however, that while a phrase such as "my Négritude is not a leukoma of dead liquid over the earth's dead eye" in this stanza can safely be associated with Césaire's own voice, the same is not true of many of the other statements in the poem, not even all those made in the first person. Césaire combines prophetic pronouncements with realistic or satiric descriptions, quotations from those who exploit and discriminate against black people with responses from those who (sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly) glorify them, the voice of the slave master and the voice of the slave, historical voices (such as that of Toussaint L'Ouverture) with present-day ones, and so on. While the result is distinctive to Césaire's craft as a poet, the underlying poetic procedure is not: T. S. Eliot's "Waste Land" or Ezra Pound's *Cantos* are other examples of long poems whose lyrical density derives from the wide spectrum of different voices and idioms they integrate. The collage or montage of voices and scraps of discourse from varied sources is one of the principal modes of high-modernist poetry (just as collage and montage also prevail in other modernist art forms such as painting and film). Césaire is not original in this respect, although his combination of a Surrealist idiom with the thematics of colonialist critique is extremely innovative. It is not always easy, in the *Notebook*, to discern just which voices Césaire would endorse and which ones he would reject, though quite often that distinction is clear enough. Perhaps by means of a close reading of some passages (for example, the one beginning with "niggers-are-all-alike, I-tell-you" or the one declaring "No, we've never been Amazons of the king of Dahomey" [Vol. F, p. 605]), students can be alerted to this difficulty and the close attention each stanza in Césaire's poem requires.

Césaire's political and literary influence has been enormous; one way of situating him in the panorama of twentieth-century intellectuals and writers is to approach him as a predecessor of what later came to be called "postcolonial studies." His exploration of the social, economic, and psychological consequences of colonial domination for both colonizers and colonized links him to other francophone anticolonial critics such as Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi. Césaire's influential *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) belongs as much to the early landmark works on colonialism and racism as do Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957).

James Baldwin

Though James Baldwin is often read in a purely American context, new perspectives emerge when we look at him as a writer of world literature—someone physically, restlessly, mobile around the world, coming to a sense of himself as a writer while living as an American abroad. An American and also an African-American: “Encounter on the Seine” develops the ambivalence of this dual identity, as Baldwin finds in his alienation and rootlessness the essence of an Americanness he hadn’t realized until he moved to Paris. In its calm, lucid, yet sardonic style, “Encounter on the Seine” forms a good lead-in to “Sonny’s Blues,” itself a work inflected by Baldwin’s Parisian experiences and the warm but somewhat patronizing French embrace of black American jazz artists, with which the essay begins. Here, for example, is Jean-Paul Sartre’s use of a jazz recording to bring a final, tentative peace to the tormented hero of his 1938 novel *Nausea*:

Now there is this song on the saxophone. And I am ashamed. A glorious little suffering has just been born, an exemplary suffering. Four notes on the saxophone. They come and they go, they seem to say: You must be like us, suffer in rhythm. All right! Naturally, I’d like to suffer that way, in rhythm, without complacency, without self-pity, with an arid purity. . . . No, they can’t tell me it’s compassionate—this little jeweled pain which spins around above the record and dazzles me. Not even ironic: it spins gaily, completely self-absorbed. . . . It is beyond—always beyond something, a voice, a violin note. Through layers and layers of existence, it veils itself, thin and firm, and when you want to seize it, you find only existants, you butt against existants devoid of sense. It is behind them: I don’t even hear it, I hear sounds, vibrations in the air which unveil it. It does not exist because it has nothing superfluous. It is.

And I too wanted to *be*.

(*Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander, 1964, pp. 174–175)

Sartre’s hero, Roquentin, goes on to imagine the two creative forces behind the song: the black jazz singer and a “black-browed” Jewish composer who composes the words, “Some of these days / You’ll miss me honey” on a sweltering night in his New York tenement, making the song that the singer will bring to life.

She sings. So two of them are saved: the Jew and the Negress. Saved. Maybe they thought they were lost irrevocably, drowned in existence. . . . I feel something brush against me lightly and I dare not move because I am afraid it will go away. Something I didn’t know any more: a sort of joy. The Negress sings. Can you justify your existence then? Just a little? (p. 177)

The novel ends with this existential affirmation, sparked by Roquentin’s identification with the Jewish composer mediated through the black singer’s voice.

You can discuss “Sonny’s Blues” with your students as building on this tradition but also subverting it. Sonny is both composer and performer, while his art is contemplated not by a philosophical observer but by his own ambivalent, guilt-ridden brother. The brother strives, in fact, for a Roquentin-style detachment, renouncing the confusions of ghetto life to become an algebra teacher, to the point that Sonny has ceased even to seem real to him, as we learn at the start of the story. As the story moves, like Sartre’s, toward an existential redemption through music, Baldwin goes far beyond Sartre in setting Sonny’s blues in its complex African-American and New York context. He also sets up rich webs of sound and sight through the story. Sonny’s blues can be compared to two major strands of imagery that lead up to the climactic scene of performance: a series of texts, and a series of musical or harshly unmusical sounds. From the newspaper in which the narrator first learns of his brother’s arrest, to Sonny’s awkward letter from prison, to the school board’s letters, writing continually falls short in establishing connection. Baldwin’s own text, of course, will seek to do better by incorporating the musicality—and the ironic complexities—lacking in these other texts.

Musicality itself is probed throughout the story; a good way to focus this is to ask students to compare Sonny’s music to the gospel music of the street performers in the middle of the story. Students can also look at the haunting scene of the death of little Grace, built around sounds and silences: “this time, Grace was quiet. Yet, Isabel says that when she heard that *thump* and then that silence, something happened in her to make her afraid. . . . And when she did scream, it was the worst sound, Isabel says, that she’d ever heard in all her life” (p. 635). The discordant harmonies of Sonny’s blues weave all these motifs together.

Gerald Vizenor

The two short stories by Gerald Vizenor presented in the *Anthology* are designed to be taught along with the short texts in the “Perspectives: Indigenous Cultures in the Twentieth Century” section but allow for more intense immersion into a single author. Other combinations are also possible: The emphasis on oral and written narrative and on indigenous and academic methods of storytelling in “Shadows” has interesting parallels with the chapter from Mario Vargas Llosa’s *The Storyteller* in the “Perspectives: Literature, Technology, and Media” section and would easily fit in with a discussion of that entire set of texts. Along somewhat different lines, both “Shadows” and “Ice Tricksters” indirectly illustrate the ways in which members of a minority culture represent to themselves their encounters with the dominant culture. If you want to pursue this aspect, you can teach Vizenor’s stories as interesting complements to the texts in the “Perspectives: Postcolonial Conditions” section, as well as with those in “Perspectives: Cosmopolitan Exiles.”

Both of Vizenor’s stories focus on the trickster, a figure that is crucial to Vizenor’s writings as well as to Native American culture more generally (and which

beyond the United States appears in different guises in mythologies and storytelling traditions around the globe). The trickster may or may not have supernatural abilities, but his (or her) intelligence and skill in taking advantage of specific situations allows him to evade the categories and expectations those around him usually apply to the real world, and thereby to escape networks of domination and oppression that normally put him at a structural disadvantage. Sometimes the trickster's special ability is merely a verbal one that allows him to mislead his interlocutors in productive ways; sometimes he carries out elaborate ruses. Vizenor's two short stories show different versions of the trickster: Bagese seems to possess genuine supernatural abilities, while *Almost's* existence is, as his name already indicates, most centrally due to linguistic approximation, an inability or unwillingness to specify things as precisely as might be possible. But both stories are not just trickster stories—they are also to some extent stories about trickster stories. Both of them, by foregrounding how precarious the existence of the trickster has become, also offer a reflection on the tradition of the trickster narrative.

Bagese in "Shadows" is a genuinely liminal figure whose exact nature is hard to pin down: a Native American woman who is clearly better adapted to life in the wilderness than to the urban apartment she inhabits, she seems to possess animal as well as human essences, both through her ability to speak to animals in a quite literal sense and the insinuations in the story that she temporarily turns into a bear (or is a bear who temporarily turns into a human). Characterized by an intense physical presence (down to the body odor that results from her refusal to wash!), she is at the same time immaterial to the point of vanishing into mirror images. Her insistence that the "live voices" of her stories cannot and should not be written down make her too elusive for the narrator, who violates her injunction and writes them down nonetheless. Or does he? In fact, the reader finds out very little about the stories Bagese actually tells—in this respect as in others, the story is not about the trickster's stories themselves but about her storytelling. Physically and in the end metaphorically, she keeps slipping from the narrator's grasp and his attempt to access and preserve her universe and abilities; ultimately, "Shadows" stages the disappearance of a trickster whose existence was woven out of orally told stories that can only be preserved and recuperated through the written medium that supersedes this orality.

"Ice Tricksters" reflects on the trickster figure at various levels. On one hand, the trickster is the narrator's grandfather, whose nickname "Almost" leads to sentence constructions that sound oddly ungrammatical because "Almost" figures in them as a noun. In addition, the character himself uses the word "almost" in all kinds of appropriate and inappropriate contexts that sometimes make even quite common and material objects seem uncertain. To some extent, this uncertainty has political connotations, associated as it is with the hope of Native Americans on the reservation that they will one day receive their government pensions; in this context, "almost" becomes a way of expressing not only uncertainty but also negation, since "almost" receiving one's pension means that in fact one has not received it. "Almost" thereby becomes a shorthand for all the promises from whites

to Native Americans that have not been kept and all the expectations that have consequently been disappointed. It is worth noting, however, that Almost, in true trickster fashion, is by no means portrayed as a bitter person, but on the contrary as someone who has found a way of living with these disappointed hopes.

Indeed, he finds ways of fulfilling them by other and unexpected means—most prominently in the story, a means of providing his grandson with the bicycle that was originally supposed to be bought with the government pension money. Through his idea of participating in the ice sculpture contest and entering a trickster sculpture, the story takes the reader to its second level of reflection on this figure. The trickster sculpture is a collage of the physical features of different characters in the story as well as of some features that belong to no one. Made out of ice in the midst of summer, this figure with the indeterminate gender is from the beginning destined to vanish, and it escapes and has to be cut down several times before the end of the competition: through its slipping away in the lake and partially melting, as well as through the sawing off of the legs that becomes necessary because the sculpture is too tall according to the rules of the contest (another violation of norms). In this story, the trickster figure itself turns into an aesthetic artifact, but an ephemeral one destined to disappear once its purpose is accomplished.

Both stories convey a sense of the pleasure that comes with the indeterminacy of classical trickster figures and the ways they escape from networks of convention; but at the same time, Vizenor also conveys some degree of uncertainty as to how viable the trickster figure itself will continue to be, as in both stories its disappearance is written into the very slipperiness of the character itself.

