BATTLE AND BALANCE BETWEEN THE MASCULINE AND THE FEMININE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO THE YOUNG ADULT FICTION OF AMERICA'S NINETEENTH CENTURY

A dissertation submitted to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies

Drew University in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree,

Doctor of Letters

John Stephen Hier

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

May 2017

ABSTRACT

Battle and Balance between the Masculine and the Feminine:
A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Young Adult Fiction of America's Nineteenth Century

Doctor of Letters Dissertation by

John S. Hier

The Caspersen School of Graduate Studies May 2017
Drew University

My dissertation attempts to fulfill a twofold agenda. First, as its title suggests, it argues for a certain kind of literature, the significance of which has been all but overlooked. For too long, literature of the nineteenth century intended for a younger audience, that which can rightly be considered the young adult fiction of its day, has been regarded as rhetorical fare designed only to divert and entertain, as mere pablum, in other words. As a result, whatever meaning it may possess beyond the literal has largely gone unnoticed. The works my dissertation focuses on, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Little Women*, may have been written for a youthful readership but in the end reveal a subtext of very adult psychological import that has profound and direct meaning, particularly for those for whom these works were originally intended: developing adolescents. For these stories have at their core the possibility for a utilitarian employment that can assist their readers in the very arduous task of growing up, most especially in achieving that which serves as the center of this dissertation: the balance between masculine and feminine sensibilities so necessary for the well-adjusted life.

In unearthing substance from the seemingly substanceless, my dissertation will also have the unintended consequence of legitimizing works that heretofore have been deemed unworthy

for weighty consideration. My particular reading applies the very formidable theoretical frameworks promulgated by Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustave Jung, and Jacques Lacan; therefore, at minimum, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Little Women* must possess a thematic and rhetorical heft able to accommodate such heady conceptual application. My dissertation does just this in the hope of providing developmental guidance for a reading public just coming into its own while, at the same time, making the case for the canonization of these and other such works.

DEDICATION

To Katrina, Lydia, and Sophie, my very own Freud, Jung, and Lacan.

And to Kati, most of all, who brought their psychological stories to such loving fruition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements vi

Chapter 1: Introduction: Battle Lines Drawn 1

Chapter 2: *The Courtship Of Miles Standish*: A Freudian Reading 17

Chapter 3: *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*: A Jungian Reading 61

Chapter 4: *Little Women*: A Lacanian Reading 128

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Balance Hard-won 191

Works Cited 203

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first debt of gratitude must go to Dr. Carol Wipf who has been with me from day one on what proved to be an unexpected protracted journey. All along she provided me with not only unflagging support but also invaluable writing advice. Because of her, I finally consider myself a writer. Secondly, a very heartfelt expression of gratitude goes to Dr. Liana Piehler who provided me academic salvation when I needed it most, agreeing to head my committee at the eleventh hour and doing so with a scholarship and solicitude that I can never hope to repay. I also need to thank Dean Rogers for all the patience and faith he extended to me along the way. Finally, a very special thank you to Dr. Robert Kloss who so long ago opened my eyes to the potential of literature to act as psychological barometer not just for the fictional character but for the flesh and blood reader as well.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: BATTLE LINES DRAWN

In 1960, Leslie Fiedler, that giant of American belles lettres, famously proclaimed within the opening pages of his groundbreaking work *Love and Death in the American Novel* that "The great works of American fiction are notoriously at home in the children's section of the library" (24). What he meant is that there is a sexual naiveté coursing through the very male bloodstream of classic American fiction, one that avoids at all costs direct encounters with the fairer sex. So at one point the reader will witness a young man, whose "hypos" are getting the better of him, volunteer for an extended sea excursion of well more than a year's duration. In that time, he will encounter not one woman aboard his whaling vessel, for it is an environment where women are expressly forbidden. At another, a young idealist will strike off on his own to live a life of simplicity and relative isolation in the woods; I say relative because he does receive a handful of visitors during his yearlong stay, but they all happen to be men. Even when sex between a man and woman lies at the heart of an American novel, the most provocative act the reader is witness to is the removal of a bonnet by a guilt-ridden Puritan maiden. Fiedler thoroughly catalogs each moment of classic American fiction and finds it betrays at every turn a sexual unknowingness, bordering on outright incompetence. This would indelibly mark American literature as hopelessly undeveloped, unforgivably immature, and simply not ready to take its place on the world stage.

What Fiedler fails to consider is that perhaps American authors had intentionally ignored the physicality of sex between male and female in order to draw a sharper distinction between the more intangible attributes of the masculine and the feminine. For might their agenda be

slightly more wide-ranging, more ennobling than the base struggle for sexual superiority? In good Hegelian fashion, might their purpose be to body forth from those two warring factions a kind of existential elixir for their fellow country man and woman? Ironically, nowhere is this attempt at balancing gendered mindsets more in evidence than in those works of American fiction that were originally intended for a more youthful readership, works that rightly belong, in other words, in "the children's section of the library."

It needs to be stressed that in any discussion of the American literary tradition, notions of the masculine and the feminine are emphatically *not* meant to indicate an intrinsic alliance with anatomical gender. Carl Gustave Jung, whose ideas will be explored at greater length in a later chapter, illustrated it best when invoking the ancients:

> . . . a pair of principles that Jung saw operating within the psyche as eternal opposites: Eros, the feminine principle of relatedness, and Logos, the masculine principle of knowledge. Obviously, as eternal principles of human behavior, Eros and Logos are not to be understood as residing exclusively in one gender or the other, literal men or women, simply because Jung identified Eros with the feminine and Logos with the masculine. (Hopcke 44)

In fact, within the Greek pantheon of gods and goddesses, Eros is a decidedly male deity, while Athena, the goddess of wisdom, is just as decidedly female, but defined by a ratiocination worthy of the Jungian Logos; nevertheless, Jung, like many of his age or, for that matter, ours as well, see the role of women as inextricably tied up with interpersonal "relatedness," a kind of sociability typified by the tender touch of ambassadors, mothers, wives, in short, ears to bend and shoulders to cry on. Likewise, the roles of men tend to embody rationality, the ready

"knowledge" of, say, the efficient businessman, the maker or breaker of deals, or the "head" of a household. It should be noted that these are the positive sides of stereotypes, but, as is well known, stereotypes are, more often than not, meant to lacerate, carrying with them strong, negative connotations. For instance, the notion of feminine sociability can and has been translated as sexual prurience, while masculine rationality, likewise, has been easily reconceived as heartlessness, if not outright, ruthless aggression. Whether we care to admit it or not, such stereotypes are alive and well even within the most enlightened literature; however, might that be because, once again, exploiting those stereotypes helps to assist the American author in bringing into starker relief the differences between the masculine and the feminine? It bears repeating, though, that the more mature minded American author recognizes that these differences are not the exclusive property of any one gender but may and can make themselves felt within any character, no matter what the sex. So, it should come as no surprise that even within those aforementioned works designed for a slightly immature, not entirely adult audience, one will find depictions of young boys and girls possessed of both a precocious sexual knowledge *and* a potential for unrestrained violence. Even the well-meaning adults inhabiting these works, charged with the supervision of these children, are to be found guilty of the same. The apple, in other words, does not fall from the tree. Nowhere is this condition more clearly demarcated and its reconciliation more starkly conveyed than in what is generally regarded as the first American drama, aptly entitled, *The Contrast*.

Penned by Royall Tyler in 1787, *The Contrast* is a five-act comedy unapologetically patriotic. The titular conflict is embodied in two of the play's central characters, the rugged, American frontiersman Colonel Manly and the effeminate but villainous, European-minded Mr. Dimple. Thrown into the mix is Mr. Van Rough, the surly but solicitous father of Maria, the

woman for whom Manly and Dimple vie. According to Michael Kimmel, "each of the three . . . embodies one of the three dominant ideals of American manhood available at the turn of the century" (16). He goes on to identify the "flamboyant fop" Dimple as "the Genteel Patriarch . . . an ideal *inherited from Europe*" (16; emphasis added). Colonel Manly, on the other hand, is meant to embody "the Heroic Artisan," one who could always be relied on by any man fortunate enough to call him friend, while in his relations with women he remains, whether for good or ill, "stiffly formal" (16). It should be noted that Kimmel is quick to remind us that "This archetype was also inherited from Europe," despite the mythologizing efforts of Tyler and all those who followed to co-opt it as one organically American (16). The entrepreneurial Van Rough, by contrast, represents, with all his newly-acquired wealth, the one model that can be said to be American through and through, that of "the Self-Made Man," a model that "seemed to be born at the same time as [its] country" (17). It is no wonder, then that, contrary to the reader's initial expectations, the character that ends up profiting the most in this fervently patriotic play is Mr. Van Rough. For his part, Colonel Manly, after suffering the emasculating taunts of Mr. Dimple, does, indeed, eventually get what he wants, that of the hand in marriage of Maria; however, his good fortune was made possible only by way of the manipulative efforts of the "cunning" Mr. Van Rough who admits to orchestrating the resolution of events and not without a little self-satisfaction. By play's end he makes certain he has everything *he* wants, specifically with respect to his and his daughter's financial security.

As evidenced by Mr. Van Rough's standing at play's end, Tyler, no matter how zealously partisan his intentions may have originally been, in the end stakes out more moderate ground. On the surface the play's conflict would appear to be black and white, unequivocally affirming the American ideal as embodied in Colonel Manly. How could it be otherwise when both

character and creator are veterans of the Revolution? "The Declaration of Independence was a declaration of manly adulthood, a manhood that was counterposed [sic] to the British version against which American men were revolting" (Kimmel 19); moreover, "British manhood and, by extension, aristocratic conceptions of manhood (which would soon come to include the Genteel Patriarch) were denounced as feminized . . ." (19). As Kimmel has already outlined, Tyler has mapped out very clear battle lines, pitting the forces of enervation against those of renewal, that is, Dimple on the side of the Old World and the feminine; Colonel Manly, on the side of the New and, of course, as his name clearly suggests, the masculine. Mr. Van Rough, with his repeated emphasis on all things monetary, is a character who seems to be neither a composite of, nor even a midpoint between the two other principals; however, he is one who is far more temperate in his approach and, therefore, emerges as a more measured alternative, that is, as a hard-won balance between the either/or dichotomies of the New and the Old World, the masculine and the feminine. Ultimately, for Kimmel Mr. Van Rough provides the very template for America itself: "Despite the play's focus on the other two, it is Van Rough who would come to dominate the new country in a new century" (16).

As Kimmel rightly asserts, Mr. Van Rough is best remembered as an historical archetype, but he is also – and perhaps more importantly – a literary type, one who American authors have seemed compelled to honor ever since the publication of *The Contrast*. For many, Kimmel included, Mr. Van Rough is the Self-Made Man, one who foreshadows such towering figures of industry as Vanderbilt or Carnegie, those robber barons who would forge a nation in the blood of others. Yet for American authors, the appeal of Mr. Van Rough lies in his ability to stick to the middle of the road, their ontological ideal, which, whether they realize it or not, is held out to their reading public in the hope that he may inspire the proper emulation. The Van Rough

character of later literary endeavors would serve as spur to a nation caught in the grip of a single-mindedness of both purpose and sensibility, specifically the very masculine rapacity of the aforementioned captains of industry. Within literature, the Van Rough type provides a more temperate alternative, a Golden Mean of sorts, one especially crafted to suit the needs of a country just coming out of its egocentric infancy; in his many incarnations, the Van Rough character may embody any number of coexisting dichotomies, yet, to be sure, if American made, he/she will always and ultimately represent the reconciliation of that most primal of binary oppositions, that of the masculine and the feminine.

More than a half century after the first performance of *The Contrast*, Nathaniel Hawthorne would compose *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel filled with Van Rough-like redolence. In crafting his masterpiece, Hawthorne felt the need to append a quasi-autobiographical introduction; in it he describes his then place of employ and his coworkers therein, among whom is one considered to be the "Ideal of his class," one Hawthorne rightly christens "the man of business" (25). He may only be an echo of Van Rough, but later, within the narrative proper, Hester Prynne, the novel's heroine, will offer a more explicit parallel. By making her home on the outskirts of seventeenth century Boston just at the border of the new world wilderness, it is as if she too were straddling the same two worlds as Van Rough; in her case, one informed by the intractability of nature while the other by the more taming influence of civilization. In fact, it could be argued that the titular "A" ultimately comes to signify Hawthorne's conception of America, itself, for it is an emblem reflective of its bearer, one informed in equal parts by nature on the one hand and civilization on the other, or put another way, by the masculinity of the new world and by the femininity of the old. By outliving her illicit consort, the reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, who throughout serves as the unwavering voice of the patriarchy, Hester would

seem to eclipse the kind of one-sided allegiance Dimmesdale clearly represents. So even though *The Scarlet Letter* offers only the most stoical of endings (and this only in the most optimistic of readings), it is Hester who ultimately endures while Dimmesdale does not. Thus, in creating Hester Prynne, Hawthorne has in effect offered up a female version of Mr. Van Rough.

The Scarlet Letter is not the only American classic to include Mr. Van Rough. Not even a year after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, Americans were offered the pleasure of reading what many have since come to regard as "the great American novel." *Moby-Dick*, written by Herman Melville, features what is perhaps one of the most unique and recognizable of all characters not just in America but on the entire world stage, that character, of course, being Captain Ahab. Yet Ahab is cut from a far different cloth than that of Van Rough. By his very own admission, Ahab is possessed of a monomania reminiscent of that masculine ethos that fueled the "progress" of Melville's America. He is, like Colonel Manly and the reverend Arthur Dimmesdale before him, driven by a single-mindedness of purpose; in his case a compulsion to seek out and destroy the white whale that "dismasted" him by biting off his leg. Nevertheless, as in *The Scarlet Letter*, it is in the figure of a more modest and more mediating character who in the end outlives Ahab and all he represents. As narrator, Ishmael demands a more wide-ranging outlook. His open-mindedness is first exhibited by his willingness (reluctant though it at first may be) to share a bed with a "savage." Yet it is this same savage that will open his mind to a Van Rough-like world view. It begins by envisioning a tomahawk, a weapon with a long history of aggression, as an instrument of reconciliation; by simply turning it on its head, Ishmael finds it acts as a peace-pipe as well. Like the whale that sees in two directions at once, Ishmael is able to take in at a single glance masculine aggression and feminine sociability. This may be what accounts for his unique fate. By novel's end, he learns, as he had with the tomahawk, to use a

coffin as a life buoy, that is, to impress an object of death into the service of the salvation of life. So, when all his fellow crew members have met their end by drowning – the consequence of submitting to Ahab's singular world view – Ishmael alone survives to tell the tale. By maintaining double vision, as it were, Ishmael, like Hester, outlasts those who would see the world in terms of either/or.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Van Rough character was still going strong. In what many believe to be the only rival to *Moby-Dick* for the title of "the great American novel," *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* offers countless variations on the single-minded masculine type. The first is Huck's own father, the illiterate and sadistic Pap Finn. He is all that is ugly and reprehensible in the white working-class stereotype. After Huck's escape from Pap Finn, he proceeds on a journey down the Mississippi with Jim, an escaped slave who will exercise the same kind of open-minded influence upon Huck as the "savage" Queequeg had upon Ishmael. Along the way, they will meet all manner of masculinity, some more tolerable than others: the feuding Sheperdsons and Grangerfords, the unscrupulous Duke and King, and even Tom Sawyer, whose infatuation with the masculine adventure tale, ends up recklessly endangering the life of another, namely Jim's. Throughout the course of his adventures, Huck nurses a growing affection and respect for Jim and even helps him escape to the free North, yet, it should be noted, that never once throughout the course of the novel does he ever condemn the institution of slavery. But thanks to Jim's influence, Huck has, in his own skewed pre-adolescent way, reconciled masculine hegemony with feminine empathy.

By far the most iconic of all characters ever penned by an American author to be composed of equal parts masculine and feminine, of the old and new worlds, is one who would prove to be the first ever to achieve international renown. One of Balzac's favorites, Natty

Bumpo, as envisioned by James Fennimore Cooper, is the very embodiment of the bridge between two cultures, two distinct worldviews. His very appearance suggests as much: a white man forever dressed in native garb. As the offspring of European white parentage, he was raised by Native Americans, where he mastered, among other masculine feats, how to track and hunt prey, earning him, among other exalted sobriquets, Pathfinder and Hawkeye, names which point to his intimate relationship with the natural world. At the same time, he maintains friendly relations with the civilized and effeminate white British colonists, some of whom even prove near and dear to him. In fact, one could argue that all throughout *The Leatherstocking Tales* his primary function, if not his raison d'etre, is as mediator between the native and the transplanted American, between masculine and feminine sensibilities.

* * *

Thus far I have considered only works primarily intended for an adult audience. Yet young adult fiction is not unique to the twenty-first century. True, it may not have gone by that name, but during the nineteenth century there were novels aplenty which would have been clearly classed as such. These works would seem to subscribe to the same agenda as their more mature-minded brethren; however, as literature intended for a younger audience, they were tailored accordingly. Specifically, these works, like their readers, tend not to be fully formed. As a result, their heroes can only be considered works-in-progress, in need of learning the hard-won lessons of balance, especially, of course, those between the masculine and the feminine; moreover, since these works emphasize the on-going development of their protagonists, there is typically a noticeable absence of the kind of relationship that exists between a character like

Ahab, a staunchly one-sided masculine type, and an Ishmael, a relatively well-rounded and firmly established character, one who has long since adopted a more inclusive world view and one who therefore may act as credible foil; in other words, by reflecting its intended audience, young adult fiction of this time will lack any certainty of character and/or circumstance. All remains in flux.

There is one area, however, that young adult fiction shares with its more adult kin. Since the task issued by the authors of the protagonists of nineteenth century young adult fiction involves the value of balance, the abiding concern remains, more or less, the same: the articulation and subsequent assimilation of a Van Rough-like philosophy, one which will equably embrace at one and the same time both the feminine and the masculine.

I intend to prove that despite the gendered prejudices of the time, writers of nineteenth century young adult fiction, even more than their adult peers, felt unconsciously compelled to act as the conscience of their country by attempting to steer their readers into right thinking, right behavior. To do so, they provided appealing psychological portraits of readily identifiable protagonists along with narratives depicting the efforts of those protagonists striving to achieve equilibrium of conscience. But, in a time when men were men and women were seen but not heard, the lines of demarcation between the sexes were all-too clearly drawn. So writers of such stories had their work cut out for them; they had to impart their special brand of didacticism only by way of the most subtle means, the kind rarely met with in today's young adult fiction. This is because, whether wittingly or no, these same writers used their work to provide nothing short of a psychological Baedeker for their nation's youth, those who just happen to be most in need of direction, those, in other words, just coming of age. It should then come as no surprise that within this developmental demographic – and in good Freudian fashion – the interior struggle

between the masculine and the feminine manifests itself primarily in terms of sexual conflict. This is not to say that American writers of the time were in the business of publishing encoded sex manuals or that Freud alone can take the measure of each writer; the condition is just far too fundamental and psychologically flexuous to be reduced to any one school of psychoanalytic thought or to any one motivating force. Thus, while surveying the representative young adult fiction from the canon of nineteenth century America, various recourse will be taken to the theories of such seemingly unrelated, if not outright inimical thinkers as C.G. Jung and Jacques Lacan. Each in his turn will help give expression to a profound struggle between the masculine and the feminine both from within and without, and, unlike its more respected canonized kin, nineteenth century young adult fiction features plenty of direct, if at times, sexually driven contact with women, a literary convention, one suspects, Fiedler might have appreciated.