PERSPECTIVES

Indigenous Cultures in the Twentieth Century

Since many of the texts in this section are of Native American origin, they are most easily combined with an exploration of Gerald Vizenor's short stories, which precede this section. Vizenor's "Ice Tricksters" and "Shadows" already foreground the confrontation between different systems of perception, knowledge, communication, and aesthetic expression that enter into contact and often conflict when indigenous cultures encounter non-indigenous ones. This confrontation also lies at the heart of most of the texts in this section, whether they focus on Aboriginal and European culture in Australia, Native American and Anglo culture in North America, or on Hausa and Islamic traditions of spirituality and medicine in Africa. Confrontations between Islamic and native African religious traditions also appear, albeit briefly, in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, providing another perspective on the encounter between the divergent traditions of the conquered and the conquerors. While some of the indigenous authors—notably Oodgeroo, Archie Weller, and Al-Kuni—portray native cultures as the ul-

timate losers in this encounter, many of the Native American texts emphasize intricate processes of negotiation whereby the indigenous characters manage to preserve a measure of autonomy, self-determination, and subversion in the face of more dominant cultural forces.

Oodgeroo's "We Are Going" and Archie Weller's "Going Home" take the bleakest views of indigenous chances of survival, in that both show native voices and characters being bulldozed into submission by socio-cultural forces that they have no resources to resist. Yet it's worth emphasizing that the reasons they are overwhelmed are quite different. Oodgeroo's poem laments the vanishing of a native culture and its rites and spaces, but there is no suggestion that it succumbs because it falls prey to the false allure of a different culture. The collective speaking voice of "We Are Going" seems self-confident of its identity even if this identity is in the process of being erased and forgotten. In Weller, by contrast, the central problem is that of overhasty assimilation of an Aboriginal character to white culture, and his rude awakening to the fact that he cannot escape his own skin color and the associated social limits even though he might seem temporarily successful in his attempt. This difference might well provide the material for a first discussion with students: Is what prompts the failure of Weller's main character the dominance of white culture in and of itself, or his willingness to deny his Aboriginal roots and to fancy himself a part of the dominant class? The story certainly foregrounds Billy's inauthenticity as a central character flaw, yet it is clear that those of his family who have remained true to their origins (mostly, it seems, for lack of choice) fare no better in the end than he does: Both Bobby and his brother are arrested by the white police on the same charges and by the same means. The implication seems to be that Aboriginals simply cannot escape the stigma that attaches to their race; yet one might (perhaps against the grain of Weller's intentions) wonder whether the situation is quite as simple as that, or whether Billy's failure in the end also has something to do with his spatial displacement from a metropolitan center to the countryside: Have race relations evolved in a different way in the cities than in the smaller towns and the countryside? One might also prompt students to explore the significance of Weller's reference to the African-American country singer Charlie Pride in the first sentence of the story: Is this meant to be a reference to yet another black culture that assimilates to and is knuckled under by the dominant white culture, or is Charlie Pride, the successful singer, a foil and an alternative model to what ends up being the failed painter Billy Woodward? Whatever the answer to this question is, it is clear that Weller portrays Billy's sense that he's made a place for himself in white society as a cruel illusion that ultimately leads him to lose his sense of self and dignity; yet the characters who make no attempt to deny their racial heritage do not in the end seem to have access to a greater sense of dignity or a more authentic conception of themselves.

The Native American texts take a more ambiguous view of assimilation, in that processes that appear to imply native characters' submission to white culture often turn out instead to be sly acts of subversion whereby the natives take advan-

tage of their dominators just when the latter are most sure of their superiority. Trickster figures whose words and actions are never quite predictable, such as Vizenor's Baghese, often carry out these subversions in Native American literature. But the texts selected here also turn situations upside down by singling out particular turns of phrase that are reinterpreted in unexpected ways (for example, the "Indian ruins" that turn out to be people rather than buildings in one of Allen's poems) or by presenting well-known facts and situations from a perspective that the non-Native American reader is not likely to be familiar with. Momaday foregrounds these differing perspectives most explicitly by organizing his narrative around three different types of accounts: the mythological and autobiographical accounts that present two different Kiowa perspectives, and the historical or anthropological materials that usually offer white perspectives on Kiowa culture and history. But a similar shift in perspective also underlies Allen's strategy of retelling the Pocahontas story from Pocahontas's own viewpoint in her poem, or Erdrich's portrayal of Native Americans watching a John Wayne western that has quite different implications for them than for the white audience. In both Allen and Erdrich, what emerges from this alternative perspective is a perception of white culture as diseased, eaten up by the consequences of its own greed and possessiveness: Both Pocahontas's reference to the damage that tobacco inflicts on whites and Erdrich's allusion to Wayne's death of cancer point to this perception.

The role of the anthropological or ethnological perspective might be particularly worth some discussion with the students. One might well introduce such a discussion by playing to the students Native American singer Floyd "Red Crow" Westerman's satirical song, "Here Come the Anthros," from his album *The Land Is Your Mother/Custer Died for Your Sins*, in which Westerman, whose voice somewhat resembles that of Johnny Cash, humorously portrays the arrival of anthropologists from a Native American view. Already in Vizenor's "Shadows," the anthropological perspective plays a role insofar as an academic (though one more closely identified with literary study than with anthropology) attempts to investigate the stories and skills of a native trickster and ends up being drawn into the imaginative world he or she attempts to investigate. In Momaday, anthropological accounts are juxtaposed with indigenous ones in such a way that neither is rejected or attributed greater authority than the other: What they document are radically different approaches to the same lived realities. The role of anthropological accounts emerges as an ambivalent one in this context, as they both preserve indigenous cultures and irrevocably alter them, present native ways and yet use this knowledge for their own purposes. The ambivalent role of anthropological accounts is also a central topic in the segment from Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller* which is included in the section on literature, technology, and media. Vargas Llosa also shares with several of the authors in this section an emphasis on the fundamental role of storytelling in the preservation as well as the evolution and alteration of indigenous cultures.

This emphasis on storytelling is particularly prominent in Silko's "Yellow Woman," first published independently as a short story in the collection *The Man*

to *Send Rain Clouds* (1974) and integrated into Silko's well-known *The Storyteller* (1981), a hybrid text that includes prose, poetry, and photographs and combines native mythology with history and autobiography. "Yellow Woman" narrates a Native American woman's short-term sexual adventure with an unknown stranger that is coded as both the story of the mythological Yellow Woman, Kochininako or Kochinnenako, a figure around whom many tales cluster in the Laguna Pueblo Tradition, and the present-day, much more ordinary account of a woman allegedly kidnapped by a Navajo. Spatially, the female protagonist moves out of and, at the end of the story, back into her Pueblo community and a life defined by her duties as a daughter, wife, and mother; in between, she explores a different social and sexual self that is portrayed as in close touch with and indeed often metaphorized by the natural landscape. Temporally, the protagonist wonders whether her own story is in fact that of the Yellow Woman or a latter-day reenactment of it, whether she herself is Yellow Woman and whether Yellow Woman had similar doubts about her own identity. The ambiguity as to whether the story is a retelling of a myth or an account of a present-day occurrence is reinforced by the stranger's evasiveness about his own identity and his suggestion that some day, future generations will refer back to the two of them as figures associated with an age long ago. Silko here paints a complex portrait of indigenous identity, especially insofar as indigenous women are concerned: Her protagonist both forms part of a community and needs to go outside it to find herself; she forms part of a tradition of storytelling that pervades her everyday thought and experience, but is unsure of her own position in this tradition. Melody Graulich's edition (*Yellow Woman*, Rutgers University Press, 1993) provides a good introduction and a collection of interpretive essays for a story that could easily be taught in conjunction with the Perspectives section on gendered spaces and the one on literature, technology, and media.

The forms indigenous authors use should also be given some attention in the classroom, especially since all of the lyrical texts included in this section appear in their original language. While the Native American authors in particular integrate elements of indigenous orature, the overall shape of their works is for the most part defined by Western modernism—specifically, by free verse and textual collage. Momaday in particular constructs his works out of diverse textual fragments, juxtaposing three narrative text elements per chapter. Silko's combination of different narrative genres and of verse, prose, and photographs in *The Storyteller* follows a similar principle in looser form.

In discussing the combination of thematic and formal elements from Western and indigenous traditions that appear in the various texts, students may be prompted to ask what, in essence, constitutes an "indigenous" text as compared to a non-indigenous one. This question may already surface after students have read the introductions to the various authors: Aside from Oodgeroo and Al-Kuni, all the other indigenous authors in this section (also including Vizenor, who precedes it) are only partially "native" by virtue of their birth. In terms of blood lineage, it is as legitimate to call Paula Gunn Allen a Lebanese American author as it is to refer to her as Native American, and Archie Weller's right to call himself an

Aboriginal author has been questioned by some, as noted in the introduction. (As also mentioned there, the question of who should be called an Aboriginal artist or writer and who should be excluded from that category has provoked some bitter debate in Australia.) Of course, the obvious alternative is to argue that the authors selected here are indigenous because their themes and concerns revolve around the fate of indigenous cultures. But in this case, could white authors who devote their work to indigenous issues be called “native”? More difficult yet, what about non-indigenous authors who pretend to be indigenous but are not, in terms of their genealogy? Discussing such questions will lead students to consider to what extent we expect the life experience of the author to undergird and guarantee the authenticity of the identity issues at the core of the texts, and to what degree these texts are artifacts that stand on their own without needing such a foundation. Thorny questions of postmodernist identity politics are only one step away from these issues, and it will depend on the level and sophistication of individual student groups how much the teacher chooses to guide the discussion in that direction. Even if the conversation does not broach broad theoretical questions, though, it should suffice to alert students to the fact that the categories of “indigenous culture” and “indigenous author” can by no means be simply taken for granted, but need to be considered carefully to determine what they mean and refuse to mean.

Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang)

In chess, a stalemate occurs when neither side can capture the other’s king, both players lacking the necessary forces, or when one player allows the other to become trapped with no legal moves. Zhang’s story shows elements of both situations: The characters are both enervated and also caught within legal and family strictures that give them little room to maneuver. Students can look at the various ways the story intertwines old and new, Western and Chinese elements; the characters’ stasis comes in part from being caught between these opposed forces. Thus on their river excursions, the couples read Shelley and toy with the unfamiliar pleasures of Western-style romance—“Love was such a new experience in China,” as the narrator dryly comments, “that a little of it went a long way” (p. 694).

They frequent the lake, however, for its classical Chinese associations, as “every scenic spot was associated with the memory of some poet or reigning beauty” (p. 694), and Luo’s problems reach a critical stage after he and Miss Fan have broken up but their friends then bring them back together on the lake, merely because “they just thought it would be sad and beautiful—and therefore a good thing—for the two to meet once again on the lake under the moon” (p. 696). Old poetic patterns hold a strong sway, even though the grandly named restaurant, leaning poetically out over the lake, is a run-down, tawdry setting, and the lake surface itself is covered with green scum. Even so, the lake has “a suggestion of lingering fragrance like a basin of water in which a famous courtesan had

washed her painted face” (p. 693): a testimony to the power of tradition, or to the self-delusion of the observers?

In the story’s final irony, the miserable and almost destitute Luo finds himself envied by his neighbors for his three wives and his poetic rose-covered lake-side house: Luo, Miss Fan, and their housemates suffer the fate of finding themselves after all in an entirely traditional situation, one that has lost all meaning for them.

Mahasweta Devi

It’s impossible to know, unless one can read Devi’s “Breast-Giver” in Bengali, how the driving tone and riveting tenor of this narrative in English translation correlates with the original. Students interested in women’s studies and the politics of gender should find this text especially compelling. Bengal’s hierarchical society defines social roles quite clearly, and woman’s role is especially well defined. You can ask students to tease out these social striations for understanding the role of women in the society Devi’s work is portraying.

The “breast-giver,” Jashoda Patitundo, literally embodies the political and economic realities of Bengali society. It is her body that bore and suckled twenty children so that the additional thirty whom she served as wet nurse could be sustained by her milk. Once the Mistress of the household looks at her breasts and declares, “The good lord sent you down as the legendary Cow of Fulfillment” (p. 704), Jashoda becomes a “*professional Mother*” whose “place in the [Master’s] house is now above the Mother Cows” (p. 705). In the end, despite having borne twenty children and suckled another thirty, she dies alone of breast cancer in a hospital and is disposed of anonymously by cremation by an untouchable.

In the course of developing this plot, Devi portrays much about the inequities of Bengali society and just as much about the iniquities of the human species. As much as this is a political story about the exploitation of women in a decidedly masculinist society, it is no less damning of human nature as conditioned by the social institutions, sacred or profane, that sustain the power structures and determine the norms of human interaction within and between classes and genders. Reading this devastating portrait of a society riddled with inequalities and systemic injustices, students might find it useful to view the story comparatively, inasmuch as their own society may be no more immune to the contradictions that make the fates of the Jashodas in every society possible. You could ask students to consider whether the institutional formation of motherhood itself might carry within its socially and historically structured sanctity some of the systemic inequalities that afflict women in this and other societies around the world. Finally, you might ask students to discern the role of women in oppressing other women. What is the role of the household Mistress and her daughters-in-law in this regard? How do class and caste intersect with gender in the cultural and gender politics in this text?

PERSPECTIVES

Gendered Spaces

The idea of the connection between gender and particular spaces should not be difficult to introduce to students because most of them have already had experiences with this association that only need to be elicited. Most of them will know how kitchens and garages can become the sites of gender-differentiated activities, how different sections of a department store or different types of bars and cafés tend to attract a mostly male or female, gay or straight clientèle, how gender-shared restrooms at home are linked to different social functions from gender-segregated ones in public places, how empty and crowded streets can entail different experiences for men and women, or how men and women are expected to behave in sacred as compared to secular places. Setting aside some time for students' own experiences with such place-defined gender distinctions and making them aware of how gender expectations can shape the forms and uses of particular spaces provides an easy way into discussing the texts in this section, especially because four of them—the short stories of Clarice Lispector, Fatima Mernissi, Gabriel García Márquez, and Jamaica Kincaid—focus on the experiences of the young growing up and having to define their identity in relation to spaces whose cultural meanings have already been shaped by other generations.

Depending on which confluences and contrasts the class is designed to focus on, various combinations of stories could be assigned and discussed together. The four stories already mentioned, which revolve around adolescent women confronting spaces defined by males or older women, could be contrasted with those of Hanan Al-Shaykh and Ama Ata Aidoo, which focus on adult women's confrontations with marriage and the uneven power it assigns to husband and wife. Mernissi's "The Harem Within" provides a convenient hinge between these two groups in that it portrays a social institution, the harem, that both growing and adult women have to come to terms with. But the discussion could also be organized according to the types of spaces that occupy center stage in the different texts: Lispector and Juan Goytisolo focus on their characters' experience of public spaces, while Mernissi, García Márquez, and Al-Shaykh emphasize private ones above all. Aidoo's story integrates both, from the school and private home to a public divorce trial. Alternatively, women's confrontations with male prerogatives, as foregrounded in Lispector, Mernissi, Al-Shaykh, and Aidoo, could usefully be juxtaposed with texts that put greater emphasis on women's encounters with the authority of other, usually older women; this aspect is integrated into Mernissi's story and constitutes the main narrative focus in García Márquez and Kincaid. Lastly, realistically conceived "objective" spaces could be compared and contrasted with more psychologically grounded, fantastic, or utopian ones. Mernissi's portrayal of the harem, García Márquez's of the home and the church, Lispector's of street and school, and Aidoo's of school and home would, in this configuration, be juxtaposed with Al-Shaykh's description of a pretended madness, Kincaid's

highly metaphorical descriptions of the changing relationship between a woman and her mother, and Goytisolo's utopian celebration of an open-air market as a space for liberated sexualities of various kinds. Mernissi could be discussed as an interesting hybrid in that she turns an objective space and social institution into the equivalent of a psychological condition in the course of her story.

Apart from such larger groupings, more narrowly conceived thematic comparisons also offer themselves. You could focus, for example, on the way in which Lispector's adolescent female protagonist experiences the public space of the street as dominated by the threat of the male gaze and touch. Curiously, what the story foregrounds is not vision but sound, however, and above all the noise made by the protagonist's wooden heels, whose staccato, in her own mind, amplifies the conspicuousness of a body she herself perceives as both ugly and precious: Her passage into adulthood, at the end of the story, is marked by the acquisition of new shoes without wooden heels, which are no doubt meant to signal a different kind of self-perception.

In this regard, "Preciousness" is a story to which students may easily relate. The crisis of adolescence so sensitively depicted by Lispector may not be far in their own past. It might be good, then, to start by asking the students how accurate the portrayal of adolescence in this story might be. While there may be some cultural differences between Brazil and the United States in terms of relations between adolescents and their parents, between male and female adolescents, and between these characters and their social environment, it might be well to explore with students where the depiction of these relations might reflect with some accuracy circumstances in their own society.

Clothing and shoes, especially, are highly significant as extensions of the body and the problems it poses for those in the process of their own self-discovery as physical beings. You could ask students to discuss how such elements as apparel become embodied and serve as significant markers of identity. Food and eating, water and bathing, public spaces such as streets, schools, bus stops, the urban landscape in general take on significant roles in the story, as does the home environment. How are each of these elements perceived by the main character, and how do they affect her?

The climactic moment in the story is obviously the encounter of the protagonist with the boys. What is the nature of this encounter, and how does it affect her? How does it affect the boys? Who is more scared, the girl or the boys? Will either she or they ever be the same again? Does the encounter resolve or exacerbate their predicament and hypersensitivity? What sort of future might your students envision for the protagonist? And for the boys? What is the significance of her getting the shoes she wanted in the end? What do your students make of the title of the story?

In the excerpt from Goytisolo's *Makbara*, in contrast with Lispector's story, the possibility of illicit gazing and touching is precisely what makes the street and the marketplace an arousing and exhilarating space, one that offers at least the potential of escape from the constraints of social convention. In contrast to Lispector's clipped, concise, and elliptic style, Goytisolo indulges in complex syntax, abundant enumerations, and a luxury of visual detail that flows together in

sentences and paragraphs barely set apart by a minimum of punctuation and spacing. In comparisons such as these, it would be very important to discuss what the contrasts between the two texts ultimately derive from: differences in the gendered experience of public spaces, differences in the cultural perception of such spaces, or differences of literary vision and style.

The discussion of *Lispector* could easily be extended to García Márquez's story "Artificial Roses" so as to highlight a different set of contrasts and confluences. In both stories, adolescent females are exposed to a scrutiny that they experience as intrusive and painful. Yet for García Márquez's Mina, this scrutiny takes place within the confines of her own home and at the hands of a woman who quite literally has lost her vision, the blind grandmother. But precisely because of this handicap, the grandmother has developed so nuanced a sense of the patterns in the other family members' behaviors that she can read Mina's behavior even when Mina desperately attempts to occult its meanings. *Lispector*'s protagonist, by contrast, behaves in ways that obey a certain inexorable logic in her own mind but are quite impenetrable to those in her surroundings. Both female protagonists, in other words, are portrayed as having to cope with social environments where girls' and women's behavior patterns are circumscribed by specific codes of expectation. But whereas these codes drive *Lispector*'s protagonist into a labyrinth of perceptions and emotions where hardly anyone can follow her, they are precisely what makes Mina's behavior so transparent to the careful observer. The young woman's behavior seems driven to the edge of irrationality in *Lispector*, while it is based on a precise and calculable arithmetic that the woman herself is unaware of in García Márquez—an arithmetic that is inscribed, among other things, in the uses of different places such as the bedroom, the bathroom, the street, and the church.

Al-Shaykh's "A Season of Madness" and Aidoo's "No Sweetness Here" yield a different kind of pairing, that of mature women faced with the difficulty of divorce. Both protagonists end up being trapped by the consequences of marriage and attacked by their husbands' relatives, though in quite different ways. Al-Shaykh's first-person narrator finds herself unable to admit to her husband her love for another man and her desire for a divorce and resorts to the stratagem of feigned madness instead, only to find that once she does confess the truth, it is itself interpreted as merely another symptom of her mental illness. Neither lie nor truth, in other words, are capable of freeing her from the bonds of an unwanted marriage. Aidoo's Maami Ama wishes for a divorce to be free from the bonds of a loveless marriage, since she has come to be the one unloved wife among three in her husband's polygamous relationship. Yet the divorce comes at an extremely high price for her, in terms of not only disadvantageous financial settlements but also the possibility of separation from the only family member she has left and the only human being she loves, her son Kwesi.