* * *

For many Americans the mention of such well-beloved classics as *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Little Women* conjure up thoughts of an ideal American past, one informed by an innocence and purity that sadly has long been forgotten. This might explain why just as many have returned to these works later in life in hopes of providing for their own children a moral beacon in a world that has seemingly given way to depraved self-interest. Ever since their publication, these books and the characters that inhabit them have served as exemplars in any number of ways: mothers have used the words and deeds of the March sisters as a kind of moral primer for their daughters, while generations of boys, although attracted by the piratical derring-do of Tom Sawyer, have, like their hero, been careful

to stay safely within the bounds of what is right and proper; to a lesser degree, but no less didactic, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* has served a similar function, offering both boys and girls an object lesson in filial piety.

This is not to say that these works are all sunshine, admitting of no darkness; one need only to recall the protracted death of Beth March, the unremitting sadism of Injun Joe, or the unwarranted envy of Miles Standish to be jarred back into the oftentimes ugly reality of the everyday. Yet, it is important to note that theirs is a severity neither glorified nor gratuitous. Like the animated Disney feature, these works reveal the underside of life, if only temporarily, in order to more effectively impart their moral; however, like those same Disney features, which have been accused of containing subliminal messages of a decidedly sexual nature ("Disney" np.), *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Little Women* are themselves possessed of an underlying meaning that could well be considered contrary to their presumed moral agenda.

A careful look into their varied subtext can offer some startling revelations; for instance, who would have thought that *Tom Sawyer* is actually a sociological tract advocating not just child but animal abuse as well (Gussow)? Or, that *Little Women* is secretly a polemic arguing in favor of gay rights (Doyle)? Such conclusions may appear outlandish at first, particularly when attached to the kind of literary fare so often associated with all that is wholesome, that is, with all that is morally American; however, readings like these are not merely provocative but possible as well, their arguments both sound and engaging. In this same unconventional vein, I will conduct a psychological examination of works of young adult fiction that effectively span the latter half of the nineteenth century, namely *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), *Little Women* (1868), and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876); by adopting a Freudian, Lacanian,

and Jungian approach respectively, I intend to prove that the stalwart Miles Standish can be viewed as a kind of hapless child violently caught in the throes of the Oedipus complex; that Jo March's life's goal is to achieve nothing short of bisexual status, ultimately emerging as an androgynous hero, able to deftly move between the Lacanian orders of the Imaginary and the Symbolic; and that Tom Sawyer, as a result of what Jung termed archetypal identification, possesses an adult prurience just as indelible as the boyish innocence he has come to represent. It will be further argued that such conditions and endeavors are on the whole unconscious ones, but ones, it should be stressed, well worth the investigation since they help to shed new light upon, and even inject new life into works that for too long have been regarded with one-dimensional prejudice; in fact, in the end these works will prove themselves to contain in equal measure both darkness and light, to act as both moral beacons and cautionary tales, but, most importantly, to reconcile the masculine with the feminine.

My thesis, being of a tripartite nature, naturally demands a threefold argument. First, the section given over to *The Courtship of Miles Standish* will explore the Freudian ramifications of a weak father figure, one who is seemingly incapable of instilling the requisite fear within the child necessary for the successful resolution of the Oedipus complex. For understanding of the Oedipus complex – controversial since its inception and even superannuated in the eyes of many today – I will draw upon those contemporary sources that provide a refreshingly new, less programmatic spin. This will assist in treating the story's three principals not as doomed lab rats but as dynamic, flesh and blood neurotics. But, even though the drama would not be complete without the interplay of the three, Miles Standish will serve as my sole analysand. I will trace his attempt to graduate to the genital stage where, sorry to say, he will find himself hopelessly stuck in the preceding phallic stage, the result of a Freudian homosexual identification with the father,

mixed with an arrested attachment to the pre-oedipal mother. Nevertheless, Miles will achieve a balance, tenuous though it may be, allowing him to come close to an ideal admixture of the masculine and the feminine. This, despite what seems both psychic and bodily annihilation by poem's end; however, it only appears this way because the poem's expressionistic denouement is designed to highlight the extirpation of only one aspect of Miles' psychology, specifically his aspiration to genital autonomy, a manhood that would admit of only the most token gestures to femininity. Instead, Miles finds that he may now boast of a genuine femininity that sits side by side with that of an equally authentic masculinity. Unfortunately, the harmony proves a *pax romana*, a forced psychic equilibrium wherein Miles will forever remain in bondage to himself, a condition precipitated by yet another childhood trauma of Freudian dimension, that of the primal scene. Explication of both the Oedipus complex and the primal scene, as well as all other Freudian theory, will be furnished by sources both authoritative and contemporary.

Research for a Jungian reading of *Tom Sawyer* will prove to be a more complex affair since the theoretical framework that I will adopt is one that at times is not as clearly articulated as Freud's. By applying Jung's Individuation process to Tom's development, I will, therefore, take liberal recourse to secondary sources in addition to Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, among other select primary sources. In doing so, I will illuminate for the reader some of the more ill-defined nomenclature that Tom's Jungian journey happens to take him through, e.g., the Collective Unconscious, the Nekayia, the Self. Such nomenclature will reveal Tom's ultimate inability, although not without want of trying, to assimilate the masculine. Until that time, Tom will experience all the various and regimented steps required for individuation and will seem well on his way to successfully completing the process. Ultimately, what will stymie his (very unconscious) ambition is simply his age. Individuation is a

psychological journey intended not for the young at heart. So, in contradistinction to, say, Mile's final, wavering state of mind, Tom's will emerge as one clearly defined but only one-sidedly so. Similar to the fate of Miles, Tom will end up captive, although to the feminine world that had at first acted as sole nurturer and caregiver but will now serve as only warden and taskmaster. All is not lost, however, as Tom's status by novel's end will reveal; his Jungian journey was not for naught as he comes to embody an ancient yet forever-youthful archetype, one that contains trace vestiges of a fetal masculinity and upon which, needless to say, he has put his own irrepressible stamp.

For my analysis of *Little Women* I will make almost exclusive use of the available commentary on Lacan's notion of the three orders of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and the Real and their ongoing interplay in order to prove the power and influence of what Lacan refers to as "The Name of the Father." In other words, I will take very little recourse to anything penned by Lacan himself, only that which proves intelligible to the average reader. In doing so, I will use Jo March as the locus of my argument, but her three sisters, each in their own turn, will act as models for possible emulation. The oldest sister, Meg, as the first to be married, will act as the dutiful soldier of the Symbolic, a distinctly masculine order. Amy, the artist, will represent the Imaginary, the order where the image holds primary sway and considered the sole domain of the feminine. Finally, Beth, the ailing sister, the one who will pass away prematurely, represents the Real, the most profound and ineffable of the orders. It will be up to Jo to decide in proper Lacanian fashion which of these best suits her.

My final chapter will attempt to offer not only a summation but a discussion of how my original readings serve as the aforesaid psychological Baedeker, warning boys and girls, in a manner approximating that of Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, of the potential

trouble spots within the aborning identities of not just adolescence but also nationality, particularly when those identities lack the necessary equipoise of masculine and feminine sensibility.

CHAPTER 2:
THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH: A FREUDIAN READING

I. Introduction

Of the three writers involved in this treatment, none is more thoroughly Victorian than Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It is a distinction of dubious value since he has come to be seen as embodying all that is staid and superficial about that era. True, Victorian poets "preferred experimenting with new or unusual metrical patterns" (Abrams 933), and, indeed, none were more adept at such experimentation than Longfellow but, for better or for worse, his technical virtuosity often times proves just *too* dazzling, going so far as to eclipse his content. Who can recall any particulars from the sparsely plotted *Evangeline*? Instead, what remains are those wonderful lines of heroic hexameter that only someone like the gifted Longfellow can actually make palatable for the English reader. Even the most unpoetic among us cannot help but be lured into

> . . . the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
> Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
> Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic. (Longfellow *Evangeline* 3)

Yet, no matter how impressive Longfellow's meter may be, it is not enough to redeem what many regard as a content bereft of any real significance, a charge seldom leveled at his fellow Victorian versifiers. When Poe had called Longfellow a plagiarist, he meant that Longfellow "seemed to plagiarize reality itself, not to search it to its depth as Poe so much wanted to" (Pearce 210). Only on the strength of Longfellow's metrical dexterity may his poetry give the

impression of profundity, but it only takes a second look for even the most casual reader to soon realize that "the rhyme word justifies its existence only as a rhyme word" (214). For example, there is upon first reading a seductive quality to the trochaic tetrameter of *The Song of Hiawatha*, but as a result of its epic length, the unconscious allure soon gives way to undisguised mockery since the accentuation of its meter proves "sufficiently strong to invite easy exaggeration into singsong, an invitation readily accepted by most modern readers" (Hirsh 38). In fact, *The Song of Hiawatha* has been the object of such ubiquitous scorn for so long that it has served as the subject of satire for everyone from Lewis Carroll to Bugs Bunny. Consensus among the vast readership of Longfellow, both critical and casual, seems to be of one accord: his poetry, for whatever merit it may claim and no matter how pleasurable the reading of it may be, is in the end all sheen and no substance.

But is such sweeping opprobrium justified? Even upon initial introduction, Longfellow would seem to fulfill the aims of the Victorian agenda, particularly with respect to his longer, narrative poems, which "like many Victorian writings, evoke the past of myth and history . . ." (Abrams 934). *The Song of Hiawatha* tells the tale of a mythical tribal chief of the Hurons sometime during the seventeenth century just prior to the mass arrival of the white man. Representing an attempt "to extend his treatment of American life beyond the regional and cultural boundaries he knew best" (Buell 29), it is a story far removed in both place and time from the relative luxury of Longfellow's own mid-nineteenth century. Likewise, *Evangeline* purports to unfold the story of a pair of star-crossed lovers during the very real eighteenth century Acadian Diaspora. Finally, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* chronicles the colonial tale of a love triangle whose participants Longfellow actually claimed ancestral kinship.

Additionally, like the plots of many a Victorian novel, Longfellow's narratives, particularly *The Courtship of Miles Standish*,

> center on the struggles of the protagonist, male or female, to find himself or herself in relation to other men and women, in love and marriage, with family or neighbors, or with associates in his or her working career. Occasionally such a search may take quasi-religious dimensions. (Abrams 937)

Based upon the evidence, Longfellow seems to measure up to his Victorian contemporaries, so why is it he can never seem to escape critical vitriol? Particularly, his longer, narrative efforts claim a seriousness of purpose that unfortunately eludes most readers; what he took for rhetorical and thematic heft the rest of us regard as "derivative and all that is *kitsch* in nineteenth-century American letters" (Pearson 270). Preventing him from gaining admission into that canonized sphere inhabited by the heavyweights of nineteenth century American literati is, as Pearce so simply put it, Longfellow's "inability . . . to penetrate deeply into his subjects" (212). Such a deficiency is magnified when, in *The Song of Hiawatha*, Longfellow attempts to render a lifestyle almost wholly other; as a result, the final product is a botch, "an insipid, ethnocentric armchair fantasy" (Beull 29) that remains for many unreadable, informed as it is by a cold and detached tone and peopled with flat and unsympathetic characters. Only slightly less remote in both time and space, but suffering on the same account, is the overly maudlin *Evangeline*. It too proves a lifeless reading experience as a consequence of its author's seeming inability to understand the human heart. However, the same cannot be said of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, a story just as seemingly superficial and sentimental but one vindicated by its author's more intimate connection to his material. In it, Longfellow still insists upon making a considerable leap in time but explores rites, rituals, and a way of life much closer to home, thus

providing him with an impetus for writing that proves itself far more committed, far more heartfelt than the aforementioned narrative endeavors.

Longfellow composed *The Courtship of Miles Standish* from personal motives unusual for his poetry. Believing himself to be the direct descendent of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, he recounts the legendary Pilgrim love triangle that ensued when Miles Standish was added to their company. In composing *The Courtship of Miles Standish* Longfellow was in effect compiling family history. As self-appointed genealogist sprung from the very same tree as his subjects, Longfellow manages to avoid in this work the pitfalls to which he succumbs in his previous narrative efforts simply by virtue of the closeness with which he stands to his subject matter. Such familiarity accounts for the inclusion of those personal prejudices and desires – and even moments of uncharacteristic levity – that seem to sneak their way into his family portrait, and which, in turn, lend the poem its tone of wistful intimacy while also providing, inadvertently or indirectly, a content of psychological viscera, one rife with even the occasional suggestion of sexual brutality.

Literally related to the subject of his writing, Longfellow in *The Courtship of Miles Standish* for once lets down his guard, exposing himself in a way that up until now had remained a well-kept secret and in the process proving himself once and for all worthy of the Victorian mantle. And, even though it has been argued that "In Longfellow's tales one must not look for deep psychological insights" (Gregory xvi), a close reading of *The Courtship of Miles Standish* suggests the contrary: that the very staid Longfellow is perhaps far more aggressively Freudian than his complacent façade would lead one to believe. This should come as no surprise since psychological subtext is the stock in trade of any good Victorian writer. In poetry Swinburne and Browning come to mind; as for the novel, Hardy's *Tess of the D'ubervilles* and Stoker's

Dracula serve as ideal examples. Similarly, when viewed through a psychoanalytic lens, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* is charged with that same sexual undercurrent, reenacting as it does through the interplay of its three principals certain psychic childhood trauma generally considered common to us all. With the help of that same effective and timely use of dactylic hexameter found in *Evangeline*, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, although not without significant variation, gives poetic expression to what Freud had labeled the Oedipus complex.

* * *

Throughout his career, Freud remained curiously inchoate in his explanation of the Oedipus complex, especially considering that it is arguably his most well-known theory: "nowhere does Freud present a systematic account of what he means by the Oedipus complex after his first mention of it in 1910" (Vice 19). Actually, even before its formal christening, the Oedipus complex in germinal form first appeared in a letter from Freud to his then good friend Wilhelm Fleiss in the year 1897, and surprisingly the nascent description proves perhaps the most succinct authorial summation:

> A single idea of general value dawned on me. I have found, in my own case too, the phenomena of being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood. (qtd. in Breger 18)

Freud's embryonic explanation may possess the ring of certainty, but it falls far short in considering the myriad implications to such a bold, sweeping proposition. Instead of chasing down every reference through the voluminous pages of Freud's collected works, I readily defer to the expressive talents of Elizabeth Wright, who, while in the process of applying Freudian

theory to her survey of psychoanalytic criticism, has provided a more manifold yet concise and convenient recap:

> Freud sees the child's relationship with its parents as critical for the achievement of its proper sexual identity. The difficulties begin with the child's dependence on the nurturing mother. Not only are there problems specific to the very formation of a self-concept in the initial separation from the mother's body, but the love of the mother remains dominant in the early formative years. Inevitably . . . a perception of the father as rival in this love becomes insistent for the boy-child to the point where he is drawn into fantasies of the killing of this rival and of possessing the mother. This is the Oedipus complex. (14)

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to clarify certain aspects of the Oedipus complex that have generated more than their share of controversy over the years. To begin with, the Oedipus complex must be understood as a theory that has more to do with a fundamental quest for subjectivity than it does with sexual rivalry and/or conquest. Recall Ms. Wright's assertion that the Oedipus complex is "critical for the achievement of its [the child's] proper sexual identity." The emphasis here is (or should be) on *identity* and not on sexual. Admittedly, the "sexual" is added only because Freud, for the better part of his professional career, was unusually preoccupied with all matters sexual, believing them to be our sole motivation in life. Much to the disgust of even his own profession, never mind the general populace, Freud had repeatedly characterized children as active sexual entities, a claim, I might add, that has held up to this very day. Be that as it may, does anyone honestly think that Freud actually believed a five year old boy wishes to engage in literal coitus with his own mother? For the most part, when Freud used "sexual" as a modifier, especially for children caught in the throes of formative

development, he really meant *sensual*. This is what is behind his characterization of new-borns, as being "polymorphously perverse," a sensually diffuse condition that stays with us our whole lifelong, growing more focused as we mature, culminating in the Oedipus complex. It must always be borne in mind that the Oedipus complex and the phallic stage from which it springs is a mental construct only, purely abstract and as such must be accorded a large degree of symbolic consideration. In fact, to date our understanding of the Oedipus complex has evolved to the point where it is now seen in almost exclusively metaphorical terms. One simply need think of Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence*, which argues that every new writer must struggle against the achievements of their literary fathers or, even more metaphorical still, Roland Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text* wherein Barthes argues for the text as maternal object and "The writer [as] someone who plays with the mother's body . . . in order to glorify [and] embellish it" (37). For our purposes the Oedipus complex will be seen as a desire not for mother's body but a desire for psychic autonomy:

> Freud's ideal Oedipus was the conscious master of his own experience, a "subject" who had overcome dependence on the illusions produced by the desire to remain in, or return to, the primal mother/child symbiosis or find consolation as the worthy object of an omnipotent father's love. (Toews 79)

This is the psychology behind, and the underlying meaning of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, despite its dramatis personae being assigned at times what appear to be rigid and orthodox oedipal roles.

The oedipal nexus within *The Courtship of Miles Standish* consists of the poem's three principals. At its center is the character of Miles Standish – his age notwithstanding –

representing the psychologically bedeviled child, the confused and torn son attempting to come to grips with his appointed place within the family dynamic. John Alden, in turn, represents the father, although one whose weak will and faltering resolve will exacerbate an already potentially damaging situation of developmental consequence. Finally, Priscilla Mullins will act as the mother, who by remaining faithful to Freud's script, both contributes to the poem's central conflict while, at the same time, attempts to bring matters to a peaceable conclusion (although she too will offer up, if ever so slightly, her own variation on Freud's time-honored model). By story's end, Miles Standish will have symbolically achieved what for Longfellow comes near to "ideal" identity, one that strikes the desired balance between the feminine and masculine. Ironically, Miles will do so only by failing in his bid to become his own "subject," in falling short of the Freudian ideal, in other words. As victim of developmental stasis, Miles Standish will always remain under the psychological sword of Damocles, a balance not of his own volition but one imposed from without; through the coercion of his parental substitutes, he will remain mired in "the primal mother/child symbiosis" while at the same time serve as "the worthy object of an omnipotent father's love."