Aidoo's short story gains additional complexity through the presence of yet another female character, the first-person narrator. As Kwesi's teacher, she also functions as his duplicate mother insofar as she has far-reaching plans of her own for Kwesi's future education and career—plans that can be understood as an alle-

gory of her hope for Africa's better and more modern future. It is through this duplication of the mother figure, and the implicit contrast between the traditional polygamous wife who works the fields and the single, educated teacher who works in the classroom, that the final plot twist of Aidoo's story assumes its full significance. Kwesi is lost not because of the machinations of divorce and a sociolegal structure that favors men over women but because of the apparently random accident of a snakebite—he is lost not just to one but both of his mother figures and to the community as a whole. If Kwesi should indeed be read as the embodiment of black Africa's hopes for the future, this ending makes an interpretation of the reasons for the failure of this hope complex. Is the teacher, who represents modernization, in any way to blame for his death, given that she left her pupils in order to attend Maami Ama's divorce proceedings? Or is the cause of death ultimately the conflict between her modernizing ambitions and the older traditions that surface in the conflict between Maami Ama and her husband Kodjo Fi? Maami Ama, in this reading, might well be the representative of Africa's real predicament—dissatisfied with traditional culture and attempting to find a different way of life, yet losing what is most precious in the process.

You could easily expand the class discussion of Al-Shaykh and Aidoo's stories to include Mernissi's "The Harem Within," which proposes a very different solution to the problem of women literally and figuratively locked into patriarchal structures. Rather than turning women's predicament into a metaphor for a broader cultural problem, Mernissi ends up psychologizing it by emphasizing the importance of the social barriers that women erect in their own minds. Since this inward turn implies that it is up to women themselves to tear down such barriers and to open up avenues of subversion in and through existing structures, students may well find Mernissi's more optimistic outlook more appealing than the bleak ending of Aidoo's story: Mernissi's protagonist sees prospects for happiness within the existing structure that seem difficult or impossible in the tellingly entitled "No Sweetness Here." While such a preference is perfectly understandable, you might want to challenge students on the assumptions that underlie it, that is, elicit their views on the extent to which it is possible and desirable to accept existing gender structures and find a way to live within them or to reject and attempt to change them.

Mernissi and Al-Shaykh, as the two Arab women writers in this Perspectives section, can also be taught with Fadwa Tuqan in the "Perspectives: Postcolonial Conditions" section as one solid cluster dealing with women writing in Arabic culture. The first text can serve as an introduction to the other two, since Mernissi provides a sort of overview: Though writing her narrative recollections of her childhood, she is more of a theorist than a creative writer. Mernissi's elaboration of the structure of women's space in Arab culture is reinforced by the story of Hanan Al-Shaykh, in which the heroine lets her frustrated imagination loose and demonstrates the impact of that limited space of tradition and customs on women. The limitations are further developed in the story by the heroine's exile in the African Diaspora of the Lebanese community, in which the stress of exile is intensified by her perception of the lack of love on her husband's part. The feigning

of madness is not a mere trope in the story but rather a space for freedom that enables her to face the tyranny of her mother-in-law. This freedom acquires its political and national dimensions in the poems of Fadwa Tuqan. She intertwines the personal with the national in her struggle to achieve her freedom and that of her country, Palestine, which suffers under occupation.

Mernissi's portrayal of gendered spaces within Arab culture can also lead back to an exploration of Goytisolo's chapter, as the expression of a European perspective that here transforms a particular kind of public Arab place into a utopian alternative to what Goytisolo perceives as the repressive urban structures of European cities. The enclosed and closely guarded space of Mernissi's harem makes for a clear contrast with the open structure and nomadic as well as erotic flows of Goytisolo's bazaar. Yet the discussion might also take its cue from the encounters between Mernissi's first-person narrator and Yasmina to explore the relationship between the younger characters and the older women who advise, protect, educate, and in some cases threaten them. Kwesi's relationship to his teacher and his mother, Mina's relationship to her grandmother, and the narrator's relationship to her mother in Kincaid's short story would thereby come into view.

Among these, Kincaid's sequence of vignette portrayals of an at times welcoming and protective and at other times uncanny, repulsive, or dangerous mother figure is no doubt the most ambivalent. The sequence is organized in terms of an evolutionary logic of sorts, whereby the protagonist and her mother, sometimes separated by a dark pond only inhabited by invertebrates, by turns appear as reptiles, sea creatures, or furry, cave-dwelling mammals. The changing body shapes as well as the changing settings in which they are located—a dark bedroom, a seabed, an island, a valley, an empty house, a “bower made from flowers”—point to varying sensations of fusion with and separation from the maternal presence. At times the narrator and her mother are depicted as replicas or mirror images of each other, at other times the mother towers far above the child, just as their interaction rhythmically alternates between harmony and rejection. More than any of the other texts in this section, Kincaid's short story explores a psychological world of dreamlike images that are even further removed from narrative realism than Goytisolo's utopian fantasies. She draws on elements of biblical narrative (references to a “Garden of Fruits,” a tree, and scaly reptiles appear repeatedly), on pastoral (grazing lambs and bowers of bliss), and on the ancient motif of the metamorphosis. The crucial space in which gender identity is shaped and reshaped here is ultimately the mother's body and the varying distances that separate the child from it at different moments of her own development.

Chinua Achebe

A discussion of *Things Fall Apart* could well begin with the title of the novel. It is no accident that Achebe took the title for his work from the verse of a modern poet from another colonial context—Ireland's William Butler Yeats and his 1919

poem “The Second Coming.” Much can be said, and much has already been said, about Yeats’s poem that is relevant to Achebe’s novel. A review of the apocalyptic implications in both Yeats and Achebe would convey to students the sense of urgency with which both authors mine their common English colonial culture that is their formative background. There is an irony in the reference to the Messianic Second Coming of the Christian Savior to redeem the world anew and translate the world into glorious eternity after the last judgment.

Yeats’s poem ends in an interrogatory that asks “And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?” You might ask students to compare and contrast this ending to the last paragraph of Achebe’s novel and to what is announced in the death of Okonkwo and the book the District Commissioner is thinking of writing as he orders the dead man’s dangling body to be cut down. No doubt, students will find much in this scene to compare to the Crucifixion and just as much to the “second coming” or “deliverance” implied in the title of the book taking shape in the Commissioner’s mind as he views the scene—“*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*” (p. 849). You might ask students to consider how this closure of Achebe’s book becomes the “Annunciation” of a new book and a new age in the history of Africa.

It is significant that Achebe takes the first four verses of the first stanza from Yeats’s poem as the epigraph for his novel. Between the title of Achebe’s book at the beginning and the title of the District Commissioner’s book at the end, we are given the chronicle of a world that endures what is encoded in Yeats’s poem. Here is the rest of this first stanza: “Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned; / The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.” Students might be asked to decode these verses through the events of the plot in Achebe’s novel as the history of Umuofia.

Why a decidedly anticolonial African novel that is a seminal work in the history of postcolonial literature should be read through the poetry of a white, European poet like Yeats is a question worth discussing as well. Aside from the fact that Achebe leaves the reader no choice by virtue of the fact that he takes Yeats’s poem as an epigraph for his novel, the two writers—the Irishman and the Nigerian—as already noted, share a common English colonial history. They also share a fundamental religious formation in Christian mythology. It is important to remind the students that Achebe’s father was a teacher in an evangelical Protestant school of the Church Missionary Society and that Achebe himself was formed with the beliefs of the Christian church and was christened “Albert,” after the son of England’s Queen Victoria. In the work of the Nigerian and of the Irish writer there is an undeniable syncretism of the imperial religion of Christian England and of local beliefs. In Achebe’s novel, however, we have a narrative dramatization of the fraught relationship between the imperial and the local and the impossibility of syncretism without the violence done to the local and indigenous culture of the colonized. Thus, you should point students toward the irony

of the salvationist, apocalyptic opening and closing frames Achebe has devised for his novel. Achebe's is a redemption story on the model of Christian history, but its unfolding clearly spells something other than redemption for its characters and their culture. In terms of historiography and narrative modeling, then, Achebe's novel becomes a primal example of protest and anticolonial literature that leaves a record of the vanishing culture as it disappears and ensures our knowledge of it even as it documents its historical disintegration. What cultural elements does the novel salvage for the reader? What narrative strategies does the author employ to ensure that the novel serves as documentary record of what is being lost even as it is being narrated in the story?

Within this framework created by Achebe for the novel, a number of questions could help structure the discussion, and the list of characters furnished at the beginning of the work could prove helpful in tracking the developments that respond to these questions. How do the characters and their actions enact this drama? What is the course of transformation of the native culture's basic values that makes the culture vulnerable to colonial intrusion from the outside? How does Achebe's structuring of this story make the outcome of the indigenous culture's history inevitable? What traceable changes run through the novel before the arrival of the European colonists and after their arrival? Can Achebe's work serve as a model for understanding other colonial contexts in Africa and in former European colonies in other parts of the world? What might there be in this novel that is relevant to the beginning of the twenty-first century and the incursions into nations and territories by nations that are militarily more powerful?

An essayist as well as a novelist, Achebe has not shied from using other genres to engage in the polemic on the history of colonialism and the place of colonized peoples in human history. His essay "The African Writer and the English Language," printed in the *Anthology* as a companion to his novel, addresses one of the most debated issues in postcolonial writing and criticism, the question of language, nationality, ethnicity, and literary culture. These are vexed issues that Achebe tries to untangle, though he does so with the caveat that Africa is too complex and too diverse to lend itself to one answer where such questions are concerned. He observes that African nations are a European invention, but the people and their culture, certainly their stories and narratives, are not. In making such differentiations, Achebe distinguishes between nation, people, culture, ethnicity, and language, noting that these do not always coincide by virtue of the caprices of colonial administration and the accidents of history. He sees English as yet another such historical "accident" that may not be necessary but that cannot be ignored in the development of African literatures (in the plural), even if it came into the lives of the African people with the violence of conquest and dispossession. And though English may not be ignored, it will be the English of Africa with which African writers write literature and not the English of the imperial metropolis. Achebe's diagnosis has certainly been borne out by history, as we now speak of "Englishes" (in the plural), and English literature is written and read by more people outside of England than within it.

Wole Soyinka

Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* is, in its basic structure, a tragedy, and one of the first tasks in teaching it is to explore the implications of this genre with the students. Depending on how much older literature they have already explored, they may be familiar with the basic assumptions of ancient Greek tragedy, in which case a first phase could be designed to draw out their knowledge of the genre. If they are unfamiliar with it, it might be easier to begin with a comparison between everyday usages of the terms "tragedy," in which it is possible to refer to such random events as car accidents or natural disasters as "tragic," and the more technical meanings this term assumes in literature.

Once students have familiarized themselves with such notions as the "tragic flaw" or the hero's "tragic fall," some of the central questions of Soyinka's play will easily come into view. Certainly the most important of these is what exactly it is that precipitates Elesin's tragic fall: Does he fail to fulfill his calling of following the king into death because of his own latent unwillingness to die or because of the intervention of the colonial force? Soyinka seems to tilt the answer toward the first possibility in his "Author's Note," when he observes that "[t]he Colonial Factor is an incident, a catalytic incident merely. The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical" (p. 869). The initial portrayal of Elesin as a man of exuberant vitality who thinks of the pleasures of the flesh even on the brink of death reinforces the sense that the main obstacle to his ritual withdrawal from life lies in himself. Yet clearly, the context of colonialism is not nearly as secondary as Soyinka claims, given the way in which almost half of the play focuses on scenes at the Pilkings' house and at the ball, and considering the emphasis it places on the Pilkings' failure to grasp Yoruba ideas of community, sacrifice, and death. Indeed, students who read the play for the first time might well be inclined to interpret it mostly as a clash of Western and African customs and as the exploration of cross-cultural misunderstanding. The question of whether Elesin's moral failure arises principally from his own *hamartia* or tragic flaw of reluctance in the face of death, or whether his resolve is broken by the colonial context, thereby preventing him from fulfilling a task he had intended to accomplish, will no doubt provide rich material for controversy among the students.

In his "Note," Soyinka also remarks that "[o]ne of the more obvious alternative structures of the play would be to make the District Officer the victim of a cruel dilemma. This is not to my taste and it is not by chance that I have avoided dialogue or situation which would encourage this. No attempt should be made in production to suggest it" (p. 869). Clearly, what Soyinka wishes to foreground is the tragedy that befalls an African community, not that of the colonial officer. Yet the very fact that Pilkings is an obvious enough candidate for a tragic figure that the author has to defuse this reading explicitly makes it tempting to speculate how the play would be different if such an interpretation were indeed pursued. What exactly would Pilkings' tragic dilemma look like? Would it detract from or reinforce Elesin's own? How would it shift the thrust of the audience's empathy? In what ways would it alter the audience's assessment of the consequences of colonial

domination? All of these are fruitful questions to pursue with the students, and they easily lead to a discussion of the way in which Pilkings is actually characterized in the play. To what extent is Pilkings a full, three-dimensional character, and to what extent is he merely a representative of forces of death and destruction that go beyond any specific historical situation, as signaled by his own and his wife's disguise in death costumes when they first appear on stage?

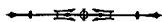
In another segment of the class discussion, you might want to shift the emphasis from the consideration of individual characters in the play to an exploration of the kinds of cultural values it endorses. Some Nigerian critics of Soyinka's, while sympathetic to his critique of colonialism, have taken him to task for defending, in *Death and the King's Horseman*, a social order that is itself clearly feudal, strictly hierarchical and patriarchal in character. (Soyinka has responded to some of these criticisms in a paper entitled "Who Is Afraid of Elesin Oba?," in his book of essays *Art, Dialogue, and Outrage*, 1988.) Are the cultural values that Elesin and his son Olunde stand for worth defending? In exploring this question, it is interesting to compare the ways in which the African and the British communities are portrayed in the play, particularly as far as social hierarchy is concerned. Elesin, clearly, belongs to an aristocratic elite that can impose its will on the peasant women in the market, to the point where he can snatch a young bride away from her husband-to-be and claim first right to her virginity in much the way feudal lords in Europe once could. But it is not so clear that such feudal structures have been unequivocally overcome in the British camp, either: The arrival of the prince clearly foregrounds the ways in which the rule of the aristocracy is also still the order of the day in this allegedly more modern culture. In addition, the play puts ample emphasis on the way in which strict administrative and military hierarchies shape almost all social interactions between the British themselves and between them and their African employees, with the only exception of the relationship between Pilkings and his wife, Jane. The class might want to explore, therefore, exactly how the play portrays the differences between British and Yoruba culture, especially in Jane's conversation with the recently returned Olunde. To the extent that similarities are foregrounded, the question of why Elesin's worldview is worth advocating for returns in full force.

In the process of comparing social relations in the Yoruba and the British settings, students may also want to explore in more detail the roles of the female characters. Both Iyaloja and Jane seem to be set up as figures who temper the male protagonists' more extreme proclivities. Iyaloja attempts to dissuade Elesin from a sexual act that she considers, initially and again in the last act, as a sign of weakness and distraction from more sacred purposes. Jane is cast throughout the play as a figure with much greater sensitivity toward differences of cultural perception than her husband and with much greater willingness to respect customs other than those of her own society, though her attempts to influence Pilkings—like Iyaloja's attempts to change Elesin's mind—remain ultimately futile. And she, too, encounters the limits of her cross-cultural understanding in her conversation with Olunde, whose continued adherence to the values of his own society she is at a loss to comprehend.

With the consideration of Olunde, the discussion might return to the issue of tragic figures in the play. As a counterweight to Amusa and Joseph, two African characters who have in some ways compromised with their colonial dominators, Olunde returns from a stay in England—initiated, as the reader finds out, by Pilkings himself in defiance of rules of filial succession for the office Elesin holds—with an essentially unaltered commitment to the values of his own culture, to the point where he is willing to sacrifice his own life for them. His perspective on British culture, as he articulates it in his conversation with Jane Pilkings, is surely worth exploring in some depth, as is the question of the necessity of his death. Throughout the play, the relationship between parents and children is metaphorized through the image of the plantain and its offshoot, which recurs at crucial moments of the unfolding action, and the death of children ahead of their parents would in and of itself be considered tragic in a Yoruba perspective. Clearly, Olunde’s voluntary death is meant to make up for his father’s shortfall and to re-establish a sense of cosmic balance for the community. Students will surely wonder whether this outcome was possible to achieve by any other means. Almost inevitably, exploring this question will also lead students to ask to what degree such a sense of metaphysical harmony is essential for the identity of a cultural community. The discussion might here broaden out into a more general consideration of sacrifice, scapegoats as sacrificial victims that symbolically stand in for specific social groups, and the way in which scapegoats are designated. Such a discussion provides ample material for cross-cultural comparison and for establishing links to other texts and other historical periods, from tragedy in different epochs to descriptions of sacred rituals in the holy scriptures of different cultural traditions.

PERSPECTIVES

Postcolonial Conditions



Mahmoud Darwish and Faiz Ahmad Faiz

Mahmoud Darwish and Faiz Ahmad Faiz are both poets of national liberation and can be taught as such, although they deal with two very different situations. In Darwish’s poems the sensitive details and preponderance of spatial imagery create poetic icons that conjure his lost country and record its history. They become anchors of the collective memory and posit an alternative history to the official one, particularly in his “Diary of a Palestinian Wound.” Darwish’s rich output of poetry can be divided into three different stages: the Israeli phase (1960–1971), the Beirut phase (1972–1982), and the post-Beirut phase (1982–present).

In the first phase, which comprises his first five collections and is represented in the *Anthology* by his “Diary of a Palestinian Wound,” his poetry was marked by its lyrical iconography of simple Palestinian objects redolent with significance and symbolism. It took pride in its Arabic language and celebrated the simple fact of being Palestinian in an atmosphere hostile to everything Palestinian. In this phase, the intellectual structure of his poetry owes much to Marx and Gramsci, and he drew his poetic inspiration from Pablo Neruda and Federico García Lorca in particular. Like them, he was not converted to Marxism but found in it an answer to his own dark emotions; it provided an ordering and granting of purpose to his life. His poetry of this phase is overtly political with luxuriant sensual language, a “daylight” poetry of visual, tactile things. Its tone is characteristically didactic diagnosis, and its technique combines the sophisticated exploitation of traditional lyrical resonance with vivid images or vignettes (which are frequently small allegories). Yet it is charged with the power to evoke tremendous resistance, which enabled it to capture and even inflame the imagination of its readers throughout the Arab world.

This changed in the second phase, which is represented in the *Anthology* by “Sirhan Drinks His Coffee in the Cafeteria” and “Birds Die in Galilee.” His lyrical poetry in the 1960s was inseparable from the structure of a politics in which political and individual codes interpenetrated to a remarkable degree. His resistance poetry had a politicized lyrical structure inscribed within a complex national mode of existence of the exceptionally free and rebellious Palestinian in an Arab world ruled by dictators. The 1970s witnessed the cynical maturity of the poet and the dissipation of the simple optimism of revolutionary innocence, for this was the phase of inter-Arab conflicts, with more Palestinians being killed by Arabs than by Israelis. Like Eliot’s “Unreal city” of *The Waste Land*, Darwish’s Beirut amalgamates the spirit of the Arab city and the ethos of Hell and is entangled in mythological and intertextual allusions. In the poetry of this phase, the poetic structure became refined and tense, as the task of the poet became more difficult, with reality getting more prosaic by the hour. The poet became increasingly conscious of his poetic endeavor and attempted to develop a new poetic form capable of conveying the prevalent sense of disconnectedness and apathy. The loss of the collective dream of an optimistic future removed from the poetic horizon not only a sense of meaning but also a whole category of imagery, vocabulary, and poetic structures. The lyrical diction and the positive imagery of the 1960s rang false in the desolate reality of the 1970s. Toward the end of this phase, the poet became increasingly aware of the apathy of his readers (in Baudelaire’s words), “*hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable—mon frère!*”

This hypocrisy became the hallmark of the post-Beirut phase, which is represented by “A Poem Which Is Not Green, from My Country.” The poetry oscillates between long dramatic poems and tense short ones in which he invokes the biblical lyric of lament and turns it against itself, so it ceases to sound euphonious and lyrical. The psalm-like poems sing of an abandoned people in Babylonian exile and captivity, and pierce like shrapnel. His long poems, with their epic quality, crystallize the sense of physical dislocation, political chaos, and failure of Arab politics, especially in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and thus de-

fine some fundamental aspects of literary modernism's pervasive negativity and pessimism. In this later poetry he became, as T. S. Eliot advocates, "more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning." In the disjunctive, perturbed poems of the post-Beirut phase, he became clearly preoccupied with a sense of the disjunction of the Arab/Palestinian self. Thus he advocated greater precision in the use of words and eschewed all types of decorative language. He also realized that the transposition from the auditory to the visual is a textual phenomenon, one entirely encoded in the poetic text; hence his resort to fresh strategies of poetic representation and new rules of reference to extrinsic elements, be they historical, realistic, or even textual. Musical mimesis replaced old forms of poetic representation and led the poet to explore various aspects of the poeticity of words and to create new rhythms as the expression of new modes of experience. In his recent poetry, even the nature of poetic obscurity has undergone radical change. Rational obscurity presupposes a framework of intelligibility in which problems can be attributed to the absence of knowledge, and once the necessary arcane knowledge is supplied, a poem would become rationally coherent. This was replaced by a different type of obscurity that was more philosophical, for the modern poems of this period involve a discourse that belongs irreducibly to a system of new referentiality and requires fresh conventions. As a result his poetry has become more pensive, for he thinks of himself as a maker of symbols rather than a receiver of symbols made by external reality.