Such a symbolic reading is not intended to suggest that Longfellow had any such conscious design in mind during the creative process; more likely, he was only aware of the historicity with which he had imbued his characters and the story itself. And that was all. Writing in the pre-Freudian era, Longfellow was surely unaware of even the most obvious of psychological implications that would have dripped from his pen, not to mention that such Sophoclean insight, most scholars agree, was well beyond his conscious ken; nevertheless, as Freud would remind us, the unconscious will ultimately have its say. Longfellow was, after all, a writer, a métier that demands exploration of the unconscious, the ability to see beyond the

surface of things, in short, to speak the language of the symbolic. It has been said that the essence of literature is that it has no essence by virtue of the fact that

> Its precise words turn out to be not quite what is meant to be said because language condenses and displaces. If so, things are hidden inside other things, and mean something slightly different from what they seem to mean. Psychoanalysis shows that. (Tambling 13)

So, even though Longfellow may have been unaware of the psychology he was crafting, he certainly knew how to employ the elements of his art: "Though in his day, except in France, the word 'symbolism' was rarely used, and certainly the conservative Longfellow was not the man to use it, the tendency in his poetry was in the direction of symbolic meaning" (Gregory xvii-xviii).

Whether he would have liked to admit it or not, Longfellow effectively exploited his poem's symbolic potential and in the process provided the reader with an alternative tale, one that attempts to track the psychological development, or lack thereof, of its man/child protagonist. It has been remarked just how often the words "childhood" and "children" appear within the pages of Longfellow's poetry (Gregory xiii), and, even though these words may be conspicuously absent from *The Courtship of Miles Standish* and its characters fully grown adults, its subtext reveals a story steeped in the oedipal drama of childhood. Longfellow's "family saga" may have its comic elements as some critics have remarked (Buell 27; Calhoun 198), but overall it is a tale fraught with the suggestion of rebellion, revolt, and the possibility of a violence that threatens to erupt at any moment, all the ingredients necessary for the playing out of the Oedipus complex.

* * *

There is a tension inherent to the Oedipus complex, one that involves a kind of push and pull of narrative interpretation that vacillates between submission and liberation:

> As the Oedipus complex was developed, it became less a story of renunciation than a story of emancipation, less a story of the adaptation of a desiring mechanism to the laws of "reality" than the story of the "normalization" of a subjective agent internalizing the rules governing the mutual relations of recognized human subjects. (Toews 74)

As shall be seen, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, even though there may be trace vestiges of "renunciation" and "adaptation," is ultimately concerned with the attempt to forge a fully functional and autonomous identity for its protagonist.

In the normal course of events, the Oedipus complex is accompanied by the ancillary, albeit much needed, condition known as the castration complex. Again, Elizabeth Wright:

> The way out of it [the Oedipus complex] is provided by the fears of the castration complex. The father is experienced as the source of all authority, all direction of desire, and thus capable of castrating the boy-child, who unconsciously believes this to be the reason for the absence of the penis in the girl. The boy thus abandons his love of the mother and moves towards identification with the father, with the understanding that he too can in time occupy such a position of power. (14)

Put another way, the castration complex involves the son's fear that he will suffer dismemberment at the hands of the father if he persists in his desire for the mother. Invariably, the son's terror impels him to surrender all claims on the mother, and, in order to prove total capitulation, his complete fidelity, the son begins to identify with the father; in other words, perception of the father and his role in the son's psychic development has changed from one who was originally the hated rival to now the coveted ideal. Such turnabout, argues Freud, is necessary for the child's developmental well-being since it is the father's prohibitions which will comprise in the main that which will ultimately become the son's superego; this in turn will eventually allow the son to assume the mantle of power, that is, to become the father himself. When all is said and done, the castration complex presents yet another variation on the quest for identity: "The fear of the father was a fear of losing that organ . . . which represented the child's claim to recognition as a subjective agent" (Toews 74). With the onset of the castration complex, Miles Standish, battle-hardened though he may be, will face his most formidable challenge to date. Fortunately for him, this "threat to identity" (74) will prove a belated one, as a result of a "father" who must first come to terms with his own identity.

From the very start of the poem, Miles Standish casts himself in the role of the son. Such a role, no matter how self-imposed, is not so consciously clear-cut as it would first appear. Seeing himself as the son in the oedipal drama does not mean he is defined by rebellion alone; human psychology is informed from beginning to end by ambivalence, and Miles Standish is no exception: "In Freud's vision of self and others, there are no simple human beings and no social relations without ambivalence" (Brunner 88). While yearning to overthrow the father, there still remains buried within him the desire for a firm, fatherly hand of rebuke, one which will put a stop to that very same rebellion. In *Moses and Monotheism* Freud asserts that "[w]e know that in

the mass of mankind there is a powerful need for an authority who can be admired, before whom one bows down, by whom one is ruled and perhaps even ill-treated . . . It is a longing for the father felt by everyone from his childhood onwards" (91). This explains why Freud, himself, after his father had told him of his brush with anti-Semitism which resulted in the father's public humiliation, began to look elsewhere for more suitable paternity: "This struck me as unheroic conduct on the part of the big, strong man who was holding my hand. I contrasted this situation with another which fitted my feelings better: the scene in which Hannibal's father, Hamilcar Barca, made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans" (Freud *Interpretation of Dreams* 260). Later, Freud would add to his list of adopted fathers such paragons of hegemony as Napoleon and Alexander the Great (Breger 3).

Since "the story of Oedipus [is] a story of identification" (Toews 78), be it with one's own father or a father substitute, Miles Standish in lacking adequate paternal authority looks to his bookshelf for surrogate "consolation and comfort" (Longfellow 96). Among the titles from which he may choose are three that are informed by varying degrees of unfettered masculinity that Miles, like the disillusioned young Freud had been, seems at present to be in desperate need of:

> Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and among them
> Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for binding;
> Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Caesar
> Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of London,
> And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing the Bible. (95-96)

It comes as no surprise that Miles took from the shelf "the ponderous Roman." As role model, Julius Caesar could not be any more ideally suited for one bent on oedipal overthrow; for, like

Caesar who had defied the Roman Senate, that is, the fathers of the republic, Miles feels himself now poised to cross his own Rubicon, no matter how interior that breach may prove to be.

The narrator goes on to suggest the allusively aggressive nature of these three texts by referring to them in a kind of military shorthand that the bellicose-minded Miles would immediately recognize and relate to: "the wars of the Hebrews [Bible], the famous campaigns of the Romans [*The Commentaries*] / Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent Christians [Bariffe's Artillery Guide]" (Longfellow 96). In highlighting their martial content, the narrator uses these works as textual corollaries to possible oedipal avenues, that is, he is offering the reader a glimpse into the mind of the war-ready Miles. His choice of *The Commentaries* suggests a very conscious desire to aspire to Caesar and a willingness to perform like-minded deeds. At the same time, the other two titles cannot be ignored. Since there are more than just three books on the shelf, why are these particular two singled out? Surely, it is more than just a matter of bounded propinquity. As I will argue, they too serve as windows into Miles' psyche, just not as self-consciously clear as that represented by Caesar's work. Both the Bible and Bariffe's *Artillery Guide* will act as scripts, as it were, or better yet, templates of identity, furnished by the unconscious for the subsequent costume changes that Miles will experience after the role of Julius Caesar has been exhausted. Since the poem is comprised of nine cantos and Miles undergoes three changes in personality, it is tempting to see a tripartite structure within Longfellow's psychological sketch; however, I think it safe to assume that Longfellow was just not that much of a literary craftsman. Still, the reader may find that the change into each of the three personae *roughly* occurs after every three cantos; more importantly, however, the order in which those changes transpire map out the evolution of the selfhood of Miles Standish.

II. The Caesarian Mode: A Self-conscious Conqueror

On its surface *The Courtship of Miles Standish* turns out to be no different than many another Puritan/Pilgrim-based work of literature; like *The Crucible*, *The Scarlet Letter*, or even *Ethan Frome* (a story of our puritan inheritance), Longfellow's colonial tale is one whose central conflict consists of a love triangle. Canto I introduces two of those three major players, Miles Standish and John Alden. Living under the same roof, they make for an oftentimes odd and antagonistic couple. As the poem opens, we find Miles Standish in an exceptionally agitated frame of mind. As a military man of some renown, accustomed to the pressure of battle, such a condition is an unusual one. It seems that after allowing for the proper amount of time to pass for the mourning of his recently deceased wife, Miles now longs for the resumption of married life, setting his sights upon the newly orphaned Pilgrim maiden Priscilla Mullins. Having been out of the dating game for some time, he is understandably uncertain as to just how to proceed and so turns to "his friend and household companion" John Alden to do the courting for him. As a writer of some ability, John Alden is perfectly suited for just such Cyrano-like labor, but that same ability also marks him as the direct antithesis of Miles Standish, the man of the sword, the man of action. Further complicating matters, is John Alden has for some time now nursed an abiding affection for Priscilla and now finds himself torn between loyalty to a friend and love for a woman.

Miles Standish's desire for Priscilla is clearly the result of arrested development. There is no evidence of romantic interest; he seems merely to long for someone to fill the void left by his recently departed wife. In fact, he yearns not for a mate but a mother figure. From the outset Miles is characterized as one fixated on the phallic stage, a phase of development decidedly transitional in nature and, therefore, highly turbulent. Described as "Short in stature . . . but

strongly built and athletic," Miles Standish is the young boy, who may be "short" but who, at the same time, is developmentally "built," the result of having newly transitioned into the phallic stage and now able to boast of an anatomy similar to that of the father's; moreover, "his [Miles'] russet beard was already/Flaked with patches of snow," providing hirsute evidence of anatomical maturity along with the suggested signs of orgasmic activity provided by the "patches of snow" (Longfellow 92). When Miles bemoans the loss of his wife, Rose Standish, he never refers to her as such but rather as "Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside" (95). By referring to her in these distinctly symbolic terms, it is as if she were more air than substance, more allegorical than actual; instead of a wife, he could just as well be mourning the passing of a prepubescent innocence, his rose of youth as it were. Like one who has undergone recent sexual awakening, Miles experiences not only pleasure but guilt as well; on the one hand, he would seem to derive some solace when "Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla," but in that same breath adds ominously that it is "not good for a man to be alone, say the scriptures" (99). Taken together, the solitary Miles seems to offer up a kind of veiled confession: while clearly admitting of the pleasure offered by the thought of Priscilla, Miles might also very well be repenting of the scriptural sin of Onanism, that is, masturbation. If true, then this may provide one possible explanation for Miles' egocentric mantra: "That's what I always say; if you wish a thing to be well done/You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others" (98). According to Freud, the phallic stage is precisely the time in the boy's development when masturbation becomes a significant preoccupation: "When the (male) child's interest turns to his genitals he betrays the fact by manipulating them frequently" (Gay 662). Yet, only by way of masturbation, albeit of the mental variety, can subjectivity hope to be achieved:

> The child entered into the interpersonal relations of the Oedipus complex as a narcissistic subject that imagined its own ego as the primary object of desire and associated this "self" with the organ of genital pleasure. The moral task of the oedipal moment thus became the task of directing one's libido from self to others, from intrasubjective to intersubjective relations, and of recognizing oneself as a subject in a world of other subjects. (Toews 75)

The opening cantos of *The Courtship of Miles Standish* emphasize Miles' "advanced" age in order to underscore his sexual readiness, even though his words and deeds place him clearly in the role of prepubescent son. Just the opposite is the case for John Alden who, like the teenage Priscilla, is characterized as trapped in his own minority; nevertheless, even though he is described as "Having the dew of youth" and as "Youngest of all . . . who came in the Mayflower," John Alden will ultimately assume the more adult role of the two, a role informed by, among other attributes, the advanced art of writing, an ability that Miles as oedipal child has seemingly yet to master. When Miles begins boasting of his military exploits, John adopts a position more akin to that of the patient, loving father, who is presently entangled in the very grown-up act of writing, but who, nonetheless, takes the time out to humor the overactive imagination of his child and to respond to him with avuncular good will: "Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from his writing/'Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the bullet/He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our weapon!'" (Longfellow 93). Like any child caught in the throes of oedipal narcissism, Miles pays no attention to these well-intentioned remarks; in fact, during the course of the exchange, the narrator refers to John as "the stripling" (94), suggesting that of the two, it is he, not Miles, who is the child. But within the present oedipal context, such demeaning monikers are not meant to

indicate a particular age range but rather point to the metaphorical phallus of the father, one that for John Alden remains stunted and seemingly not up to the task of effectively instilling the requisite fear in the child necessary to evoke the much-needed castration complex.

John Alden's paternal shortcomings serve as an invitation for Miles Standish to steel himself in the persona of Caesar. Like Caesar, Miles wishes to "Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and command the captains [see fathers]" (Longfellow 98). Miles' very first words suggest as much, serving as they do as a veiled phallic challenge to the pacific-minded John Alden: "So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your inkhorn" (94). It is a kind of Puritan pissing contest that Miles makes even more pointed by mentioning his "great, invincible army," upping the ante. Finally, when Miles adds that "like Caesar, I know the name of each of my soldiers," he is letting John know not to come between him and his object of desire. Meanwhile, "Alden laughed as he wrote . . ." (94); nevertheless, Miles' initial utterances can be seen to function as a tactic of intimidation, a way for the son to effectively draw his line in the sand; true, the threat is only an implied one, perhaps even a purely imaginary one, but for the hapless son it is for now the only means available to him. The canto entitled "The Lover's Errand" proves instructive, serving as an apt illustration of yet another veiled threat, one clearly crafted after the manner of Caesar: according to the highly imaginative Miles, in the time it took John to go to and from Priscilla's cottage, he had "fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city" (113). For the son bent on oedipal overthrow such martial rhetoric is to be expected, but that he would select Julius Caesar as exemplar is especially telling.

Caesar as it turns out is not your everyday, brute tyrant. Miles expresses his admiration for Caesar as one who is "equally skillful" in both writing and fighting; in doing so, Miles reiterates his oedipal desires. Evidently, to fully assume the role of Caesar, that is, to fully equip

himself for imminent, oedipal warfare, Miles must add to his arsenal the art of writing, a skill that for now seems to be the well-guarded domain of the father. Indeed, for John Alden writing would appear not only an insular, but near cabalistic affair: "Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla/Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret/Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of Priscilla!" (Longfellow 98). The "secret" points to both John's hidden desire for Priscilla and what for Miles can only be described as the mystical art of writing. Once that half of the secret involving John's love for Priscilla is revealed, Miles again invokes the name of Caesar but only indirectly; this time by likening John to the conspiratorial Brutus: "You too Brutus!" (114). Since "the orator Brutus," like John, trafficked in the persuasive art of rhetoric, the utterance is perfectly suited for the occasion, although the particular words that Miles chooses to invoke are taken not from the mouth of an ascendant Caesar but from a Caesar prepared to receive his death blow; in other words, Miles, having lost out to the father's phallic power of superior persuasion, seems to usher in the psychic demise of Caesar as adopted persona. In his final gesture as Caesar, an enraged Miles imperiously yet impotently threatens to run John through with his sword. Just at that moment, however, he is informed of a possible Indian attack upon the colony, thus forcing him to stay his weapon in apparent nick of time. Or, seen another way: the sword has wilted in the presence of the pen, that is, no matter how easily manipulated the weak-willed John may appear to be, his stunted phallus possesses a power that the starry-eyed Miles can only envy. Miles is now convinced of the inadequacy of his Caesarian model, realizing that it is incomplete, lacking the linguistic prowess needed to compete with a sire of such silver-tongued capability. In fact, in light of Miles' aforementioned flights of rhetorical fancy, such "*Rumors* of danger and war and hostile incursions of Indians!" (115) could very well be the product of Miles' own imagination since

they serve as a convenient cover for his retreat; but even if real, they act as an objective correlative for Miles' present state of mind. Either way, Miles, as captain of the pilgrim forces, quickly gathers his men and heads into the forest whereupon Miles as Caesar is never heard from again.

III. The Davidic Mode: A Slayer of Sleeping Giants

The transience of the Caesarian persona as oedipal armor was unknowingly foretold by Miles himself as early as canto II, a section significantly entitled "Love and Friendship." Ironically, one of the many sayings of Caesar's that Miles is so prone to recite predicted with pinpoint accuracy his own immediate fate: "'Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Caesar!/Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village/Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it" (Longfellow 97). When Miles learns he is second to John in the affections of Priscilla, he flees to the nearest "Iberian village," in this case the environs of Plymouth, where he knows he will always come in first, doing what he does best: waging war. Like the child who first feels the pang of parental disapproval, Miles escapes the presence of both John and Priscilla by hurriedly betaking himself to a place far away and wholly unknown to either of them. In the case of the spurned child, this area is typically his or her own bedroom. As the sexually motivated boy-child, Miles' retreat to more isolated quarters would ordinarily lead one to believe that a variety of autoerotic activity will eventually ensue, especially when considering the manner with which he had declared war on the Indians; he had curiously indicated his aggressive designs by stuffing a quiver full of gun powder and bullets, an act just overflowing with autoerotic implications. The conflation of sex and aggression, however, results in behavior curious still; in a variation on the "They'll be sorry when I'm gone" fantasy, Miles falls into a mode of behavior more akin to that of Max from Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild*

Things Are. The Plymouth Wood, in other words, is in the end nothing more than Miles' psychically bedecked bedroom, one that has been transformed into an arena suitable for playing out the Oedipus complex, where strange, alien creatures lie hidden within a hostile, jungle landscape.

In order to brave such dangers, Miles finds he must take down, in a manner of speaking, another book from his shelf, that is, another identification, the Caesarian script having proven inadequate to the task. This time the book is the Bible, a selection foreshadowed during his declaration of war against the Indians when "on the table before them was lying *unopened* a Bible" (Longfellow 116; emphasis added). It is left for Miles to metaphorically open it whereupon he will promptly learn of its psychic restructuring effects, particularly those embodied by the figure of David from Old Testament lore. When the narrator had earlier referred to the Bible as "the war of the Hebrews," he was clearly alluding to David, the figure in the Biblical history of Israel most accomplished in warfare and most responsible for its greatest expansion of influence. Yet, not to be overlooked is David's lyrical ability, one that produced the world's most memorable psalms and one that would seem on the face of it capable of linguistically outdoing Caesar and, by extension, John Alden.

Unlike the transformation into Caesar, Miles's taking on the persona of David proves not only gradual but wholly unconscious. As opposed to the oft-repeated references and allusions to Caesar that Miles had earlier indulged in, when it comes to the equally heroic David he remains unusually mute. Miles never once utters the name of David simply because of the oneiric nature of the sequence of events that follows this latest costume change. These events will partake in as much of the fantastical as is necessary for the realization of Miles' oedipal fantasy. As such, they will be attended by a blurring of boundaries both psychological and physical, a phenomenon

best illustrated by Miles and his faithful troops marching into the "mist," a narrative flourish similar in effect to the filmmaker's squiggly screen that is intended to convey either a return to the past or to indicate a passage into an unconscious state. Ironically, the realm which Miles eventually enters belongs to the preverbal world where the Orphic talents of David no longer apply, a psychological truth that John unknowingly confirms the morning after he had revealed to Miles the identity of Priscilla's true love:

> Then he [John] had turned away, and said: "I will not awake him [Miles];
>
> Let him sleep on, it is best; for what is the use of more talking!"
>
> (Longfellow 120)

Only in such a speechless milieu will Miles be able to take vicarious revenge upon John, who, having effectively administered oratorical castration, has earned from Miles all the hateful scorn an oedipal son can muster for a father.

Before proceeding any further with Miles' oedipal odyssey, it must be stressed that the fatherly role bestowed upon John Alden can only be considered as incidental. The status of paternal authority that Miles has accorded John has as much to do with Priscilla as it does with John. While delivering the "Lover's Errand," John had thrown Priscilla temporarily off her guard, and, at first glance, it would seem that the cause for her momentary discomposure was simply that she had hoped it would be John who was the one harboring marital designs. After collecting herself, she issues an exhortation that has since gone down in the annals of American literary history as one of the country's first feminist rallying cries: "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" (Longfellow 110). Psychoanalytically speaking, however, such sentiment, no matter how grand and commanding, refers not so much to John's feelings for Priscilla as they do

to John's relationship to Miles. Discovering to her dismay that she is now a pivotal player in a makeshift oedipal drama, occupying the exalted position of what Freud termed cathexis, Priscilla does what the majority of women in her situation often do (perhaps just not as self-consciously) and that is to side with the father. In contradistinction to John's wavering approach, Priscilla responds decisively, offering in a single statement what it will take John nearly an entire canto to realize. In urging John to "speak for himself," Priscilla's hopes that John will set his wayward son straight by letting him know in no uncertain terms that mommy and daddy constitute an indivisible dyad; in other words, what at first may have seemed a bold assertion of feminine desire on the part of Priscilla is really nothing more than her genteel way of urging a father to provide for his son a firm and unmistakable castrating presence.

The urgency of the situation is made clear from the first moment John enters Priscilla's cottage and finds her occupied, "Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snowdrift/Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle/While her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its motion" (Longfellow 104). As the "snowdrift" at her door amply illustrates, seminal desire for Priscilla on the part of Miles and John is reaching critical mass. As an instrument of sublimation, Priscilla's spindle can be seen as metonymic stand-in for Miles, while her handling of it serves to symbolize the ambivalence with which she regards his unusually "ravenous" attachment to her. At one and the same time Priscilla's manipulation of the spindle manages to promote his libidinal desire, lending it a hand, as it were, while she believes an antipodal appendage, her foot to be precise, will be enough to adequately regulate, if not stamp out altogether if necessary that same stormy passion. The operation, however, being clearly mechanical, is for the most part an unconscious one. So, even if she wanted to, Priscilla is just not consciously equipped to police her emotions, never mind those of another. Not until

John brings her Miles' offer of marriage is the matter brought to the conscious light of day and Priscilla realizes what must be done: John must lay down the law by speaking up for himself.

In the wake of his encounter with Priscilla, throughout nearly the whole of canto IV, an emotionally befuddled John takes to the shore, where he finds his interior world mirrored in the movement of nature: "Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and tossing" (Longfellow 111). John will eventually emerge with the spirit intact; "Leaving behind him the shore," his interior tempest will be replaced eventually by a placidity of soul born from "the strength of his strong resolution" (112). His "strong resolution" consists of simply telling Miles the hard, cold truth come what may, proof that he has managed to gather the will necessary for confrontation, that is, to act the way a father should, in short, to learn to speak for himself.

Until that time comes, however, John will undergo his own dark night of the soul, tormented by, among other things, Davidic echoes of his own situation:

> "Is it my fault, he said, "that the maiden has chosen between us?
>
> Is it my fault that he failed – my fault that I am the victor?"
> Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet:
>
> "It hath displeased the Lord!" – and he thought of David's transgression,
>
> Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle!
>
> Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-condemnation,
>
> Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the deepest contrition:
>
> "It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temptation of Satan!" (Longfellow 111)

To the surprise of the reader, the normally deferential John has crafted an analogy that casts himself as none other than King David while relegating Miles to the forlorn role of Uriah the Hittite; Priscilla, of course, plays the part of the irresistibly bewitching Bathsheba.

The analogy is revealing for a variety of reasons. To begin with it suggests that John, by crowning himself king, on some level already regards himself in the light of parent and/or patriarch, and, by assigning Miles the role of Uriah, the lawfully wedded husband of Bathsheba and clearly the injured party, has already crowned himself "victor." However, true to his timorous form, John, even when imbued with what appears monarchical omnipotence, cannot help but see himself as nothing more than an adulterous interloper, as in some way abusing his authority, be it wielded as a friend or father. Acting as his own Nathan, John upbraids himself, feeling that he should possess the resources able to withstand the temptation of feminine allure, no matter how emotionally invested he may be; instead, he ends up asserting his own individual desire, a trait his usual solicitous nature rebels against, believing it to be unforgivable in a friend, let alone in a king who is expected to act as more than mere family patriarch but as a *pater familias*, a father of fathers. To compound matters, Priscilla, while in the unasked for guise of Bathsheba, suggests that John has, if only unconsciously so, glimpsed her in all her psychological nakedness; for, as both mother and lover, Priscilla has revealed herself as one stripped, as it were, of all civilized taboo. Since scripture never makes it entirely clear as to just how willing or reluctant a participant Bathsheba may have been, hers provides the perfect profile for a woman who may or may not know the extent to which she feeds the spindle of sexual desire. Priscilla must, therefore, be held to some degree complicit in the whole affair. Finally, and most importantly, John's Biblical analogue clearly establishes the family pecking order. For all his imperial aspirations, Miles has been compelled to play the part of the unwilling, servile

son; he has been denied the royal robes and instead must make do with the rags of a mere shepherd boy, playing the part of a youthful David, armed with only the id, the most primitive of slingshots, while he prepares to do battle with John's more mature and invidious David.

Nominally, Miles may retain the title of captain but the narrator makes it clear from the outset that Miles is destined to inhabit the skin of the youthful David for some time to come, at least until that day he proves himself worthy of assuming the mantle of authority. From the very moment he marched into "the mist," that is, commenced with his revenge fantasy, the narrative allusions to Davidic lore relegate Miles to the position of an inferior, his present military rank notwithstanding. When his soldiers are described as "the mighty men of King David" (Longfellow 118), one is led naturally to infer that their leader will occupy the role of King David. But that role seems to remain forever out of reach for Miles both literally and figuratively; for, these same soldiers are characterized as "Giants," men "who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines" (118). The suggestion is that for the diminutive Miles, everyone appears larger, taller, and thus in possession of a more commanding presence, particularly one giant of Philistine origin known as Goliath, whose superior height and abundant strength mark him as an ideal candidate for an authority figure worthy of both oedipal envy and enmity.

It is in canto VII, "The March of Miles Standish," where Miles finally realizes his fantasy of revenge. When "After a three days' march," Miles arrives at an Indian encampment, he finds the braves of this particular tribe are "gigantic in stature / Huge as Goliath of Gath" (Longfellow 132), further evidence of the fantastical, hyperbolic nature of this particular sequence of events. Two in particular stand out as exceptionally menacing: Pecksuot and Wattawamat. These two will act as stand-ins for both mother and father. Like the pre-oedipal

parents, they first appear as a benign presence, approaching Miles with kindness; but, when they ask to trade "mostly for muskets and powder" and are refused, they turn on him just like the parents who quite suddenly and unreasonably ask their son to give up his hold on the mother (133). Since the source for both these oedipal irruptions partake in the same psychic wellspring, it should come as no surprise that the Indians' request for "muskets and powder" eerily recalls Miles sexually-charged declaration of war against these same people. If Miles were to give in to their demands, he would be surrendering that same manhood that sent him off to war in the first place and, as a result, would find himself back in the thrall of the parents. For their part, the parents, by requesting arms and ammunition of such phallic import, are in effect demanding that Miles return to an earlier stage of development; they are not unlike every other parent who wishes their child to remain as cute, cuddly – and as sexually unknowing – as the day she/he was born.

As it is the mother with whom the child is first acquainted, so it is Wattawamat, the more maternal of the two, who is the first to confront Miles. We are told that "He [Wattawamat] was not born of a woman" (Longfellow 133), a clear echo of the Caesarian-born Macduff. But unlike his literary antecedent, Wattawamat will not slay his opponent but instead fall under his knife. So might Wattawamat's entry into the world suggest he is not in possession *of* a woman's sensibilities? But has since absorbed them? This would seem the only logical explanation, particularly in light of his subsequent action:

> . . . he [Wattawamat] unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his left hand,
>
> Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the handle. (133-134)

True, we are soon informed of Wattawamat's other knife, the one he keeps at home, the one "with the face of a man on the handle" (134), but it is the female "face" that in the end "he" decides to show to the public. Of the two, it is Wattawamat that Miles chooses not to harm, even though Wattawamat is to be clearly counted among the enemy. This is in perfect keeping with the unfolding of the Oedipus complex, where the idealized image of the mother suffers something of a drubbing. By siding with the father, the mother unwittingly invites the hostility of the son, one just not as intense and certainly not as self-conscious as that which the son harbors for the father. Nevertheless, this marks the start of a lifelong ambivalence for mother that could have been avoided, the son feels, had she only taken up his cause against the father instead of leaving him defenseless.

Pecksuot, on the other hand, clearly qualifies as the sexually despotic Freudian father. The suggestion of the male member embedded within his very name begins to hint at Pecksuot's significance. For Miles, he is unquestionably the phallus personified and, therefore, is the one upon whom he unleashes his exclusive fury, ultimately slaying him. As the product of Miles' imagination, Pecksuot behaves in the only way the oedipally-wrought Miles knows how, namely in a manner distinctly autoerotic, fondling his knife by "Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back" (Longfellow 134). Even Pecksuot's discourse can be considered phallic-driven when filtered through the mind of Miles. As one who has recently come into his "manhood," Miles is extremely sensitive and takes grave offense to what he perceives as the emasculating taunts issued by Pecksuot: "He [Miles] is a little man; let him go and work with the women!" (134). But, just as the son wishes to simultaneously rid himself of the father while aspiring to be the father, Miles in his murderous rage directed at this father substitute, calls upon his ancestral paternity for assistance: "All the blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston de Standish /

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his temples" (135). Appropriately, Miles delivers the fatal blow courtesy of Pecksuot's own knife, that is, like Oedipus, his literary prototype, Miles has wrested the phallus from the father only to kill him with it. Unlike Oedipus, who will suffer the scorn and punishment of his community, Miles' patricide, because of its dreamlike quality, is given unqualified assent. Like any fantasy, Miles has peopled his with its fair share of adoring onlookers. One of these, Hobomok, gives expression to Miles' satisfied sense of revenge:

> "Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength, and his stature,
>
> Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man; but I see now
>
> Big enough have you been to lay him *speechless* before you!" (136; emphasis added)

Not only has Miles metaphorically increased his stature by shedding a father's favorite term of endearment for his son, "little man," but Hobomok makes it a point to indicate that Miles has slain the father in such a way that he will never again be able to coax or cajole anyone, leaving him as he does "speechless." Miles' revenge may now be said to be complete; David has slain his Goliath and is now prepared to lay claim to his divinely ordained kingship, one whose distinctly oedipal domain includes his very own mother.

IV. The Messianic Mode: An Unconscious Christian Submissive

After slaying Pecksuot, Miles finds himself newly emboldened, going so far as to send back to Plymouth the decapitated head "as a trophy" to be publicly displayed (Longfellow 136). Miles' fantasy reaches a fevered pitch when, as if on cue, his imagined spectators "rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took courage" (136); however, all is not entirely well as, even in fantasy,

Miles cannot achieve consensus, the one dissenting voice, of course, being that of Priscilla: "Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror / Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles Standish" (136). It is as if Priscilla's obduracy were part of the dream-work of Miles' fantasy that would act as the unconscious displacement of civilization's taboos and their ever-present power to assert themselves. But, even if this were Priscilla's actual response, it bodes all the more disastrous for Miles' oedipal prospects. Priscilla seems now the very image of Jocasta, herself, when first discovering the awful truth of her second marriage, a moment that inexorably leads to the tragic downfall of both mother and son.

Whatever the reality or unreality of the situation may be, and no matter the feelings of Priscilla, Miles remains undaunted; driven by a monomania that would do Captain Ahab proud, Miles is ready to take on all who would stand in his way in his quest to possess the mother: "Bravely the stalwart Standish was scouring the land with his forces / Waxing valiant in fight and defeating alien armies" (Longfellow 137). In Miles' fantasy, killing the father once is just not enough; it is a script whose pleasure demands to be enacted over and over. So, while on the way to the maternal penumbra, Miles encounters wave upon wave of "alien armies," the appropriate guise for the father, who is at once both *armed* – equipped with the almighty phallus – and *alienated* – a presence from whom Miles has become hopelessly estranged. It is not until that time when the real John finally decides to give physical expression to his desire for Priscilla, that Miles' imaginary patricidal killing spree will be brought to an end as well as his fantasy of unseating the father.

When Miles initially stormed off after learning of Priscilla's "true" feelings, John impressed upon Priscilla the need for restraint; until circumstances changed, Priscilla and John were to conduct themselves in a purely Platonic manner. Even though it is clear they wish to

take their relationship to the next level, they hold back simply because they feel that anything less would be tantamount to betraying their friend. Or, taken another way, the parents have decided to entertain the tantrum of an overly-indulged child.

In lieu of expressing any form of physical affection, John and Priscilla pass the time by sublimating their passion by working at the spindle, a mutually agreeable sexual substitute. As a labor that is both initiated and supervised by Priscilla, she provides John with instruction but only after upbraiding him for his passivity, although making sure to put matters in the most delicate of terms: "Come, you must not be idle" (Longfellow 140). When she assigns him the task of "Hold[ing] this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting" (140), she is again effectively urging him to take hold of the paternal phallus, that is, to assume the power and responsibility that is rightfully his, no matter how reluctant he may be to do so. If there remains any lingering apprehension on his part, not to worry since Priscilla will be there to proffer the necessary aid, not to mention a firmness of purpose that recalls the kind of unstinting spousal encouragement of a Lady Macbeth. Priscilla appeals to his narcissistic impulses, going so far as to suggest that, if he only does what she says, then he may very well end up creating nothing less than an entirely new archetype of paternity: "Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed and the manners / Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John Alden!" (140). Yet, if "his clumsy manner of holding" the skein is any indication, then it would appear that John is just not ready to meet such a challenge (140). It is clear that Priscilla must adopt a different, more direct tack. She does so when she decides to put her spinning wheel to a slightly different use, one wherein the inadvertent application of her feminine charms will be enough to ensure a favorable outcome.

The importance of the spinning wheel cannot be overstated; not only does it give canto VIII its name, but it also helps to underscore an additional narrative significance, one separate and distinct from that which it had been invested with in canto III, "The Lover's Errand." This time around the spinning wheel will unfold another stage of the Oedipus complex; instead of creating the conflict, it will serve as catalyst to its resolution. In the process, it will further imbue each principal with added allusive texture. To begin with, the canto's very title evokes the laborious but faithful efforts of the Penelope of Homeric renown, a figure of unerring fidelity. As opposed to that displayed by her ancient forerunner, Priscilla's conduct, no matter how Penelope-like it may appear on the surface, is informed by a degree of duplicity as she sexually strings along, no matter how unknowingly, at least one would-be suitor, namely Miles. It is left to John to act as a kind of Puritan Odysseus, the one who seeks mortal retribution against all those who would dare insinuate themselves into his domestic bower even if that someone happens to be his own "son." As we have already seen, John finds the task utterly repellent, if not impossible to carry out. Only after Priscilla opts for a more direct approach – her more subtle, verbal exhortations having long since fallen on deaf ears – will John finally rise to the occasion. While setting the yarn straight, she finds herself "Sometimes touching his [John's] hands," an act, it must be stressed, the narrator is at pains to point out is the result of an unknowing inner compulsion: "as she disentangled expertly / Twist or knot in the yarn, *unawares – for how could she help it*?" (Longfellow 140; emphasis added). Whether she had intended to or not, the effect of her mere touch proves immediate, not to mention almost literally electric by "Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body" (140). Thoroughly aroused, John is now ready and able to scale all manner of Odyssean heights of heroism, even if that includes the slaying of kith and kin.

It is no coincidence that just as soon as Priscilla and John partake in the aforementioned physical congress, then:

> Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger entered,
>
> Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the village.
>
> Yes; Miles Standish was dead! (Longfellow 141)

At the moment of touching, paternal trepidation has evidently given way to paternal pleasure, one that is both "breathless" and full of "heat" (140-141) and one that provides John with the much needed impetus to once and for all finally fulfill his oedipal destiny; John has reclaimed his kingdom, wife and all, by slaying the offending suitor. Interestingly enough, Priscilla, who "Silent and statue-like," is the one struck dumb, "*But* John Alden," upon receiving the awful news of his friend's fate, feels "as if the barb of the arrow / Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own" (141). At first glance such sentiment may seem sympathetic enough, but the effect proves just the opposite as John believes the arrow to have "sundered / Once and forever the bonds that held him bound as a captive," leaving him, "*Wild with excess of sensation,* the awful delight of his freedom" (141; emphasis added). Instead of sympathy, John experiences what seems a welcomed rush of relief. But was not Miles his dear friend and confidante?

An explanation for John's apparent heartlessness may be had if one considers the oedipal underpinnings of the aforesaid simile, one that is designed to approximate John's initial reaction to Miles' death. Notice that the arrow is said to have penetrated only the heart of Miles and not John's; it is as if John's heart (and/or another appendage) had suddenly hardened enough to repel Mile's oedipal onslaught, or, as if the arrow were that prized phallus for which the two must grapple, and which, according to Freud, the father most always ends up the victor while the son

is forced to forego the spoils of the mother. Once the unwanted suitor has been done away with, then and only then may the two "friends" reunite as husband and wife, or, as John would have it, quoting from the marriage ceremony itself: "Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them asunder" (236). No *man* maybe, but with respect to the relationship between father and son throughout the turmoil of the Oedipus complex, a boy surely.

The report of Miles' death is shot through with the kind of fatalism seemingly inherent to the Oedipus complex. To begin with, Miles is said to have met his untimely end by having been "Slain by a poisoned arrow" (Longfellow 141). This is the same arrow that John had just made mention of, the symbolic phallus that, if prematurely possessed, will result in certain psychic death. Furthermore, the circumstances surrounding his death ironically recall those of Uriah the Hittite, the faithful husband of Bathsheba and loyal subject of King David. According to scripture, Uriah's premature death was orchestrated by David by way of missive, that is, language once again serves as lethal agent for the patriarchy:

> In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die." (Holy Bible 343)

Like Uriah, Miles stands no chance, being "shot down in the front of the battle / Into an ambush beguiled" (Longfellow 141). Uriah's murder was necessitated by the unexpected pregnancy of Bathsheba; in other words, the sexual act prompted the deed. Likewise, immediately after John and Priscilla touch hands, Miles is killed, the touch acting as metonymic substitute for sexual intercourse since Victorian mores prevented Longfellow from providing more explicit means of

expression. The same censoring ethos is at work, when directly after news of Miles' death, John and Priscilla decide to marry, the ceremonial rite yet another substitute for the sexual act. Their official union, in fact, is the very reason for Miles' death, at least while he wears the mask of David.