This is similar to what Faiz does in his poems, where the conditions of confinement become symbolic of the whole condition of a fractured nation. His experience as a political prisoner and an exile left its lasting mark on the structure, language, and imagery of his poetry. Light became a prevalent metaphor in his poetry, with many different meanings, not only as a symbol of freedom and the opposite of the darkness of the cell in which he is confined but also as a symbol of peace and tranquillity, a space where fears are dissipated and brutalities of war or tyranny are exposed. In "Blackout," the extinguished light becomes the light of reason and enlightenment, as well as the light of peace, love, normality, and even a firm sense of identity. "Solitary Confinement" is one of his prison poems in which light becomes a potent metaphor and a means of defeating his jailers. The dance of the wave of light defies confinement and provides the prisoner, from whose perspective the poem is written, a glimpse of hope.

Faiz's poems are capable of transcending the particular, achieving the universal through the power of carefully wrought images and metaphors. This is clear in his poem "No Sign of Blood," which can be read as a metaphor for all those who die without acknowledgment of their sacrifice or the injustice of their death. It is a poem about sanitized killing that has happened in the past and is still happening now. It could be read as a poem about those who die almost gratuitously, whether the Iraqi civilians caught in the merciless fight resulting from the occupation of their country or the Palestinian ones who are the victims of the longest military occupation in modern history.



Reza Baraheni

Baraheni is the typical survivor of the twentieth century's ideology prison system, in his case the Iranian prisons of the Shah and of the Ayatollah. The two poems printed in the *Anthology* are exemplary of the human predicaments of such systems, which seem to be migrating with great ease from the twentieth into the twenty-first century. "The Unrecognized" can be read as a counterpoint in solidarity and survival. The twist for students to note here is that those in solidarity are the very same human beings who must survive, individually, at a cost to their human bonds with those bound in solidarity with them. It is one of the dehumanizing consequences of political regimes that force people to disown each other in order to survive. So efficient has this conditioning been that by the beginning of the twenty-first century, the topic of human solidarity is no longer a theme for discussion, much less a practice. Rare are the writers and intellectuals contemporary with our students who do engage in social commitment and in solidarity with the oppressed. This in itself could well be a topic for class discussion, as would the assignment to find exceptions to this historical legacy of the twentieth century.

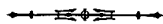
"Answers to an Interrogation" is clearly set in the Shah's regime, during which Baraheni was either under surveillance, imprisoned, or under interrogation. The responses Baraheni rehearses in this poem should give the students a snapshot of the twentieth century and also a glimpse into the "family history" of the poet. The tone of the poetic voice is obviously as significant as the responses themselves, and it might be interesting for students to correlate these responses with the historical figures—James Joyce, Che Guevara—whose names typify twentieth-century rebellion in art as well as in political ideology.



Farough Faroghzaad

"A Poem for You" is a mother's last lullaby to her son, as noted in the poem's second stanza. The students may well find this uncanny, perhaps as a premonition of Faroghzaad's own premature death. It is also a poem of hope that counts on the future reading and understanding of the poem by the son. Given that Faroghzaad lost custody of her child early in his life when she was separated from her husband, this may be explained on the basis of the poet's autobiography. Nonetheless, this is also a highly political poem, a gender-inflected, feminist politics in a society where a woman's role is strictly defined. You might prompt students to identify some of these political elements. How might these still have some relevance in their own social context and in societies around the world today? How does this rebellious young mother count on her son's reading and understanding in the future what she is writing now? Why is it important to her

that he understand? Is this a hopeful or pessimistic poem? What is the poet's persona rebelling against in this poem?



Derek Walcott

Walcott's first two poems presented in the *Anthology*, "A Far Cry from Africa" and "Volcano," work well together as expressing both Walcott's rich heritage and his creative ambivalence toward all its strands. His love of punning is also prominent in both poems: Puns serve as one way to overlay eras and meanings. Thus "A far cry" means both "a long way" and also a distant sound—which may be either the sounds Walcott hears in his mind's ear (the rustling wind, the scornful worm's cry) or the poem itself. A poem about the poet's vocation, "A Far Cry" stages Walcott's position as biracial heir to both sides of the conflicts he must contemplate. You can ask students to note the sudden abruptness of the truncated twenty-eighth line, "I who have cursed": Walcott must move beyond cursing in order to give effective verbal form to what he sees, even though doing so will involve him in the language, and the poetic forms, of the European tradition.

A similar ambivalence is seen, more playfully, in "Volcano," with Conrad and Joyce turned into glimmering volcanoes contemplated by the "miles-out- / at-sea derricks" (lines 12–13), punning stand-ins for Derek Walcott himself. Even as he acknowledges the power of his modernist fellow-exiles, Walcott makes a poem out of the very urge to stop writing and only read.

One of Walcott's most important poems, "The Fortunate Traveller" takes its title by reversing *The Unfortunate Traveller*, a comic, violent picaresque narrative by Thomas Nashe, a contemporary of Shakespeare. Nashe's rogue-hero Jack Wilton cheats and swindles his way around the Elizabethan world, getting into one scrape after another, saving himself by his quick wits and ready tongue. Walcott's protagonist jets around the world doing development work and contemplating his own detachment from the sufferings he encounters: He dispenses monetary charity without any real feeling: "And have not charity" (line 68), as he thinks, recalling a line from Saint Paul in the King James translation. Here Walcott puns across centuries, giving "charity" the double sense of love and of foreign aid to the poor. Walcott's protagonist explicitly distances himself from the racist imperialism of Conrad's Mr. Kurtz ("Through Kurtz's teeth . . . / the imperial fiction sings," lines 133–134), and he has been shocked out of his academic disengagement by the sight of starving children. Yet it appears that he has, in fact, fallen into corruption himself, taking bribes from Africans who don't fully trust him ("You know if you betray us, you cannot hide?," line 24) but then apparently pocketing the money rather than delivering the promised goods. At the poem's end he has fled to a Caribbean island, where he thinks of the gun-running poet Rimbaud and waits for his fate. The two gentleman have "found out my sanctuary" (line 192); the narrator will not escape the consequences of his uncharitable charity.



Salman Rushdie

“Chekov and Zulu” teaches beautifully with Walcott’s “The Fortunate Traveller,” as its protagonists are international civil servants who become caught up in corruption and violence. Whereas Walcott’s protagonist favors Rimbaud and the Bible as a means of understanding his situation, Rushdie’s characters are immersed in the world of contemporary popular culture. They obsessively role-play *Star Trek* characters, and when “Zulu” begins to become dissatisfied with his situation, he reaches out by involving himself in Tolkien’s Middle Earth. Like Walcott’s protagonist, Zulu has been taking bribes, or so his superiors surmise at the start of the story, and it is now suspected that he has joined a violent Sikh group; echoing the catch-line about the Starship *Enterprise*, Chekov surmises that “Zulu has boldly gone where no Indian diplomaut has gone before” (p. 959). Moral uncertainties grow as Chekov reveals his own feeling that “I should have been a terrorist” (p. 960). (Note the classic Rushdian verbal hijinks seen in the coinage “diplomaut,” a sort of pseudo-Anglo-Indian malapropism that perfectly captures the character’s self-dramatizing, spaced-out diplomacy.)

You can ask the students what Rushdie gains from adding Tolkien to the *Star Trek* analogies that dominate the narrative. Where the Starship *Enterprise* is closely associated in the story with British colonial rule and later financial manipulations, Zulu’s reading of Tolkien causes him to quit the Great Game altogether. As he explains to a skeptical Chekov, “It is about a war to the finish between Good and Evil” (p. 962). Zulu quits his government job and starts a private security company in Bombay, while the more accommodating Chekov hangs on, only to be assassinated along with Rajiv Gandhi, in a final, bravura moment of *Star Trek* hallucination that offers him repentance and release from his postcolonial condition.

PERSPECTIVES

Literature, Technology, and Media

This section is designed to enable a discussion about the changing role of literature in the evolving mediascape of the twentieth century and about the ways in which literary texts themselves incorporate other media into their own mode of expression. The texts selected for this section integrate them thematically rather than formally; while they address nonprint media, they do not adopt experimental typographies or images into their printed appearance and, due to the *Anthology’s* format, they do not include aural, visual, or digital literary works (such as radio plays or hypertext poetry), though of course such works could easily be added to the discussion material if students have easy access to the technological infrastructure required.

The order of the texts in the section follows roughly the sequence in which different media emerged over the course of the twentieth century: Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller* deals with oral storytelling, print literature, and television but is particularly concerned with the survival of orature; Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* portrays an Arab culture's first encounter with radio in the 1930s, Christa Wolf's *Accident* and Murakami Haruki's "TV People" the role of television in a world saturated with both beneficial and dangerous technologies; and William Gibson's "Burning Chrome" revolves around the emergent world of international computer networks.

The problem of the confrontation between oral and written culture as Vargas Llosa describes it in *The Storyteller* is not limited to the twentieth century. In different guises, it emerges whenever contemporary readers encounter printed texts that were originally produced and disseminated through oral performance: reading ancient epics such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, medieval *chansons de geste* such as *El Cid* or *Le conte du Graal*, or the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm implies an experience of literary expression completely different from that of the original audience. If such earlier texts formed part of the world literature course, you might begin the class discussion by referring back to them so as to highlight that the problem of the "medium" is not an exclusively modern or contemporary one. (Eric Havelock has written extensively on the cultural consequences of the transition from oral to written culture in ancient Greece in his *Preface to Plato*, 1963.) You might also want to explore in this context the parallels and differences between the contemporary reader's printed encounter with texts that originated in oral expression, but have since undergone a long evolution in printed form, and the encounter with oral texts from contemporary indigenous cultures. Native American author Gerald Vizenor's short story "Shadows" explores the latter problem in the character Bagese's condemnation of the first-person narrator's written stories as "dead voices" and his violation of her prohibition to put her stories into print; similarly, N. Scott Momaday implicitly reflects on orality and literacy through his juxtaposition of oral myths, historical accounts, and autobiography in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (p. 680), and Leslie Marmon Silko's "Yellow Woman" (p. 673), included in her hybrid text *The Storyteller*, reflect an equally intense concern with the forms and functions of oral narrative in a culture dominated by print. The discussion of literature, technology, and media, therefore, could easily evolve out of the engagement with indigenous literature and orature. You might familiarize students with this unusual term by explaining, as Walter Ong does in *Orality and Literacy* (1982, p. 12), that "thinking of oral tradition or a heritage of oral performance, genres and styles as 'oral literature' is rather like thinking of horses as automobiles without wheels"; a different term is needed to foreground the specificity of oral expression.