Psychologically speaking, the reported demise of Miles, who as we soon learn remains alive and well, was not a matter of misinformation but one meant to be taken metaphorically. His death was merely a matter of again discarding one persona for another; that is, closing one book while opening another. After turning the last page in David's story, Miles now turns to his latest and last work of literature, *Bariffe's Artillery Guide*, the text our narrator had earlier referred to as one fit for "belligerent Christians." The book is appropriate to represent someone as warlike, yet God-fearing as Miles. At the same time, however, no matter how "belligerent" Miles has proven himself to be, his recent defeat at the hands of the father, while even in imagination, has left him possessed of the kind of humility and submission that would earn the envy of the most exemplary of Christians. Even when governed by Christian values, however, Miles proves just as willful and determined, only this time his pugnacity is fueled by allegiance to those new-found values. Meantime, the book's titular "artillery," of course, refers to the newly-discovered male member, that which Miles has up until recently regarded as clearly an instrument of aggression. Miles' change of heart, his "conversion" to those core principles of Christianity, was foreshadowed at the very start of the poem in the form of yet another instrument of potential aggression. As we learned in canto I, hanging upon the wall of Miles' chamber is his "trusty sword of Damascus" (Longfellow 92) which evokes not only the conversion of Saul of Tarsus but within the present context puts a decidedly phallic spin on that conversion. Ultimately, however, Miles must rule out Saul as one fit for psychic emulation; for

the tireless efforts to win over the Gentile world to Christianity on the part of the newly-christened Paul prove just too tenacious for Paul to serve as the ideal oedipal convert. In short, his variety of belligerence is simply an improper fit for Miles at this stage of his development. Instead, Miles realizes his final incarnation in the very model of Christian humility itself, none other than as the Son of God. At this point, any belligerence exhibited by Miles is of the type that will obstinately uphold, in distinctly Christ-like manner, the will of the father.

Only after their exchange of vows, at the very close of the ceremony, itself, do John and Priscilla notice a figure at the threshold that seems to bear an uncanny resemblance to their recently departed friend; he is variously described as a "strange apparition," "a ghost from the grave," "a phantom of air," and "a bodiless, spectral illusion" (Longfellow 143) Clearly, such characterization suggests a resurrection, even a quality of otherworldliness, in short, a profile that captures the very essence of the newly-risen Christ. In keeping with such scriptural tradition, Miles comports himself as one whose unquestioned loyalty and obedience has already brought to successful completion the will of the father. He goes so far as to beg forgiveness of John and Priscilla, while at the same time preaching, by way of implication, an unlikely gospel of pacifism:

> Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amazement
>
> Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish, the Captain of Plymouth!
>
> Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion, "Forgive me!
>
> I have been angry and hurt – too long have I cherished the feeling;
>
> I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is ended. (144)

By characterizing himself as "hard," Miles would seem to be unknowingly laying blame for his ill behavior upon the vagaries of the phallus. In order to prove just how sincerely remorseful he is, Miles adopts a Christ-like persona of a distinctly detumescent variety. Prefiguring the fate of the oedipal son, Miles' former spirit of rebelliousness, if not broken, has gone hopelessly limp as he begins to embody submission itself.

In the course of his conversation with John, Miles, in a locution reminiscent of the royal "we," never employs direct address, instead opting to use third person address only. It is as if Miles were but the lowly subject addressing his munificent liege, afraid to even look him in the eye. Upon further examination, however, it would seem more than just a case of a Uriah offering up the appropriate obsequies to his King. When the Christ-like Miles utters the aforesaid expletive of gratitude, i.e. "thank God!," he might very well be giving expression to yet another royal reference to John and in the process, abasing himself even further; this time going so far as to imbue John with divine grace, if not omnipotence itself. If so, then such slavish submission would suggest that Miles is now willing to accept all manner of crucifixion at the hands of the father, to lay down the phallus, as it were, once and for all. In fact, the further assertion, "it is ended," clearly echoes the words Jesus managed to utter with his dying breath: "It is accomplished"; this, in turn puts the reader in mind of those words of oedipal evocation which, according to scripture, had immediately preceded Jesus' final testimony: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." In sum, there is a solemnity to Miles' declaration of contrition that suggests a covenant similar to that which had been agonizingly sealed in the Garden of Gethsemane, or, to put into more psychologically secular terms, that which the father forces the son to agree upon which signals the end of the Oedipus complex. But why the sudden

turnaround? How does one go from shouting down the Gods to bowing down to them in the seeming blink of an eye?

Miles' "apotheosis" can best be attributed to that phenomenon Freud had termed the "primal scene." As already noted, when Miles was first espied upon completion of the marriage ceremony, he was of a ghostly pallor that could be understood as the result of his reputed death, or even as the consequence of one who has lost out in love, dead, for all intents and purposes, to his prospective lover. Yet, a third possibility exists, one whose psychological pith provides, perhaps, a more convincing explanation; in addition to the ever-present threat of castration, what eventually sends Miles over the edge, into complete abject submission, is the witnessing of the wedding of John and Priscilla, a "coupling" he finds profoundly disturbing. But to the point of death? For Miles it represents that trauma of early childhood that Freud had argued all children are forced to undergo either in reality or in imagination, namely the witnessing of one's parents engaged in sexual intercourse. It is an alien experience that the child can only interpret as an act of extreme violence perpetrated by the one upon the other:

> Their [children's] perceptions of what is happening are bound, however, to be only very incomplete. Whatever detail it may be that comes under their observation – whether it is the relative positions of the two people, or the noises they make, or some accessory circumstance – children arrive in every case at the same conclusion. They adopt what may be called a *sadistic view of coition*. They see it as something that the stronger participant is forcibly inflicting on the weaker. . . (Freud The Sexual Theories 220)

Such is the force of the experience that it would seem to literally strike the fear of God into Miles, compelling him to play the role of Jesus, the sacrificial lamb. So it would seem that John has finally accomplished what he was meant to do, while Miles, "in atoning for the error" (Longfellow 144) gives expression to those feelings experienced by every former oedipal upstart, those who have been recently chastened by the knowledge of the father's seeming omnipotence and who are, therefore, anxious to win him over as an ally: "Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of John Alden" (144). Identification with the father marks the end of the Oedipus complex; from here, according to Freud, the child moves on to experience a latency period and then onto the genital stage where she/he will be able to engage in healthy, functional relationships with members of the opposite sex, that is, provided all goes as it should in the resolution of the complex.

There is more to Miles' oedipal capitulation then meets the eye. His very public display of submission, the over-the-top deference he shows to John, seems to suggest that Miles has identified not so much with the father as he has with the mother. As seen through the eyes of the child, he is the mother, putting himself in the place of one helplessly ravished by the father. For what is Christ's crucifixion other than a violation of the son perpetrated by the father? In other words, Miles, in the guise of Jesus, is more woman than man:

> Freud tied the inability of sons to resolve their ambivalent wishes toward their fathers, and thus successfully conclude the oedipal story, to an inability to free themselves from a "homosexual" and "feminine" position, that is, a position in which they submitted themselves to the father in the imagined terms of the primal feminine object of the father's active masculine desire. (Toews 75)

At the same time, does not identification with the mother imply identification with the father? How else to account for a "homosexual" preference? Even the adoption of the Christ-like persona is accounted for in this identificatory process of multiple inversion:

> . . . the "homosexual libido" evident in the son's identification with the father, or merger into the father, as the passive object of his active subjectivity required a displacement and sublimation that redirected the desire to be recognized and loved into an obligation to serve the "great common interests of mankind." (75)

Evidently, serving the "great common interests of mankind," is not only the charge issued to any would-be savior but also a convenient rationalization for those trapped in the oedipal dilemma, those, that is, who are incapable of bringing to a successful close the Oedipus complex.

V. Conclusion

The Courtship of Miles Standish ends in a curious tableau. After he has made his peace with John and Priscilla, Miles suddenly and mysteriously disappears, never to be heard from again. For the few remaining stanzas the narrator feels no need to make mention of the title character again, or, for that matter, to even remind the reader that he ever existed. Instead, the remainder of the poem is given over to John's unveiling of his wedding gift to Priscilla, an offering rife with Freudian symbolism:

> Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,
>
> Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of Priscilla,
>
> Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying the hand of its master,

Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,

Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a saddle. (Longfellow 146)

It would appear that the bull has replaced Miles in the poem's triadic matrix; or, put another way, Miles has been transformed into that bull. The metamorphosis is significant insofar as the bull is "snow-white," suggesting in this case a variety of innocence, one free of oedipal transgression; Miles' criminal record has evidently been expunged through the magnanimity of the bull's owner and master. Although by assuming the form of a bull, a creature of decided aggression, it further suggests that patricidal desire within Miles has not been done away with completely but only been driven underground where it will remain seemingly ever latent. The "crimson cloth" that "Covered" the bull boasts a Freudian dimension as well, specifically by evoking once again the horrors of the primal scene. Simply put, the redness of the cloth is merely code for what the child believes is the necessary bloodletting involved in the act of vaginal penetration. According to Freud, "if the child discovers spots of blood in his mother's bed or on her underclothes, he regards it as a confirmation of his view. It proves to him that his father has made another assault on his mother during the night" (Freud Sexual Theories 222).

Oddly enough, the poem ends with Priscilla bestride the bull and John leading them "to their new habitation," where it is safe to assume they will indulge in the kind of newly-wedded bliss that Miles had just witnessed and which was the cause of his present "arrested" development. So, why does John drag along the bull in the first place? Does he too recognize on some level the patricidal spirit of Miles within the bull? And if so, is he now determined to keep Miles forever cowed by providing regular displays of his sexual prowess? Or, is it even more personal, more an internal show of masculine authority, a way for John to prove to John his

"mastery" of fatherhood by holding captive a key symbol of male virility? Either way, there is an element here of the savage and sadistic that heretofore was altogether lacking in John. He has been granted license to express all those ugly traits prescribed to the Freudian father once Miles conformed to the kind of conduct that is in keeping with that of the post-oedipal son. In this newly realized tyranny, John forces Miles to repeat the trauma of the primal scene. As already noted, such experience is interpreted by the unwilling observer as an act of violence, but now, as evidenced by Miles' latest and final incarnation, there is added an underlayment of bestiality, which can only heighten the dread, thus deepening even further the son's psychic wounds. This same incarnation, however, would *seem* to suggest that Miles might already be well on his way to absorbing the stern, brutal and "beastly" lessons inherent to the primal scene.

Longfellow's decision to conclude his narrative with such expressionistic flourish leaves the reader both secure and unsettled. Secure, insofar as the sun-setting tableau suggests that domestic tranquility has seemingly prevailed; unsettled because the slightest whiff of the bestial into that same domesticity can only promote anxiety concerning the fate of our three principals, particularly the title character. The reader is prevented from receiving the kind of narrative satisfaction normally experienced within nineteenth century story-telling with respect to its protagonist. So why the irresolution, what, if anything, is Longfellow trying to leave his reader? An answer can be found, ironically enough, in the work of one of Longfellow's literary fathers.

As translator of the *Commedia* and a self-professed Danteist, Longfellow could not help but scatter throughout his own body of work myriad references and allusions to the Dantean oeuvre. It comes as no surprise, then that not only Freudian but also Dantean echoes should be found within *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, most notably within its culminating episode. In *La Vita Nuova*, Dante early on describes a vision he had experienced not long after being greeted

by his beloved Beatrice during a stroll along the corso. In it he conjures up both characters and circumstances that eerily recall those involved in that very Freudian final episode of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*:

> So I returned to the loneliness of my room and began to think about this gracious person. As I thought of her I fell asleep and a marvellous [sic] vision appeared to me. In my room I seemed to see a cloud the colour [sic] of fire, and in the cloud a lordly figure, frightening to behold, yet in himself, it seemed to me, he was filled with a marvellous [sic] joy. He said many things, of which I understood only a few; among them were the words: *Ego dominus tuus* [I am your master]. In his arms I seemed to see a naked figure, sleeping, *wrapped lightly in a crimson cloth*. Gazing intently I saw it was she who had bestowed her greeting on me earlier that day. In one hand the figure held a fiery object, and he seemed to say, *Vide cor tuum* [Behold your heart]. After a little while I thought he wakened her who slept and prevailed on her to eat the glowing object in his hand. Reluctantly and hesitantly she did so. A few moments later his happiness turned to bitter grief, and, weeping, he gathered the figure in his arms and together they seemed to ascend into the heavens. I felt such anguish at their departure that my light sleep was broken, and I awoke. (Dante 31-32; emphasis added)

To begin with, like Miles, Dante apparently has the ability to change the complexion of his surroundings at will. His vision is one that again, like Miles', variously includes a "lordly figure," to whom he addresses treacly as "master," an object of desire touched by "crimson cloth," and finally the suggestion of sex that Dante, the narrator, is compelled to witness. For his

primal scene, Dante must sit helplessly by as both his lord and love engage in what appears as oral foreplay only to eventually "ascend into the heavens" of sexual ecstasy. The "anguish" is so great that Dante awakens leaving the reader no doubt that the source of this particular traumatic episode lies only in the imagination; nevertheless, the pain is just as real and the end is still the same: Dante must ultimately surrender his beloved to God, the father, in the same way that Miles had to relinquish his to his surrogate father. The consequences of that separation are identical as well, Dante bowing to God's greatness and Miles in effect doing the same to John; Dante moving on from there to write about his patriarchal rite of passage and Miles, if he continues to follow the Freudian script, will invariably walk in the footsteps of his "father"; furthermore, if Longfellow's oedipal efforts in the name of Dante, the Poet, are any indication, Miles, like Dante, the Pilgrim, will in good metafictional manner surely go on to record the experience, whether for good or ill, to the greater glory of the patriarchy, be that record a written or simply lived one. But what of those very feminine objects of desire, what is to become of them? Dante, the writer/protagonist, would go on to pen the *Commedia*, his masterpiece, one that ends in glorifying a thoroughly masculine God but while providing almost equal billing to his beloved and decidedly feminine Beatrice, situating her as he does within the privileged confines of the Empyrean. In doing so, Dante is bestowing equal value upon both the feminine and the masculine. Longfellow's aim would seem to be the same. Miles' eventual identification with both the mother and the father clearly suggests Longfellow believed, if not in a psychological balance between the masculine and feminine, at least an uneasy alliance between the two, one that, although onerous, is necessary, and one best illustrated in the figure of Miles as "Snow-white bull," an odd admixture of a potentially destructive bovine masculinity tempered, steered, and even in some cases overruled by a feminine sensibility known as Priscilla.

CHAPTER 3:
ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER: A JUNGIAN READING

I. Introduction

When Mark Twain first conceived of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, he envisioned chronicling a life that would be apportioned into four parts, ranging from "Boyhood and youth" all the way to "age 37 to [40?]," at which time its hero was to "return & meet grown babies & toothless drivellers who were the grandees of his boyhood" (qtd. in Kaplan 179). Having made it no further than "Boyhood and youth," Twain expressed within the "Conclusion" of the final draft a design contrary to his original intention: "So endeth this chronicle. It being strictly a history of a boy, it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man" (Twain 218). So why the change of heart? Why prevent Tom from growing into a man, unless, of course, Twain sensed something in Tom that prevented him from taking his narrative any further.

Evidence of Twain's uncertainty can be found in the months just prior to the novel's publication. Having long since given up on the original quadripartite structure, Twain instead was beset by an uncertainty over just who the novel's intended audience should be, children or adults. In an attempt to settle the matter, he had entered into a regular correspondence with his friend and fellow realist writer William Dean Howells. Ever the tastemaker, Howells eventually handed down a judgment that prevails to this day: "But I think you ought to treat it explicitly as a boy's story" (qtd. in Clark 256). Twain was quickly sold on the idea, although perhaps not without some small amount of spousal encouragement: "Mrs. Clemens decides with you that the book should issue as a

book for boys, pure and simple – and so do I. It is surely the correct idea" (qtd. in Clark 256). Twain clearly required some convincing, suggesting that his initial misgivings had not been entirely dispelled. Quite simply, he had considered targeting adults in the first place because he sensed something adult within Tom. The cause for Twain's confusion and my purpose in pursuing this line is clear: an adult undercurrent runs throughout *Tom Sawyer*, namely one of an aborning sexual energy that is easy to overlook since it paradoxically prevents its protagonist from reaching manhood; that is, he yearns for entry into the mysteries of the masculine but will be repeatedly denied as a result of his all-too intimate knowledge of the feminine. Such a claim rests on the novel's equally overlooked psychological dimension, one best "diagnosed" and "treated" by implementing the analytical psychology of Carl Jung, specifically the process he termed individuation.

* * *

According to Dr. Jolande Jacobi, a leading expositor of Jungian theory and one of the few whose work has received Jung's personal sanction, the individuation process is one "of maturation or unfolding, the psychic parallel to the physical process of growth and aging" (107). Individuation, moreover, is multi-phased, requiring of its subject an ever-increasing awareness. For the subject must become ever more conscious of itself at each stage in order to graduate to the next. These stages amount to encounters with what Jung referred to as archetypes, which are informed by their own special function while given their own special designation. Jung denominates these archetypes with such everyday terms like the "shadow" and "self" and places them alongside their more Latinate brethren, the "persona" and the "anima/animus." Taken together, they outline a

process whose aim is ultimately to achieve unity within oneself, to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable, to make sense, for instance, of the sexual maturity Tom will eventually experience but which will occlude the possibility of that selfsame maturity. Jung variously referred to this phenomenon as an encounter with Self or, more dramatic still, as the direct confrontation with God. As one would imagine, individuation, involving as it does coming face to face with divinity itself, is not for the faint of heart; to make it only halfway through the process "is not a task of youth but of mature years" (Jacobi 123). For the pre-pubescent, twelve year-old Tom the way will prove exceptionally arduous, for it is one fraught with potential pitfalls and near diabolical temptations that his tender years simply cannot protect him from.

It should be noted that from start to finish, Tom's attempts at individuation are, as one would expect from a boy his age, unconscious while concomitantly opposed by consciousness. For individuality – never mind individuation - suggests a certain species of *emotional* maturity that the irrepressible Tom and the eternal boyhood he represents would seem naturally to resist; nevertheless, the pull of that maturity proves inexorable. And herein lies the novel's core conflict: it comes down to that age-old story of boy becoming man. But, in marked contrast to the standard plot trajectory of what the critics call a bildungsroman, *Tom Sawyer* is a coming-of-age story wherein the hero – for all his attempts otherwise – *fails* to come of age. Such narrative deviation is the result of Tom's sexual indecision, which, in turn, is responsible for his failed bid at individuation. For having passed through every one of the aforementioned stages of individuation, Tom finds himself stalled at the threshold of the last and most crucial, the Self, that moment which marks the successful networking of archetypes, and that which would enable him

to achieve the aforesaid quasi-divine status. Unfortunately, to do so, requires the sexual knowledge reserved solely for adults.

In the end, Tom meets with the same Jungian fate as so many before him, no matter what the age. He will allow himself to get swallowed up in the collective unconscious where he commits the grievous error of identification, that is, he will give himself over body and soul to archetypal absorption; however, to be fair, given Tom's archetype of choice such identification is understandable. Known as the *puer aeternus*, "the eternal boy who is so often a personification of the immature eros of a man" (Beebe 45), this archetype is particularly suited for Tom, consisting as it does of a curious admixture of Tom's boyish aspirations and the adult world's expectations of conformity. Moreover, it bears a striking resemblance to the persona he originally dons at the start of the novel; it is as if he (and the reader) have come full circle. In short, such archetypal identification betrays a simple and steadfast refusal to grow up. Tom could well be considered the American Midwest's answer to Peter Pan. For, as it will be shown, Tom's hometown, St. Petersburg, is nothing other than a self-fashioned Neverland, one in whose bosom Tom finds himself comfortably residing by novel's end. It is a world of eternal pre-pubescence, where matters of adult sexuality will forever remain a concern only for the far distant future. Although this leaves Tom in a state of partial development, it also leaves him in possession of a psychic expansiveness, the kind generally denied to the fully-formed adult. Tom is not yet trapped in the fixity of adult ideas; he remains open to whatever may come his way. Simply put, he has yet to make up his mind.

Finally, before a proper study can commence, a word or two is necessary concerning the novel's recurring motif of indirection. Indirection would seem the most

apt characterization of Tom's uncertain state of mind, one which desires to avoid maturation and by extension individuation while, at the same time, longing to embrace the unknown if not only to travel a path contrary to that set out by the ruling authority. In order to travel that unknown, that is, to make his way through the dark of individuation, Tom will need to navigate successfully the archetypal shoals of Jung's collective unconscious and to do so, will invariably require charting a course of indirection.

The oftentimes circuitous outward actions of Tom and, for that matter, the novel's other principal players are designed to reflect this very interior and complex condition of the simultaneous rejection and acceptance of adult sexuality. Tom, for one, is forever exiting and entering by way of windows or back doors or side doors, never through the front one; and, on the rare occasion when he does, it is with an alacrity seemingly born from an inveterate unwillingness to do so. He also disdains the use of gates, preferring to jump over fences, while showing a decided preference for taking side roads and alleys rather than amble down Main Street. These seemingly impulsive actions are anything but; they are the predictable outcomes of a deep-seated ambivalence concerning the inculcation of his Aunt Polly's special brand of the straight and narrow. As his sole guardian, Aunt Polly acts as the most vocal and influential spokesperson for the prevailing law of the land, which, as we will see, demands complete and utter fealty. Symbolically speaking, then, Tom, if he were to take the direct route, that is, to swing open a gate outright, would be signaling his submission to that law, while jumping over it suggests a search for an alternate path, one, however, that his youthful years will prevent him from following all the way.

Tom is not the only one for engaging in indirection. Aunt Polly, kind and compassionate though she may be, is herself remarkably adept in this art as well, suggesting that she too is possessed of a degree of ambivalence. In her case, ambivalence is the result of the desire to keep Tom locked in maternal grasp, while well aware that for Tom to grow into healthy manhood, she must eventually free him from it. Within the novel's very first paragraph we learn that, when searching for Tom, she "pulled her spectacles down and looked *over* them about the room; then she put them up and looked out *under* them" (11; emphasis added). As Tom's primary caregiver and only real parental model, Aunt Polly could well be said to provide the inspiration and wellspring for Tom's behavior, thus giving rise to Tom's own penchant for indirection. In other words, his is evidently learned behavior. As a consequence of such questionable tutelage, Aunt Polly, for all her kindness and compassion, will eventually rank as Tom's principal antagonist in his quest for individuation, raising her to archetypal status as one who bears the rather unflattering Jungian moniker of the "Terrible Mother." Indeed, Tom's eventual abortion of the individuation process will prove the direct result of Aunt Polly's unconscious influence, one that will urge him to avoid that which should have been inevitable, namely confrontation with Self. Until then, however, Tom will forge ahead in his Jungian odyssey undaunted while at the same time unaware as well.

II. The Persona

The first step in the individuation process involves the recognition and subsequent dissolution of the "persona." Even though Tom's ultimate identification with the archetype Puer Aeternus strongly resembles his initial persona, the persona is the only step which does not boast of an archetypal component. Instead, it is the image we

extend to others, the face we present to the public. It is, in other words, "the form of an individual's general psychic attitude towards the outside world" (Jacobi 26-27). As the term suggests, the persona is merely a role, a part we play, albeit a very significant one. In order to proceed with the individuation process, the persona must first be recognized for the superficial fragment of consciousness that it is:

> When we analyze the persona we strip off the mask . . . Fundamentally the persona is nothing real: it is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be . . . in relation to the essential individuality of the person concerned it is only a secondary reality, a product of compromising, in making which others often have a greater share than he. (Jung *Basic Writings* 138)

The persona acts as a mediator of sorts. The outside world does not allow for free expression of the ego, so one adopts a socially-acceptable, oftentimes socially-constructed role, typically one's profession. In doing so, one must not permit the persona to overtake oneself; glimpses of "the real me" must always remain possible. Jacobi adduces among others the university professor, seemingly secure and dignified but who seems to have no existence beyond his office hours and who upon further examination is all "peevishness and infantilism" (29). For Jung, the persona's allure is ever-present. And, if one were to give in to the temptation, namely to hide entirely behind the mask, then one's true nature would atrophy and ultimately decay. Matters are made even worse if the persona is "forced upon the individual by his parents or the pressure of education" (29). In such cases, the consequences can be grave and long-lasting (29). Thanks to the

persistent and oftentimes misguided efforts of his Aunt Polly, Tom proves to be just such a case.

Like the personae worn by everyone else in this world, Tom's is not of his own making but one that is the product of his environment – an environment governed exclusively by mothers, what Jung terms a matrism, those "mother-oriented social structures . . . reflecting characteristics of the mother archetype" (Stevens 299); or, what is more commonly referred to simply as a matriarchy. Informed in large part by the feminine, Tom's persona is not so much a clearly defined role as it is one that he has imbibed through the very air of St. Petersburg. Cynthia Griffin Wolf effectively argues that the novel's principal setting, that of St. Petersburg, is "a matriarchy . . . that holds small boys in bondage," a town "saturated with gentility" (97). St. Petersburg represents a realm of feminine suzerainty wherein the masculine is duly suppressed if not exiled outright; as the darling of St. Petersburg, Tom is indicative of the former, while Injun Joe, a convicted criminal and the novel's principal antagonist, is an example of the latter. Wolf goes on to add that there is a noticeable absence of men and those few who do call St. Petersburg home are merely instruments – willing or no – of the ruling matriarchy. Judge Thatcher is a prime example. As the town's top ruling official, he represents the final word of law, a law designed to serve the mothers' ends, specifically by keeping Tom, and all who would follow his lead, feminine. After all, it is Judge Thatcher who passes judgment on the very intractably masculine Injun Joe which leads to his eventual banishment and death. Be that as it may, such a law is not to be found in any law book but rather takes the form of a prevailing spirit of feminine virtue that extends to every sector of society where even schoolmasters are impressed into service. When Mister

Dobbins finds the need to punish Tom, he places him on the girls' side of the classroom; admittedly, he's been duped into doing so by Tom himself, but the end result is that he carries out the will of the mothers by unwittingly aiding in their efforts to feminize Tom, their ultimate aim.

No matter how resistant to the rule of the mothers Tom may eventually prove to be, his unconscious quest for individuation seems doomed from the start. To begin with, he is not given the time to examine much less recognize the persona as such since Aunt Polly and her co-conspirators, that is, the other mothers of St. Petersburg, reinforce it with an aggression that proves unremitting. In other words, Tom does not know what has hit him. The novel's very first words, in fact, act as the opening salvo in the mothers' psychic assault; while in search for Tom, Aunt Polly calls out for him three times:

> "Tom!"
>
> No Answer.
>
> "Tom!"
>
> No Answer.
>
> "What's wrong with that boy, I wonder? You Tom!"
>
> No Answer. (11)

Wolf sees in this apparently harmless beckoning a note bordering on the Orwellian: "The demanding tone permeates the novel, no other voice so penetrating or intrusive" (97). Like Big Brother (or, in this case, Big Sister), Aunt Polly, in wondering what might be "wrong with that boy," suggests the need for a reprogramming. The persona that she, in collusion with the other "mothers" of St. Petersburg (some of whom, as we have already seen, prove to be men), force upon Tom represents just such a psychological makeover;

for, it is one that the novel would have us believe are the traditional feminine virtues of St. Petersburg, foremost among these are order and submission. For the mothers, order consists primarily of a reverence for those laws and mores that govern St. Petersburg society, while by submission they mean simply the willingness to conform to those same laws and mores. Their fervent desire is that Tom should come to embody these virtues. This, in turn, compels them to foist upon him a persona that consists primarily of just such virtues; however, like Tom, who remains wholly unconscious of his own attempts at individuation, the mothers are in the grip of a motive force, which they, themselves, are not even aware.

As an aborning adolescent, Tom is undergoing changes that prove at once irresistible and irreconcilable. He feels the magnetic pull of maturation, the urge to go beyond the bounds of St. Petersburg, while the mothers' wish is to keep him well within shouting distance. This would account in large part for the stress they put on the aforementioned virtues, particularly that of submission. When one of those mothers, this time his cousin Mary, in preparation for Sunday school attempts to perform, among other ablutions, the curling of Tom's hair, she is met with an unusual obduracy: "he held curls to be effeminate and his own filled his life with bitterness" (31). Interestingly enough, "the persona involves not only psychic qualities but also . . . our habits of personal appearance, posture, gait, dress, facial expression . . . even our way of wearing our hair" (Jacobi 28). When Mary has finished making over Tom, she finds her subject not only unwilling but also downright hostile, aware, at the very least, that he is denied the right to self-expression; notice, however, that to diffuse the hostility, to make him submit to her will, Mary need only apply a bit of the feminine rhetorical touch:

> He lost his temper and said he was always being made to do everything he didn't want to do. But Mary said persuasively:
>
> "Please, Tom – that's a good boy."
>
> So he got into the shoes snarling. (31)

Mary's palliating remarks have the intended effect of keeping Tom's urge toward individuation in abeyance, but only temporarily so since "good boy" exhortations are designed primarily for the pre-pubescent, and so for the ever-maturing Tom such appeals will prove effective for only so long.

The novel's opening scene wherein Aunt Polly's cries for Tom are thrice ignored, mark a moment of profound ambivalence on the part of both Tom and Aunt Polly. For, once she locates him, she immediately suspects he has been up to no good, but, when she learns otherwise, is "glad that Tom had stumbled into obedient conduct for once" (14). Ultimately, Aunt Polly and her allies, as Mary has already articulated, desire only that Tom be a "good boy," the kind other boys, however, tend to regard as a "sissy" or, worse yet just outright "girlish." Although his love for Aunt Polly would seem never in question, Tom will consciously have none of this, especially while he hovers on the cusp of adolescence where the need to display his manliness is felt with ever more increasing urgency.

An incident of some note takes place within the first chapter that would seem to illustrate Tom's desire to shed the Aunt Polly persona. When it turns out that Tom had not "stumbled into obedient conduct" after all, he flies from Aunt Polly's admonishing blows where he eventually encounters "a boy a shade larger than himself" (15). Appropriately enough, the narrator leaves the "stranger" unnamed, thus allowing for the

possibility that this stranger, whether corporeal or no, might very well serve within the fragile psyche of Tom as a doppelganger. For just prior to his appearance, Tom had been plagued with the thought that "He was not the Model Boy of the village," the result of the ambivalence he feels concerning the "model" persona Aunt Polly asks him to adopt. He then gives himself over to what could only be considered feelings of self-loathing, albeit ones expressed in the safety of the objectively distant third person: "He knew the model boy very well though – and loathed him" (14). It is no coincidence that immediately after this expression of self-revulsion, *a* model boy does appear, attired in distinctly feminine garb, sporting a "dainty" cap, "new and natty" pantaloons, and "a bright bit of ribbon" (15). He is the very "model" of Tom's feminine side, what Tom would be were he to give himself over entirely to Aunt Polly's demands.

For all of Tom's efforts at resistance, Aunt Polly's authority appears to remain dominant, that is, if the stranger's slightly superior stature is any indication. A face off ensues between the two boys wherein Tom hurls insults and dares that are childishly but fittingly "echoed" by the "other" boy, or more to the point, the projected Other. The climax occurs when the two of them tussle and Tom emerges the victor. Once Tom's back is turned, however, the stranger throws a rock at him and promptly retreats to the safety of his home, one guarded over by an imperiously protective mother who "ordered him [Tom] away" (15). Tom is evidently unable to vanquish altogether the feminine influence; that as long as he remains in St. Petersburg there will always be a mother standing sentry over those prized feminine virtues of order and submission while concurrently guarding against the encroachment of anything masculine. Nevertheless, as a direct consequence of these acts of matronly vigilance combined with a nascent

masculinity best represented in his bout with the "model" boy, Tom has unconsciously initiated the individuation process by waging war against the persona.

The mothers of St. Petersburg have their work cut out for them if they hope to stem the psychosexual tide of Tom's adolescence. They begin by doing all they can to make their riverside hamlet live up to its name, specifically, by having the town appear to replicate the gates of St. Peter in all its Edenic glory – that is, by representing for all its denizens, particularly those of the pre-pubescent variety, the very threshold of heaven. By way of Sunday school competitions or town-wide picnics, they attempt to provide an environment redolent with childlike purity and frivolity. Their efforts ultimately prove illusory, for like the mind itself, St. Petersburg will eventually unearth its own unconscious underside, one that had been all too long repressed.

Already in the novel's second chapter St. Petersburg begins to reveal itself as something less than idyllic and by extension its mothers less than maternal. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the most celebrated scene of the novel, the whitewashing of the fence. When Aunt Polly discovers that Tom skipped school, she orders him to paint a fence that in his eyes is seemingly without end; in other words, he must make aesthetically pleasing a structure that is designed to hem him in, to beautify his own prison walls so that he does not realize he is a prisoner. As the projection of Tom's persona, the fences of St. Petersburg attempt to envelop him, effectively expunging any trace of whoever the "real" Tom might be. To fill the void, Tom will have no other choice than to play the good boy while under the watchful eye of the mothers, to assume, in other words, the artificial "office" of mothers' pet, a position with only deleterious results:

> Identification with one's office or one's title is very attractive indeed, which is precisely why many men are nothing more than the decorum accorded them by society. In vain would one look for a personality behind this husk. Underneath all the padding one would find a very pitiable creature. (Jacobi 28-29)

Just like the fence, Tom has been given a new "coat," as it were, one that if applied properly will seamlessly integrate him into the prevailing ethos of order and submission, reducing him to nothing more than a piece of existential ornamentation.

The whitewashing of the fence not only illustrates the invidious efforts of St. Petersburg to undermine Tom's psychic integrity but also reveals his occasional ambivalence in response to those efforts. After he has scammed his friends into doing the painting for him, Tom proudly presents his work to the seemingly unsuspecting Aunt Polly. The reward she bestows upon him for a job well done, however, would seem to suggest otherwise, that she is, indeed, at least on some level, very much aware of Tom's malingering and his schemes to break free of her iron grip. By handing him an apple, she simultaneously evokes the Edenic image of St. Petersburg that the mothers are so wont to convey while at the same time bringing to mind Eve's original temptation of Adam, which, in turn, serves to prefigure the futility of Tom's attempts at warding off the unwanted persona, that, like Adam, he too will fall.

Significantly, this episode is brought to a close when Tom, after throwing "six or seven clods" at Cousin Sid in retribution for tattling on him, makes his getaway by hopping "over" the fence rather than by way of the gate. By opting for a path of indirection, Tom is giving physical expression to the unconscious contempt he feels for

the machinations of Aunt Polly and her sinister cohorts; through his physical actions Tom articulates his refusal to abide by the straight and narrow or, better still, the orderly and submissive.

After Tom's "indirect" exit, he finds his freedom short-lived since such indirection is not only the physical reflection of Tom's moral revulsion at the mothers' concerted attempts but also of that ambivalence born of a lifelong and unflagging inculcation of a dominant feminine principle, one that would seem always to bring Tom back under its yoke. At no time will the contrary pull of Aunt Polly's persona and that of maturation show signs of letting up. For now it maintains only an uneasy rule as Tom returns but reluctantly so; nevertheless, in the very act of returning, Tom submits once again to Aunt Polly's persona-sculpting hands, allowing her to continue to "fence" him in. Just why Tom continues to return will not become entirely clear until he graduates to the next stage of the individuation process; however, Aunt Polly in an earlier rhetorical flourish unknowingly provides a partial explanation. Before she is about to utter words of rebuke, she likens Tom to a "singed cat," an animal driven wild after being burnt (see demands of persona), but whose domestic nature (see ill-prepared for maturation) will inevitably bring him back under control (14). In fact, the key to Tom's interior world, at least at the level of the persona, is best found in the critical understanding of the novel's repeated tropological use of the cat.

The persona Aunt Polly hopes to foist upon the recalcitrant Tom represents nothing more than the feminization of Tom. It is one, moreover, unintentionally larded with archetypal significance. Hearkening back to the days of ancient Egypt, the emblematic incarnation of Aunt Polly's persona is the cat. Again, the very opening page

of the novel proves revealing. While still in search of Tom, Aunt Polly takes a broom and punches it repeatedly under the bed where, in apparent response to her three calls for Tom, "She resurrected nothing but the cat" (11). She has, in effect, asserted for the moment her psychic hegemony, bringing Tom back to life as a household pet, one whose domestic nature will insure obedience to her rule; it is one, moreover, that has served as a time worn symbol for femininity, originating in Egyptian mythology, specifically as the feline goddess Bastet. According to Marie-Louise Von Fronz, a close friend and associate of Jung's, Bastet is not only "linked with fertility and the feminine," but is the exemplar of femininity, so much so that she takes "precedence over all other goddesses" (55).

The cat is an appropriate persona for Tom for more than just its ancient pedigree; Aunt Polly's three calls for Tom that open the novel mark the first in a series of uncanny parallels to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a play that features a protagonist who, like Tom, is urged on by a woman who demands he become someone he is not. More specifically, *Macbeth* counts among its dramatis personae Lady Macbeth, who, again like Tom, wishes to shed her femininity, going so far as to pray to be "unsexed." Well before her entrance, however, at the start of the play, like the start of the novel, the mysticism of the number three is invoked. In *Tom Sawyer*, after Aunt Polly offers up a kind of threefold incantation, she seems to magically transform a human into an animal; while in *Macbeth* there appear *three* witches, each of whom renders up a prophecy in connection to the title character, a feat seemingly achieved only with the help of their "familiars," Paddock, a toad and Graymalkin, a *cat* (1). Familiars are "demon-companions to the witches" whose relationship is similar to that shared between bat and vampire (Rowse 419), thus

suggesting a side of the cat decidedly at odds with the obedient domestic Aunt Polly yearns for: "One of the most striking things about the cat as a symbol is its ambivalence. Like the serpent, its image oscillates between beneficence and malevolence" (Von Fronz 55). Cats are, in other words, the very soul image of their owners.