One of the central questions that underlies Vargas Llosa's as well as the indigenous authors' engagement with orature is whether it is in some ways a more authentic, more "real" and less artificial mode of expression than the written or printed word. But this question plays itself out quite differently in the Native American writers' texts, whose project is to revive their own cultural traditions,

which they broadly perceive as repressed and undervalued by the dominant white culture. Such is not the case for Vargas Llosa's narrator, whose fascination with Machiguenga storytelling does not imply any return to his own cultural roots, though the vitality of this native tradition clearly becomes a (perhaps utopian) model for his own writing. (It should be noted here that the novel's Spanish title, *El hablador*, literally "The Speaker" or "The Talker," emphasizes oral expression much more forcefully than the English title *The Storyteller*.) More than anything, what impresses him about the Machiguenga storytellers is the central importance of their craft to the culture: It is the equivalent of mythology, religion, genealogy, education, current news broadcasting, and entertainment all rolled into one, and obviously the narrator longs for a culture in which his own craft of writing could have a similarly broad relevance to the lived experience of the community.

Vargas Llosa's novel is a story on the technologies of producing stories. The span of Vargas Llosa's narrative dramatization extends from pre-industrial "primitive" societies of the Amazon to the high-tech museological productions of the most advanced urban centers of Western Europe such as Florence and electronic media production in mega-urban centers such as Lima, Peru. The Storyteller in the novel traverses this span across historical times and geographical space. He goes from work in television program production to indigenous Machiguenga shaman and tongue, or mouthpiece, of the spirits of the Peruvian jungle nomads. They, in their own time-space dimension, are only reachable by the technology of the airplane and the science of the ethno-linguists devoted to tracing vanishing languages and stories.

Vargas Llosa's narrative weaves into one story the diverse time capsules of culture, from the stone age to the postindustrial age, that co-habit in the twentieth century. His protagonist is a marked man destined to traverse these time zones and their stories. You could ask students to consider how the birthmark on his face that gives him his nickname, Mascarita, or "little mask," might be significant in his role. His Jewish name, Moshé, and the Israeli links of his family indicate that he is also Jewish. What might be the significance of the principal character's Jewishness to the plot of the story? If he is a "Wandering Jew," like the literary prototype, how does he connect worlds across geotemporal thresholds and technological means of generating and delivering stories? What is the significance of the title of their television program in Lima, "The Tower of Babel," in this regard?

You should also alert students to the historical situatedness of Vargas Llosa's novel. The following questions might be helpful in exploring the historical dimension of the text. What historical details of twentieth-century politics and literary culture does Vargas Llosa incorporate into this narrative, and what might these particular details signify? What is the role of the missionaries and translators in the generation of stories and in their telling? How does the Bible and its stories intersect with the stories of the Machiguenga? How does Vargas Llosa depict the role of ethnography and anthropologists in this story on stories? What significance do ethnographers have for the native peoples of this remote region, and how do they affect their culture? How does this become a political issue in the study of cultures?

It is in this context of these questions that the question of the “authenticity” of oral storytelling emerges in full force. Throughout the novel, the narrator shows an ambivalent attitude toward the Wycliff Bible translators, who study native languages and develop written transcriptions for them with the principal goal of translating the Bible. Even though they help preserve native languages and cultures through their codification efforts, the narrator’s friend Saúl Zuratas had fulminated against what he perceived as their corruption of native culture through the imposition of a foreign religion. But the end of the chapter shows just how ambiguous the authenticity of indigenous culture has become: If Zuratas, a Peruvian of Jewish origin, has himself become a “native” Machiguenga storyteller and has imposed the new injunction of keeping the storytellers’ existence secret, the question is whether he himself is not contributing to the transformation of native culture in his own way just as much as the Wycliffites do in theirs. If the fulcrum of Machiguenga culture is occupied by an outsider, its authenticity is in question, and with it the whole idea that there still are sources of untainted native culture on which an exhausted Western one can draw to renew itself.

But what prevents a novelist from having the stature of a Machiguenga storyteller in modern society is not only the fact that cultural authenticity may have become an abstract concept rather than a tangible reality, or that literature, compared to indigenous storytelling, might have become too narrowly confined to the niche of the “aesthetic.” As the narrator’s own situation shows, one of the factors that has fundamentally altered the meaning of literary expression is the emergence of television as an alternative medium, the one that he himself agrees to contribute to at least temporarily. The show that he helps broadcast in some sense tries to replicate some facets of Machiguenga storytelling in that it, too, aims to combine information, education, and entertainment (against infinite practical odds, as the chapter repeatedly emphasizes). So while the narrator clearly longs to reinvigorate his craft of writing through contact with the premodern medium of oral storytelling, he is at the same time making the transition to the postmodern medium of television, which might further weaken what relevance the printed word retains. Marshall McLuhan, who prophesied a return to orality in the age of television and the computer, would surely have been delighted at the parallels Vargas Llosa establishes between orature and television—even though, in a final turn of paradox, these parallels are described by a novelist in a novel whose title is never far from the ironic.

Abdelrahman Munif’s *Cities of Salt* focuses more directly on the introduction of a technologically advanced medium into a traditional community, in the context of a narrative that more generally explores the consequences of American oil exploitation in the Persian Gulf on the societies and lifestyles of the region. Confirming science fiction writer Arthur Clarke’s contention that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic for those not initiated into its origins and manipulation, the radio appears to the Arab community portrayed in *Cities of Salt* like nothing short of a miracle at first: The presence of voices and music from what appears to be nowhere cannot easily be accounted for by means of any logic available to its members. But the excerpts presented in the *Anthology* also show

that this sense of wonder and bewilderment gradually gives way to the integration of the new technology into the existing power structure. The emir quickly grasps that if he learns to manipulate the new device successfully, this skill will enhance the authority he already possesses, while a failure to do so might diminish it. Whatever this medium's function might be for the Americans, in other words, it will be appropriated and refigured by the culture into which it is newly introduced. But conversely, it is also clear that the existing social structures in the Arab community have to redefine themselves at least partially around the new medium. The emir cannot afford simply to avoid a technology that is bound to captivate the deep interest of the population; he sees himself forced to acquire a technological literacy he himself might not be particularly interested in and that is clearly bound to remain superficial. In this latter respect, of course, he doesn't differ fundamentally from the average Western user of advanced technologies; Munif illustrates beautifully how the average user can manipulate such technologies with considerable technical and social success without understanding in the least their underlying principles of functioning. Indeed, the possibility of using technologies without any deeper understanding is precisely what enables their easy implantation into everyday life.

As in Hardy's Wessex or Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Munif created his imaginary desert oasis and town and his parallel narrative world in his novel. Both the oasis of Wadi al-'Uyun and the city of Muran in *Cities of Salt* acquire an independent geography and a real sense of particularized space. In this imaginary place, which stands as a metaphor for the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, Munif elaborates the impotent, backward, and defeated Arab world in which a despotic and corrupt state rules over oppressed masses. This novel, which took seven years to write, is without doubt the most significant novel to have emerged from the Arabian Peninsula. On one level, the novel is a tribal saga depicting the feuding tribes of Arabia and the triumph of one particular tribe over the others, through treachery, violence, manipulation of religious dogma, and enlistment of British and American support. The feud continues within the triumphant tribe throughout the 2,500 pages of the five-volume novel, but the tribal saga is given second place to the portrayal of the process of modernity and its devastating impact on the traditional pattern of interaction and the old network of relations and praxis. On another level, the novel endeavors to capture the nature and rhythm of a world that is rapidly disappearing and records its customs and mores, its popular lore and way of life, and its memory and infrastructure of views and visions that are being gradually eradicated. It is also a novel of the ontological contagion of the triangular desire that governs the nature of development in the Arab world, in which the process of internal mediation reaches an alarming level of servility and self-destruction.

The structure of the narrative with its repetitions and constant return to the past reflects the yearning for lost times and bygone ways. The episode of the radio selected in this *Anthology* is part of Munif's larger portrayal of the enormous leap from traditional desert life with its cosmic time, Bedouin life, and eternal serenity to the modern life of consumerism and social conflicts provoked by the discovery of oil as an evil feeding on corruption, destruction, greed, and human weaknesses.

Munif depicts the process of modernity in desert communities as inseparable from the proliferation of tyranny, despotic rule, the triumph of ignorance, and historical amnesia. The novel demonstrates the disappearance of the freedom, independence, and dignity of desert life under the wheels of modernity, foreign domination, and neo-imperialism. The advent of modern technologies and their accompanying modes of interaction has led to the formulation of new power structures whose lack of legitimacy and reliance on tyranny, intimidation, nepotism, and oppression is amply manifested. Hence it is also a novel about the devastating impact of American neo-imperialism in the Arab world and its role in thwarting any progress in the region, serving as an early warning against such intervention.

While Vargas Llosa and Munif investigate the relationship between different media in the developing world, in social contexts where the encounter with new technologies always also implies a confrontation with another and usually more dominant culture, the remaining texts in the section all focus on media as they function in already thoroughly developed societies. Wolf's novel *Accident: A Day's News* embeds its consideration of media into the more general context of rapidly advancing technologies. The novel was understood by many as an uncompromising rejection of nuclear technologies and the techno-scientific hubris that created and pretends to be able to manage them. But this is not to say that Wolf's overall tone is Luddite or antimodern. The novel hinges on the juxtaposition of technologies that sustain life and those that endanger it: The one day in the life of the female protagonist that the reader witnesses throughout the novel is shaped by her concern for her brother, who is undergoing brain surgery that day, and by the simultaneously emerging news broadcasts about the nuclear fallout from the reactor accident at Chernobyl. The excerpt in the *Anthology* switches back and forth between these two contexts; Wolf foregrounds just how porous the boundary between the two different kinds of technologies is by her idiosyncratic punctuation, which often marks the transition from one paragraph to another by just a comma or an ellipsis rather than a period. What enables the transition between brain surgery and nuclear power may well be the fact that they do not after all represent completely different types of technological endeavor, but different types of risk. In the case of brain surgery, the risk is voluntary and known in advance by those who undergo it, even though the outcome may still be lethal (in the novel, it is not—the protagonist's brother survives the operation). In the case of a nuclear accident, the risk is unplanned, involuntary, and experienced as unexpected trauma by those who undergo it. In a way, then, the novel is a reflection on which kinds of technological risk are acceptable and which ones must be rejected as unacceptable in a society that understands itself as civilized.