Tom's own ambivalence is best seen symbolically when, later on in the novel, he finds himself caught in the throes of pre-pubescent depression. He is administered a "new" medicine by Aunt Polly, who "was one of those people who are infatuated with patent medicines and all newfangled methods of producing health and mending it" (83). She proceeds to administer regular doses of "Painkiller" to Tom, which "was simply fire in a liquid form" (84). Judging by the following events, the Painkiller can be seen as a baptism by "fire," an initiation into the maternal dominion. It is important to note that prior to administering the Painkiller, Aunt Polly, who demands that one's psychic disposition conform to the same rules of good health that govern the body, attempted to "sweat his [Tom's] soul clean"; she began by rolling him up in a wet sheet and then covering him in blankets whereupon Tom deliriously declared that "the *yellow* stains of it [his soul] came through his pores" (84; emphasis added). Aunt Polly would seem to have made a convert of Tom if his conflation of the bodily and the spiritual is any indication. For Tom, however, who is presently at odds with Aunt Polly and all that she represents, the present remedy proves just too hard to swallow, so he eventually feeds it to the cat, his "familiar." Curiously enough, this marks the first and only time that the color of Peter's coat is mentioned: it just so happens to be the same yellow as Tom's soul. After being fed the Painkiller, Peter "sprang a couple of yards in the air, and then delivered a war whoop and set off round and round the room, banging against furniture, upsetting

flowerpots, and making general havoc" (85). As Tom's familiar, Peter's reaction to Aunt Polly's "medicine" serves as adequate adumbration of Tom's eventual response to the efforts of the mothers of St. Petersburg.

When Aunt Polly discovers Tom's apparent inhumane treatment of Peter, she feels the need to exact punishment but fails to follow through after Tom's remonstrates by invoking the suggestion of Peter's familiar power:

> "Now, sir, what did you want to treat that poor dumb beast so for?"
>
> "I done it out of pity for him – because he hadn't any aunt."
>
> "Hadn't any aunt! – you numbskull. What has that got to do with it?"
>
> "Heaps. Because if he'd a had one *she'd a burnt him out herself!* She'd a roasted his bowls out of him 'thout any more feeling than if he was a human!"
>
> Aunt Polly felt a sudden pang of remorse. (86; emphasis added)

Tom's response not only to the Painkiller but to "mothering" in general might very well be reflected in Peter's "roasted bowls"; more to the point, this scene further suggests that life with Aunt Polly is one that for Tom will prove her words prophetic: an existence not unlike that of a "singed cat."

Chapter nine affords an even clearer illustration of the cat as projection of the persona while at the same time introduces Tom to the archetypal power of the mothers. The chapter involves the journey of Tom and his overly superstitious friend Huckleberry Finn to the local graveyard. They venture out just before midnight, calling to each other by way of a predetermined signal: a meow. Once they reach their destination, they find that the lettering on all the tombstones has been effaced, signaling a marked departure from anything resembling the patriarchy wherein writing is one of its principal hallmarks.

This is not to say that the scene will remain entirely bereft of masculine influence, specifically its linguistic code; however, for the time being it represents a distinctly feminine milieu albeit one not of the persona but one of more ancient origin and, therefore, one of archetypal dimension. According to Jung, "the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead" (*Basic Writings* 334). Furthering the connection between the feline and the feminine, Huck claims that the graveyard's ghostly inhabitants "can see in the dark, same as *cats*" (67; emphasis added); moreover, as if acting as reluctant escort to Tom and Huck, the moon comes "drift[ing] from behind the clouds" (68). Like the cat, the moon has long served as a symbol for femininity, having originated with Hecate, the tripartite goddess (Graves 5). No matter how far afield he may journey, Tom cannot seem to escape the long arm of the matriarchy – even though it was never his conscious intention to do so.

Huck originally prompted the visit to the graveyard for the purpose of ostensibly getting rid of warts; however, on a deeper unconscious Jungian level, Tom's willingness to accompany him is tantamount to an attempt to shed the persona. This would explain why they bring along with them a dead cat, which, according to Huck,

> . . . when its midnight a devil will come, or maybe two or three, but you can't see 'em, you can only hear 'em talk; and when they're taking that feller away, you heave your cat after 'em and say, " Devil follow corpse, cat follow devil, warts follow cat, I'm done with ye!" That'll fetch *any* wart. (48)

For Huck the cat is merely a means to bring about a superstitious end. For Tom, on the other hand, the graveyard will serve, through the efficacious agency of the cat, as the appropriate burial ground for his femininity.

Tom and Huck's plans are foiled when they become the unintended witnesses to an alien practice of decidedly masculine cast. Not long after their arrival to the graveyard, in apparent confirmation of the foregoing superstition, he and Huck hear "A muffled sound of voices float[ing] up from the far end of the graveyard" (67). After some time these disembodied voices become "Some vague figures" that Huck appropriately dubs "devil-fire" (67). Tom and Huck it turns out have timed their ritual to coincide with an act of grave robbery perpetrated by three "devils" who emerge as three very recognizable, although not entirely respectable, *male* figures from St. Petersburg: Doc Robinson, the town physician, Muff Potter, the town drunk and Injun Joe, the town's pariah. The last of these leaves the most indelible impression upon Tom as Injun Joe will provide Tom with what he has been in developmental need of all along: a real masculine model, one that shatters the prevailing order of the mothers. For, in the midst of their corporeal theft, the robbers unearth a treasure map, whereupon greed quickly overtakes them and violence ensues; when the dust clears, Doc Robinson lays dead at the hand of Injun Joe who will frame Muff Potter for the murder. Injun Joe's unadulterated display of masculine aggression would seem to serve as the ideal but ironic anodyne for Tom's ill-fitting feminine persona. Nevertheless, that persona still holds sway and forces Tom to recoil from such a grisly act of violence. With Huck fast on his heels, Tom flees in terror where the dead cat and "the open grave were under no inspection but the moon's" (70).

When Tom and Huck, "speechless with horror," feel they've returned to the protective custody of the world of the mothers, the true nature of Huck is revealed. They

take refuge in an old tannery, where they immediately gravitate to "the sheltering *shadows* beyond" (71; emphasis added). Huck insists that they swear a "Solemn oath" never to reveal what they've seen. Not normally one to shun any opportunity for a chance to bask in the limelight – considering it forms an integral part of his persona – Tom uncharacteristically acquiesces, even though news like this would make him the undisputed cynosure of St. Petersburg. The only explanation for Tom's apparent misstep, his inconsistency of character, is a Jungian one, namely that Huck exerts a power over Tom that he is at present unaware of since it is one that up until now has been kept in unconscious abeyance; Huck is actually the projection of that other Tom kept hidden from conscious view; in a word, he is Tom's "shadow."

III. The Shadow

The graveyard scene proves pivotal in the development of Tom's individuation. In coming face to face with the shadow, Tom begins to journey beyond the protective ken of the persona, which is not to say that he has turned his back altogether on this well-worn mask. As it turns out, Tom proves no different than the rest of us, who, when confronted with the first sign of the existence of an undesirable interior dimension – shadow-related or not – respond by initially clinging to our conscious selves, while opting to "project one or more of our latent unconscious [see undesirable] traits upon someone in our environment who is suited to this role by certain structural qualities" (Jacobi 111). Jung has termed this role the shadow. Whether projected or not, the shadow is a concept that has since made its way into our everyday vernacular, commonly identified as our dark side, a side we seldom, if ever, own up to. As popularly conceived, the shadow becomes our own Mr. Hyde, thoroughly and irredeemably evil, a kind of

custom-made Darth Vader. Yet, for Jung matters are never quite so black and white; his shadow is one that leads a dual existence:

> The first form is that of the "personal shadow," containing psychic features of the individual which are unlived from the beginning of his life or only scarcely lived. The second is the "collective shadow." It belongs together with the other figures of the collective unconscious and corresponds to a negative expression of the Old Wise Man" or the dark aspect of the Self. (111).

The first of these confounds our expectations, consisting as it does of only the "unlived" or the "scarcely lived"; in other words, in contrast to the remote, unbidden nature of the collective shadow, that of the personal is decidedly more intimate, and thus not necessarily the emissary of some evil unconscious empire.

Whereas the collective shadow can be defined as the "Other" Tom, the personal shadow is one best defined as the What-If Tom, or as Jung would have it, the "also-I" (*Basic Writings* 27). Or, more to the point, it is the Tom, who in those moments of character inconsistency, provides us a glimpse of a Tom just as genuine as the consistent one. These are the times when Tom relinquishes the role of the much sought-after cynosure of St. Petersburg, the times when he does not feel himself bound and determined to remain the persistent center of attention of that well-meaning hamlet; for to remain forever the object of anxious affection of every mother's world proves just too taxing a position to maintain, to say the least, especially when one has recently come into possession of certain masculine sympathies at odds with the prevailing mores. This

would just invite even more negative attention and explains why in those rare moments of uncharacteristic modesty Tom abjures that very same limelight he would seem to otherwise so consistently crave, thus allowing for the emergence of that seldom-experienced side of himself, the personal shadow. True, these are moments that result in unavoidable embarrassment, where one's first reaction is to quietly slink away, but something else would seem to be at work since these are episodes that occur well into the novel when one has come to expect the sure-footed Tom to find a way to extricate himself from even the tightest of situations; instead, when at the behest of Judge Thatcher to name the first two of Jesus's disciples, Tom "looking sheepish" can only "blush" and drop his eyes before a crowd of onlookers that under normal circumstances he would unreservedly savor (36). Is this the kind of response consistent with one whom with "his entire being had for many a day longed for the glory and éclat that came with it" (33). Likewise, upon "Examination" day in front of a similar audience, "Tom struggled a while then retired, utterly defeated" (136-37). Though it may be only "scarcely lived," Tom's personal shadow is realized at these moments as he unconsciously declines the distinction of intellectual achievement, that which – if the attendant pomp is any indication – would appear the most highly prized by the mothers of St. Petersburg; rather, Tom stutters and stammers, opting for a mode of behavior resembling that of an illiterate, a behavior not unlike Huck's, and one, moreover, that Tom on a deeper level perceives to be unequivocally masculine while at the same time disdainful of anything feminine.

Like a magnet, the fatherless Tom is irresistibly drawn to the motherless Huck. And, indeed, Huck's anchoritic-like lifestyle answers with shadowlike precision to Tom's bustling, overcrowded one. Huck's is one informed by an apparent disregard, almost

utter contempt for the rewards and caresses of the mothers and, by extension, for the matriarchy of St. Petersburg. The reality, though, is that Huck, having been raised solely by an uneducated, alcoholic father, one prone to spasms of violence, simply wishes to avoid being noticed, to avoid being the next target of that violence. So, it comes as no surprise that Huck simply desires to fly under the radar, as it were. He avoids any occasion that would place him in the spotlight with a fervor equal to Tom's longing for that same spotlight. Even in matters of life and death, Huck remains steadfast. When at the novel's climax, Huck saves the Widow Douglas from the sadistic hands of Injun Joe, he does so only under the condition of anonymity. After the truth is revealed to the Widow, out of gratitude and affection, she adopts Huck in an attempt to "sivilize" him; he'll have none of it, of course, and proceeds to run away, where by novel's end he has returned to his old accommodations, a hogshead, and to the lazy indifference of his shadow self.

Perhaps even more telling of Tom and Huck's apparent psychic symbiosis is when the two boys witness their own funeral. After having run away to Jackson Island in an unknowing attempt to break free from the mothers, Tom, along with Huck and Joe Harper, are thought to have drowned in the Mississippi. When, during the course of their island stay, Tom surreptitiously makes his way back to St. Petersburg, he learns of this grisly news, but receives it, instead, as glad tidings since it represents another opportunity to take center stage. No wonder Tom rejoices since he gets to realize that which normally remains consigned to our fantasy world, namely the primal fantasy, the "Wait until I'm gone, then they'll be sorry" syndrome. Once he and his wayward companions are discovered amid the mourners at the funeral, "Tom Sawyer the Pirate looked around

upon the envying juveniles about him and confessed in his heart that this was the proudest moment in his life" (117-118). Meanwhile, Huck, maintaining the strict profile of the shadow, acts in opposite fashion by merely standing "abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes" (117). When he attempts to "slink away," Tom, who "seized him," finds himself both literally and figuratively locked in impenetrable embrace with his own shadow.

Huck represents the necessary psychological nodal point for Tom, one that offers Tom the sense of wholeness he is in such Jungian need of: "Where relationship with the father has been inadequate, the unconscious, unrealized masculinity is projected onto the friend, and union with him is expected to restore the missing psychic content" (Edinger 36). No wonder, then that Huck's lifestyle appeals to a boy like Tom, who at present is attempting to break free from the fetters of an institutionalized matrism that threatens to squelch, if not extinguish altogether, his new found masculine proclivities. Huck's defiance of the maternal law, his refusal to live within its bounds, the refusal, in other words, to be a "good boy," proves just too unconsciously eye-catching for Tom. Huck may not be Tom's best friend – that honor goes to Joe Harper – but he is even closer to Tom, bound as they are in Jungian intimacy. Huck puts it best, when urging Tom to keep "mum" (mother?) about the murder at the graveyard: "That Injun devil wouldn't make any more of drownding *us* than a couple of *cats*" (72; emphasis added). They are two sides of the same feline-faced coin: Tom, the persona and Huck, the inextricable shadow.

Tom's initial recognition and acceptance of the shadow takes place as early as the graveyard scene when Tom agrees to Huck's demand that they keep silent about the murder they witnessed. Knowing what we know of Tom, no matter how scared he may

be, he would like nothing more than to make such information known to the inhabitants of St. Petersburg and in the largest and most public of venues at that; instead, Tom keeps his silence and by doing so is forced into Huck's shadow world of anonymity and indifference. This is what Tom is aiming for, even though he does not know it yet. After signing the oath, he and Huck grow terrified at the sound of the howl of a stray dog. When the ever superstitious Huck asks what that howl could mean, Tom remarks with prescience apropos of individuation: "Huck, he must mean us both – *we're right together*" (74; emphasis added). Their psychic bond is reflected in the blood they used to sign the oath. The task of writing the oath, of course, falls to the educated Tom. For the better part of the novel Tom keeps the oath, that is, he learns to live with the shadow. In the end, however, Tom is overcome by his feminine compassion and reveals what he knows because, if he does not, an innocent man, Muff Potter, will hang. Tom lays the blame for his betrayal of the oath to the persistence prick of "conscience," for he is haunted by nightmares that are accompanied by the Lady Macbeth-like exclamation (she too, a projected archetype) of, "it's blood, it's blood, that's what it is" (81). In the end, Tom's feminized conscience certainly would seem to have gotten the better of him allowing for the first reconstitution of the persona.

Curiously, even after Tom breaks his oath, Huck refuses to leave Tom's side. But, then, as Tom's personal shadow how could he? Especially now as Tom prepares to embark – unwillingly so – upon a quest that will eventually bring him face to face with the collective shadow. What emerges is a relationship between Tom and Huck that takes on archetypal significance. Theirs will be one not unlike that shared between the primitive Enkidu and the civilized Gilgamesh or even the heathen Queequeg and the

Christian Ishmael. In the sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Tom, himself, puts it best when he inadvertently compares their relationship to that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, the one saturated by romance while the other barely literate. The archetypal echoes are appropriate since Tom's quest will be one that can only be accomplished with the cooperation of his personal positive shadow.

IV. The Anima

From the very start of the novel Tom has been smitten with Becky Thatcher, a girl who just recently moved to St. Petersburg and who will eventually come to embody Tom's anima. Literally translated, anima is one's "soul image," and Becky just happens to possess, among her many allures, hair of "yellow," the same color as Tom's "soul"; moreover, since "the anima may take the form of a . . . cat" (Jacobi 116), the yellow coated Peter and his function as familiar might very well point to Becky as one serving a similar capacity. Simply put, the anima "represents the image of the other sex that we carry in us as individuals and also as members of the species" (114). The anima is yet another archetype, but one of infinite importance in the quest for individuation.

In their very first encounter, Tom, in order to catch Becky's eye, begins showing off "in all sorts of absurd boyish ways" (Twain 25). When Becky begins to make her way into her house, "Tom came up to the fence and leaned on it, grieving, and hoping she would tarry yet a while longer" (25). Tom's physical posture is indicative of his psychic distress, one that is not necessarily the result of his new-found crush on Becky but by having all this while straddling the fence, so to speak, between the civilized world of the mothers and the untamed, sexual one of the fathers. In a last ditch attempt to hold Becky's attention, Tom gives further physical expression to that same internal tightrope

walk when "he picked up a straw and began trying to balance it on his nose . . ." (25). Her response proves equally revealing: when upon the threshold, "she tossed a pansy over the fence a moment before she disappeared" (25). At first glance, the pansy would seem to be a gift symbolic of the feminine principle that any anima would be expected to embody, yet when taking into account Tom's psychic schism, perhaps Becky's gesture is meant to be one of disdain, if not outright mockery. For when Tom receives this gift, he does so only furtively lest any of his friends, with whom he had just finished playing army, witness the victorious General Tom, "The fresh-crowned hero," exchange his laurel wreath for a mere pansy. If they had, Tom and by extension his projected anima, Becky, know full well that he would be regarded as something of a "pansy" himself. So it would appear that Tom's Jungian destiny demands that he not pick up the pansy, but rather toss it to symbolize the anima's rejection of a feminine-fueled persona; in other words, Tom's projected anima is attempting to assist him in taking ownership of his masculinity, which he must before he can ever hope to encounter his "inner woman" and get on with the business of individuation.

As Tom's anima, Becky is endowed with the potential not only to elevate and enlighten but also to derail and destroy. For the anima,

> . . .has the power to lure men away from their work or their homes, like the sirens of old or their more modern counterparts. She appears again and again in myth and literature as goddess and as 'femme fatale', 'The face that launched a thousand ships', 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'; or in fairy-tales as the mermaid, water sprite, or nymph who entices a man

> under the water where she lives so that he must love her for ever or be drowned. (Fordham 54)

Jung, himself, provides a warning of even more dire consequence: "If the ego adopts the standpoint of the anima, adaptation to reality is severely compromised. The subject is fully adapted to the collective unconscious but has no adaptation to reality. In this case too he is de-individualized" (*Basic Writings* 304). By virtue of her continued proximity, Becky has the potential to distort Tom's reality just as much as the mothers of St. Petersburg already have since it is she who will eventually bring him into Jungian communion with the masculine archetype he has been in search of all this while.

One of the functions of the anima is to act as go-between for the personal conscious and the collective unconscious, to serve as a "bridge, or a door" (Storr 415). The anima introduces the ego to other archetypes, but her intercessory efforts can also lead to an opaque, even distorted understanding of those same archetypes by luring the subject into what Jung termed "inflation." Within the course of their very first conversation, Becky begins to lead Tom astray by inflating his all too receptive ego with that archetype Tom has already set his sights upon, namely that of the aggressive, uninhibited male, a kind of anti-type to what Jung labeled the Wise Old Man. When reporting to school late one day, Tom, already thoroughly initiated into the contrasexual mode thanks to Aunt Polly, manages to get himself seated on the girl's side of the room, convincing Mr. Dobbins that this would make for an appropriate punishment. While mired in this feminine surrounding, Tom becomes unusually receptive to its influence, striking up conversation with Becky and inadvertently revealing his "pansy" self-image.