What compounds this second kind of risk is its transmission by the media; Wolf is relentlessly critical of the Chernobyl coverage on East German media and the way its emphasis on visual appearance rather than substance makes an expert in a suit by default seem more credible than a protester in blue jeans. Even the movies that the protagonist decides to view instead of the news, a Cold-War spy movie and George Cukor's *Gaslight*, both focus on deception and treachery, as

though television could not transmit anything else. It is finally only in the return to literature that the protagonist finds solace at nightfall. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and particularly the passage in which Marlow reminds his listeners that England, too, was once one of the "dark places," sums up for her her own skepticism of progress and "civilization" and the supposed benefits they bring. Literature, in Wolf's novel, remains a purveyor of truth in a world that other media saturate with deceptions.

The tone of Murakami's and Gibson's engagements with media technology is fundamentally different, in part because they are not predicated on the kind of realism that Wolf's novel relies on. Both are fantastic stories attempting to capture facets of a contemporary media landscape that is in and of itself beginning to make conventional distinctions between the real and the fantastic difficult. In Murakami's short story, this difficulty is symbolized by the TV People themselves, beings whose appearance resembles that of humans in every way except that they are diminished in size; the narrator calls them "TV People" because in two central scenes in the short story, they bring large TV sets to his home and his workplace. Yet, unlike Wolf's television, we never see these TVs broadcasting any normal kinds of programs; indeed, throughout most of the story they don't broadcast at all (one doesn't even get installed). So the TV People seem to be not so much the providers of TV sets as the representatives of an alternate reality that is by no means contained by television screens. Rather than any defined broadcast, it is this alternate reality that is beginning to seep into various spheres of the protagonist's life. By the end, it is clear that he himself has crossed the border into this other reality and is henceforth separated from the normal life he led with his wife and in his workplace earlier. Even though a phone call, presumably from the wife, will come according to one of the TV People's predictions, it is clear that it will not re-establish normalcy: The protagonist realizes in a sudden wave of lucidity that the phone network itself is yet another medium that serves as much to separate as to connect different spheres of reality. Television, by the end of the story, has become more than a medium or a technology. The reduction of the protagonist's body to TV People size signals a whole way of life, a basic form of existence.

It is worth noting, in this context, that both the protagonist and his wife work in the media and advertising business from the start, and the protagonist's metamorphosis might be understood to be causally related to the chronic distortions of the real that such employment requires. But whether his transformation has any "objective" reality remains ambiguous throughout the story—it is quite possible to assume that this entire alternate realm exists nowhere outside the protagonist's own imagination. What militates most strongly in favor of this interpretation is the fact that neither at home nor in the work environment is the presence of the TV People and their delivery of massively sized TV sets perceived or commented upon by anyone other than the protagonist. His wife, whom he portrays as obsessed with order, does not even seem to notice the large TV in the apartment or the disruptions brought about by its arrival; neither do his colleagues at work seem to be aware of a team of TV People carrying around an ex-

ceptionally large set with the prominently displayed logo of a rival company. The protagonist himself is disturbed by this lack of any reaction on the part of others, but apparently not to the point where he doubts the evidence of his own senses. Yet the reader might wonder: The protagonist's bouts of migraine, his insomnia and inability to accomplish even relatively routine tasks such as doing the laundry or answering a wedding invitation might indicate a severe state of depression, and the arrival of the TV People might simply be an imaginary means of escape from a profoundly alienated and meaningless existence. Even if this is the interpretation one adopts as most plausible, however, it remains that the means of escape for even a self-declared Luddite such as the protagonist is the television set. Whether it seeks reality or an escape from it, the contemporary imagination is shaped by the world of television.

Gibson's "Burning Chrome," a story that already contains some of the core narrative motifs of his later classic *Neuromancer* (1984), similarly casts a new medium as both an advanced form of reality and the escape from it. The main manifestation of the new digital world of virtual realities is, of course, cyberspace, the world of international computer networks, which Gibson tellingly refers to as a "consensus hallucination." But it is important to point out to students that other forms of virtual reality seem equally prevalent in Gibson's futuristic universe: the realm of "simstim," a descendant of Aldous Huxley's "feelies" and virtual reality in which soap operas are experienced via the sensory apparatus of the major star, and the disembodied prostitution that is practiced in the "House of Blue Lights." What links them is the possibility of detaching motion and sensory experience from the idiosyncrasies of a particular body and making them available to other bodies in a variety of contexts and situations. While this possibility seems at first strikingly innovative due to the technological apparatus that effects the separation of body and mind in Gibson, many critics have pointed out that precisely the possibility of such a separation of mind from matter is one of the most conventional ideas of Western philosophy. Part of what is so seductive about Gibson's technological imagination, then, is that it finds a way to articulate a very traditional aspiration in the vocabulary of a new medium.

Gibson approaches the new medium in this story not via a lone hacker figure but a team of two computer specialists who complement each other and indeed may add up to nothing other than the two allegorical halves of one personality. On one side, there is Bobby Quine the idealist, who can carry out his missions of digital theft and deception only when he can give himself the illusion that he's doing them for a woman, even though the story makes it clear he has very little interest in the real aspirations of the women he courts. Automatic Jack's patently old-fashioned, industrial-style arm prosthesis already marks him physically as a realist and pragmatist. He attempts to dissuade Bobby from what he perceives as an impossibly risky venture, provides the basic technological infrastructure once he's been talked into joining, is aware of Rikki's overriding desire to become a simstim star, and does what he can to help her achieve it, even if it implies a renunciation of his own desire for her.

The figures of Automatic Jack and Rikki are also linked through their bodily prostheses, both of which are not simple body replacements but sophisticated technological tools. Jack can connect electric tools directly to his artificial arm, and Rikki succeeds, at the end of the story, in purchasing an implant of artificial Zeiss Ikon eyes that are at the same time simstim cameras. Cyberspace, with which Bobby Quine and Automatic Jack interface through a direct hookup to their nervous systems, is the third kind of prosthesis the story explores; what Gibson has in mind here is clearly McLuhan's understanding of media as "extensions of man," prostheses that improve upon humans' natural sensory organs (you could easily assign to students a page or two from McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, 1964, to go along with "Burning Chrome"). The impact of technology and new media on the human body is an issue students might want to explore comparatively in Wolf, Murakami, and Gibson: brain surgery and radioactive fallout as juxtaposed in *Accident*, the shrinking human body that signals the advent of the realm of television in "TV People," and the assorted drugs, implants, and systemic alterations the characters of "Burning Chrome" undergo, in many cases so as to take part in the new media landscape.

But cyberspace in Gibson is not merely a bodily prosthesis; it also functions as a new environment whose clean, neon-colored geometry provides a striking contrast with the decaying and sordid urban environments that the characters inhabit in their nonvirtual lives. In fact, it is to some extent surprising to see how Gibson, in practically all of his texts, models the visual appearance of cyberspace, the quintessentially postmodernist space, on that of the grid structures and geometrically shaped skyscrapers of a typically high-modernist city (Manhattan is usually the model that is either explicitly or implicitly referred to). In a metaphor that has by now become extremely commonplace, virtual space is envisioned as an extension of the urban. The description of the run on Chrome's data mingles this sense of the urban with the vocabulary of military assault and with a general sense of the intoxication induced by extreme, technologically propelled speed that already characterized the manifestos of F. T. Marinetti early in the twentieth century.

Just how much cyberspace functions in the story as an alternative to the real world is foregrounded by the narrative structure, in which the account of the high-speed data heist is interleaved with the story that led up to it. The hard-boiled realism, technological proficiency, and underworld sordidness that Gibson mixes with a fairly unsophisticated sentimentalism in his hallmark narrative idiom may fascinate some students and repel others. It might be important to spend some time sorting out the genre elements that Gibson uses to convey this mix: a *film noir* atmosphere of crime, corruption, and decay mixed with the glamour of fame and fortune, the suspense of what is essentially a story of a grand-scale heist, the futuristic journeys into cyberspace, and the melancholy sentimentalism of a story of lost love and ideals.

Some students may feel that Gibson unjustly glorifies characters who are essentially thieves out for nothing else but financial gain with the vocabulary of the "cowboy" or the *noir* private eye, both of whom are typically figures holding up a

code of honor in an otherwise corrupt world. While this is a legitimate critique of the future world Gibson portrays, it is also worth pointing out that financial gain is a somewhat ambiguous motivation for both of the male characters. Bobby Quine seems mostly interested in a venture that will require all his hacker skills and hone them back to their old perfection. He pretends to himself that his accomplishments will benefit his beloved in an odd caricature of chivaleresque code; as the story makes abundantly clear, nothing much changes in his daily life as the consequence of his newly acquired wealth. Jack, for his part, is initially opposed to the heist and agrees only reluctantly. Prosperity in and of itself seems to mean as little to him in the end as it does to his partner.

In discussing Gibson's manipulation of different genre codes, gender is likely to emerge as an issue of contention. The principal narrative agents in "Burning Chrome" are males, as they are in many Gibson texts, and their main goal is to bring down a woman who has become "one of the Boys." Students may well feel that Chrome's mistake, in the eyes of Jack and Bobby, is not just to have become associated with the Mafia but to have assumed a position of wealth and power that is usually reserved for men. But of course, Chrome is hard to cast as a victim of patriarchy—she has, after all, accumulated much of her wealth by running a prostitution business that exploits the bodies of other women, Rikki among them. Yet this fact in itself is one of the more disturbing aspects of Gibson's narrative, which all too often features female protagonists who have either a past or present involvement with prostitution, as if women's lives in this future world somehow could not be thought apart from the commodification of their bodies. On the other hand, prostitution makes Rikki ultimately independent from either Jack or Bobby, enabling her to buy herself the Zeiss Ikons and set out for her own career rather than the existence Bobby had envisioned for her. She slips from their grip just as they succeed in stealing the money that would enable either one of them to provide her with a financially secure existence. The gender politics of the story, then, is not unambiguous, yet it may be hard to exonerate Gibson completely from gender stereotyping.

If you teach the texts in the "Literature, Technology, and Media" section in the middle of a class sequence, it would be easy to segue from the exploration of new media and their impact on living environments, human bodies, and senses to the selections in the "Gendered Spaces" section. If you place the "Literature, Technology, and Media" texts toward the end of a course, you might want to conclude by showing one of the films that have recently explored the new virtual realities of the computer with some narrative sophistication. Joseph Rusnak's *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999) and David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ* (1999) both approach the virtual by way of complex embedded narrations, and the questions raised in these films—about the nature of the "real," the function of human sense perception, and the ways in which new media reshape our modes of expression—would round off the discussion of the literary texts in this section.

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