He proceeds to draw her a picture of what can be seen as a house, a traditional symbol of domesticity and, by extension, a symbol of femininity, or put another way, a feminine receptacle; she, in turn, however, demands he draw a man, whereupon a sexually charged dialogue follows in which the Siren song of Becky would seem to fulfill the function of the anima by instilling within Tom the aforesaid inflation:

> The artist *erected a man in the front yard, that resembled a derrick*. He could have stepped *over* the house; but the girl was not hypercritical; she was satisfied with the monster, and whispered:
>
> "It's a beautiful man – now make me coming along." (52; emphasis added)

Becky has successfully lured Tom into identification with the archetype; although still prey to indirection if the desire to step "over" is any indication, Tom as artist is now the monstrous male appearing derrick-like, i.e. fully "equipped," in all his tumescent glory, while she, in turn, is "satisfied." So satisfied, in fact, that later that very day she agrees to marry Tom. Granted, the engagement is broken off almost as soon as it began, but judging from the pattern of behavior that follows, Tom, for his part, might as well be locked in the most unbreakable bonds of Jungian matrimony:

> The consequence is that the anima, in the form of the mother imago, is transferred to the wife; and the man, as soon as he marries, becomes childish, sentimental, despondent, and subservient, or else truculent, tyrannical hypersensitive, always thinking about the prestige of his superior masculinity. (Storr 108-109)

This provides an apt characterization of Tom's conduct with respect to Becky after their "marriage." The only difference is that for Tom it is not an either/or situation; as a work-in-progress, a psychologically developing organism assailed by indecision, Tom will be both "subservient" *and* "truculent." For her part, Becky will act as willing accomplice in keeping him mired in the subjective world of the unconscious.

Tom's "truculent" assertion of his "superior masculinity" can best be seen in his return from the aforementioned sojourn to Jackson Island. At this time Tom finds himself in a condition closely resembling that of his Injun Joe ideal. Having temporarily wrenched himself away from the iron grip of the St. Petersburg matriarchy (and what he thinks to be Becky as well), Tom feels that his budding manhood, although not having reached full flower, has grown to the point where he no longer went "skipping and prancing, but moved with a dignified swagger as became a pirate who felt that the public eye was on him" (122). The most flagrant display of that growth occurs when Tom, along with Joe Harper, "got out their pipes and went serenely puffing around. . ." (123). Apart from the awe-inspiring effect it produces on their classmates, their pipe smoking, fueled as it is with phallic significance, serves as a way in which to unconsciously combat the ubiquitous influence of the mothers, to provide a smokescreen of defense, as it were. Tom would seem to have regarded his stay on Jackson Island along with his "funeral" as an opportunity for rebirth, hoping to put to rest once and for all the old Tom, the one beset by opposing impulses, while putting in its place a new and improved Tom, one confidant in himself, who will never again opt for the path of indirection but will confront matters head-on; in a word, Tom will replace his former feminine persona with one more akin to that of Injun Joe.

For the better part of their time on Jackson Island the boys were content to play pirates; by the end of their stay, however, at the behest of Tom, they decide to break up their routine by playing at Indians. The only possible inspiration from which Tom could draw for imitative purposes would be Injun Joe himself as he is the only Indian he knows, but he also happens to serve as the only model of a man that does not conform to the rule of the mothers; just such behavior accounts for Injun Joe's solitary and tenuous existence, and, which Tom, upon his return, is trying in his own pubescent manner to emulate, so much so, that, in addition to the mothers, he "decided that he could be independent of Becky Thatcher now" (123). What Tom does not realize is that the part at present he is trying to play is only a part, one just as manufactured as the persona because it is one whose inflated nature is the result of archetypal identification, an identification, moreover, not with the Injun Joe ideal to which he seems to aspire but with Becky, the projected anima, who for all her sexual aggression is still at heart irrevocably feminine. As the following episode will reveal, Tom's newly-minted masculinity is nothing more than femininity in disguise.

After doing his level best to make Becky jealous with his masculine antics, she turns around and drives him to distraction by flirting with Alfred Temple, the model boy of St. Petersburg, the very antithesis of Injun Joe, the boy who all-too willingly submits to the mothers' rule. Becky and Tom's forced and (one might say) unnatural, anti-Jungian, separation produces only greater longing within them both. They are reunited only when Tom in apparent chivalry takes the blame for what on the surface appears to be a mere schoolgirl prank on the part of Becky; its sexual nature, however, recalls their earlier schoolroom encounter, where Tom had submitted to Becky's artistic instruction

and, by doing so, revealed the underlying motive force of the anima; this time Becky is the one receiving direction. While the school was vacated for lunch, Becky furtively peered into the pages of Mr. Dobbins' *illustrated* book on anatomy but when Tom unexpectedly intrudes, she nervously closes the book and in the process accidentally tears one of its pages. When the schoolmaster discovers the violated text and tries to discover the perpetrator, Becky's nervous agitation almost gives her away until Tom steps forward to take the blame and the punishment. Chivalry aside, Tom's apparent submission to (maternal) authority is nothing more than yet another, albeit this time an unknowing, attempt to get himself seated on the girl's side of the room. His conduct is more akin to Alfred Temple's than Injun Joe's. Tom in his perpetual state of indecision seems to have once again opted for indirection, this time by renouncing his new-won manhood for the sake of giving outward expression to his "subservient" side, that is, by once again receiving rather than inflicting the pain. At first glance, it would appear that Becky, "in the form of the mother imago" has helped to reconstitute the mother's one-sided persona. But in the light of subsequent events, what she has really accomplished is to force Tom to reveal that "subservient" side of him that like the "truculent" is also symptomatic of anima identification.

Since "Identification with the anima causes a man to become moody and resentful. . ." (Edinger 140), Tom, at this point in the novel, falls into what can only be described as prolonged depression. Not long after he had received "the most merciless flaying that even Mr. Dobbins had ever administered" (134), Tom is let out for summer vacation whereupon the very first action he takes is to enlist in "the new order of Cadets of Temperance"(142). This proves short-lived as his attempts to restore psychic "order"

(that is, to reconstitute the persona) are stymied by the inexorable pull of the anima. This psychic struggle manifests itself in somatic illness as Tom forthwith comes down with the measles: "During two weeks Tom lay a prisoner, dead to the world and its happenings" (143). More to the point, Tom remains captive to the anima and thus cannot partake of everyday reality. Even when Tom is able to get back on his feet, when such an act would seem to portend a return to "order," he finds that

> Every boy he encountered added another ton to his depression; and when, in desperation, he flew for refuge at last to the bosom of Huckleberry Finn and was received with a Scriptual quotation, his heart broke and he crept home and to bed realizing that he alone of all the town was lost, forever and forever. (144)

We are told that a wave of religious revivalism has taken such tenacious hold of St. Petersburg that not even the shadowy Huck is immune to its redemptive influence. But Huckleberry Finn, the town's aimless waif, quoting scripture! It all seems a bit too much to believe. Could it be that Tom has not gotten over his illness entirely and that the incredulous specter of his own shadow-self towing the maternal line is simply the skewed reality of one currently caught in the throes of anima identification? Reality is, indeed, turned on its head when Huck has in effect adopted the perspective of the persona. When the still ailing Tom witnesses the surreal image of "Jim Hollis acting as judge in a juvenile court that was trying a cat for murder" (144), we can be sure of Tom's psychological captivity, since the image of the cat, previously associated with the persona, has also been turned on its head, now claiming for itself symbolic allegiance to the anima since it is clearly the anima that has "murdered" the persona (Jacobi 116). The anima, in other words, has overcome the persona. It comes as no surprise then that Tom

will suffer a relapse where he is forced to spend yet another three weeks in bed, the appropriate setting for identification with an archetype so sexually inclined.

V. The Nekyia

According to the narrator, Tom is finally roused from his depression as a result of the hubbub created by the commencement of Muff Potter's murder trial. However, when looked at within the context of individuation, Tom's emergence from his depressive fog and his subsequent interest in the trial, could be explained away in part as yet another case of identification. Tom recognizes in Muff Potter a fellow captive soul because, like Muff, Tom is standing trial for murder as well, if only symbolically. More importantly, just like Muff, Tom's present straits are due to his close association/identification with a potentially dangerous archetype, the anima's subtle seduction just as insidious as Injun Joe's animal aggression. So, although it may be through only the most vicarious of means, Tom's identification with Muff is brought about because of a slight, psychic stir to vindicate himself to himself for having "murdered" the persona. Slight, only because, when Tom decides to take an active role in the court proceedings, his motivation goes beyond the mere act of displacement. Tom knows Injun Joe and not Muff Potter murdered Doc Robinson and so, even though it may mean his life, Tom agrees to testify but not, it should be stressed, for the sake of serving the cause of justice but to move closer to his desideratum. His reluctance to name Injun Joe while on the witness stand is, therefore, not the result of what the defense attorney refers to as "diffidence" but a reticence born from a childlike superstition that believes that once he gives voice to his desire, it will abandon him. It is one not unlike the superstition he entertained at the graveyard concerning the cat. For Tom intuitively realizes that since Injun Joe's nature is

steadfastly antithetical to the maternal order, inhabiting a world outside its laws, that prison could not contain him; at worst, it would only tame and diminish, if not expunge altogether, Injun Joe's archetypal significance and, by extension, Tom's desire. Sure enough, once Tom finally utters his name, then "Crash," Injun Joe disappears, diving through the nearest courtroom window as if through a looking glass darkly where he henceforward will be nowhere to be found, having vanished from sight of everyone and beyond the reach of even the longest arm of maternal law (150).

Instead of cowering in fear or falling into a funk of Jungian implication, the likes of which he had experienced in the aftermath of identification with the anima, Tom curiously engages in behavior that belongs more to one newly liberated, as if it were he who had escaped. What Tom does not realize is that naming equals ownership. Injun Joe's escape from the mother's justice only means that Tom has found the inner fortitude to activate the masculine aggression that heretofore lay only dormant within him; Injun Joe, in other words, can be said to have escaped maternal justice by entering into Tom's heart of masculine darkness, where, as a result, Tom finds himself immediately elevated in status and heightened in awareness. Already well into the individuation process, Tom is now in the grip of forces far greater than himself and, for that matter, even the mothers. Significantly, after Muff Potter is formally exonerated, Tom is treated as a "glittering hero" (151). It would appear he is now more than just everyone's favorite lovable prepubescent scamp; rather, a mythology begins to surround him, one evocative of that belonging to an Odysseus or an Achilles fully clad in a suit of shining armor, perhaps one even forged by Hephaestus himself. Tom must be so equipped because he will now undertake what will prove to be a quest of heroic proportions.

Before commencing with that quest, it must be stressed that Tom's metaphoric absorption of Injun Joe is one of which he is entirely unconscious. What must equally be underscored is that Tom's sudden leap into mature masculinity is symbolic in the Jungian sense only; on a conscious level he is still just a boy, yearning for what a boy yearns for and fearing what a boy fears. Tom's condition is best summed up by the narrator's cryptic assertion that "Half the time Tom was afraid Injun Joe would never be captured; the other half he was afraid he would be" (151). Tom's ambivalence is the result of having taken the public plunge into manhood. Up until now all his attempts have been puerile, school yard boasts. Now, within the very adult arena of the courtroom, Tom has proven himself a man, pointing the finger at St. Petersburg's most notorious villain, thereby suggesting to the entire town that he "knows" Injun Joe in a way the others do not; there is, in other words, something of the outlaw in Tom too. He is guilty by association (or identification), but for one who longs for such status, it is a guilt to be proud of. This might explain the sudden and renewed presence of Huckleberry Finn.

Communion with the impersonal shadow evidently requires communion with the personal. Interestingly, Huck's name, as opposed to Injun Joe's, is never mentioned during the trial. Just as Tom is about to mention Huck's presence at the graveyard, he is prevented by the verbal intrusions of the defense attorney. Injun Joe and Huck may occupy roughly the same fringe of society but not the same reaches of the psyche. Injun Joe's domain is that of the impersonal or collective and, so fittingly falls within the public domain; Huck's, on the other hand, belongs to the personal, which might explain what at first appears to be the narrator's rather callous observation that Tom "did not care to have Huck's company in public places" (169). Similar to Catherine Earnshaw's declaration

that she is Heathcliff, Huck, in the Jungian sense, is Tom. Therefore, mention of his name, in private or public, would be superfluous if not redundant. But try explaining that to the highly superstitious and fearful boy on the witness stand; for him it still follows that at the mention of his name Huck would invariably follow Injun Joe's lead, disappearing into those same unexplored regions. Much to the relief of the conscious Tom, however, Huck remains anonymous, allowing him to join him in his quest; from here on out, Huck with personal shadow-like loyalty will seldom leave Tom's side.

Fueled by the newly-absorbed Injun Joe archetype, Tom is suddenly overcome by the "raging desire" to dig for "hidden treasure" (153). He is, in other words, now fully and utterly sexually aroused. Crafted by a wily and poetic unconscious, Tom's digging for treasure is nothing more than convenient sublimation for the act of coitus. Each of the possible sites Tom suggests for the discovery of treasure is rife with sexual implication. Enlisting the aid of Huck (and significantly not his "best friend" Joe Harper), Tom recommends three possible treasure-laden areas:

> It's hid in mighty particular places, Huck – sometimes on islands [see Freudian female genitalia], sometimes in rotten chests under the end of a limb of an old tree [see mature phallus], just where the *shadow* falls at midnight, but mostly under the floor in haunted houses. (153; emphasis added)

The last of these presents the most complete picture of Tom's present interior world as well as Jung's, for that matter. Within his autobiography, Jung relates a dream wherein he had entered a house and proceeded to discover, like the basilica of St. Clemente, one

subterranean level after another. Upon proper reflection, he had concluded that the house was a symbol for the unconscious and its descent into its many stories a descent ultimately into the collective unconscious:

> The ground floor stood for the first level of the unconscious. The deeper I went the more alien and the darker the scene became. In the cave, I discovered remains of a primitive culture, that is, the world of primitive man within myself – a world which can scarcely be reached or illuminated by consciousness. (Memories, Dreams 161)

This is roughly the same journey that many a hero before has taken, Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Aeneas, and it is the same that Tom is about to undertake as his course will follow an unremitting downward trajectory.

Nekyia is a Greek term Jung first discovered in the pages of Homer's *Odyssey*, where in the middle of that epic the hero ventures into the underworld. In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung writes:

> *Nekyia* . . . the title of the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, is the sacrifice to the dead for conjuring up the departed from Hades. *Nekyia* is therefore an apt designation for the 'journey to Hades', the descent into the land of the dead . . . Typical examples are the *Divine Comedy*, the classical *Walpurgisnacht* in *Faust*, the apocryphal accounts of Christ's descent into hell, etc. (52)

The purpose of a *Nekyia* is to purge and to renew. After Aeneas emerges from his in Book VI of the *Aeneid*, he is firmly resolute in the cause of his mission, namely to found what will become the Roman Empire. The imperial aims of Tom will not be too different, informed as they are by aggression and sex.

Unlike Aeneas and, for that matter, Christ, Dante et al., Tom, even at the very height of his own Nekyia, will not be cognizant of it nor aware of any purpose it may serve for the greater good; he is compelled by stirrings neither moral nor magnanimous, but by forces merely sexual and aggressive. After Tom and Huck have exhausted themselves digging at those sites where they "spotted the shadder to a dot," they set their sights upon the "ha'nted house," a place where perhaps a more unfamiliar, more impersonal, shadow may reside (Twain 157-158). Indeed, the house in which they settle upon to dig just happens to be the same structure where Injun Joe and his partner have buried their treasure, one that had long ago been filched by the reputed pirate Murrel.

The previous day Tom and Huck had been digging within sight of this house only to have ceased their efforts for the sake of playing Robin Hood. As a folk hero known for his altruistic efforts on the part of the poor while at the same time defying the rule of law, Robin Hood provides the ideal dress rehearsal for the Oedipal overthrow of someone the likes of Injun Joe; however, when the two boys make their way into the house, they soon grow weary of digging and, with a symbolic self-analytical éclat that would do Jung proud, decide to explore the upper recesses of the house, where "they found a closet that promised mystery, but the promise was a fraud – there was nothing in it" (162). Their fruitless endeavor serves to confirm the mythology of their quest, namely that before they can hope to ascend, they must first plumb depths both geological and metaphorical. This

is not to say that their momentary detour was entirely in vain; just at that moment when they are about to descend, they become aware of the presence of an "other." Injun Joe and his accomplice have appeared with a ghostly vengeance, where not long after, they take note of Tom and Huck's pick and shovel; even though the two boys remain frozen in fear, they have nothing to worry about. For, while ascending the stairs, Injun Joe breaks through one of the "ruinous" steps, whereupon he declares that "whoever hove those things in here caught sight of us and took us for ghosts or devils or something" (166). The "things" to which Injun Joe refers are Tom and Huck's digging tools, which act as symbolic vestiges of Tom's new-found phallic mastery since they betoken a direct threat to Injun Joe's "treasure." The fact that Injun Joe is unable to ascend the stairs suggests that he is earth-bound, if not chthonic through and through, while Tom is capable of reaching heights that even he may not be aware of. The entire incident serves as a symbolic echo of Tom's earlier art lesson where, under the tutelage of Becky Thatcher, his anima, he drew a house but was promptly instructed to draw a "man coming along." The question remains, however, which role will Tom assume: domicile or tenant, that is, a part of the furniture of structured, maternal order or a part of the adventurous uncertainty of nomadic masculinity? Put into more sexual terms, will he be one entering or entered into?

Once Tom learns that the treasure belongs to Injun Joe or, to put it another way, learns that the treasure and Injun Joe are one and the same, his search now becomes one of ineluctable self-discovery. After Injun Joe and his partner unearth the treasure (with the ironic aid of Tom and Huck's digging tools), they decide to rebury it because, before they can take the money and run, Joe must exact "revenge," though upon just who at this

juncture is not exactly certain. In the meantime, he instructs his more maternally bound partner to "Go home to your Nance and your kids" (165). The sight chosen for reburial is Injun Joe's "den," which, understandably, his more domesticated companion mistakenly identifies:

> "You mean Number One?"
>
> "No – Number Two – under the cross. The other place is bad – too common." (166)

The numeric monikers are not, when put in Jungian terms, a matter of a persona/shadow split as it is more a case that appropriately recalls Jung's own childhood:

> Then, to my intense confusion, it occurred to me that I was actually two different persons. One of them was a schoolboy who could not grasp algebra and was far from sure of himself; the other was important, a high authority, a man not to be trifled with . . . (Jung Memories, Dreams 33-34)

Jung's schizoid childhood personality could serve just as easily as the apt characterization of Injun Joe, who has taken to donning the disguise of an "old deaf and dumb Spaniard" in order to make his way around St. Petersburg unnoticed (162). The face he shows to the public is one informed by failing sense perception as well as a defunct communicative ability, while the hidden face is one possessed of homicidal intent, one that unquestionably represents "a man not to be trifled with." Jung believed such a dualistic condition to be entirely natural for each individual. Not surprisingly, this seeming state of dissociation was one that remained with Jung his whole lifelong but

presented no cause for concern; in fact, he was convinced it actually betokened a sign of normalcy:

> The play and counterplay between personalities No. 1 and No. 2, which has run through my whole life, has nothing to do with a "split" or dissociation in the ordinary medical sense. On the contrary, it is played out in every individual. (45)

Such a condition may very well be natural, but, according to Jung, most of us spend our lives content to wrestle with pedestrian, algebraic formulae, never realizing personality No. 2 and, as a consequence, never opening ourselves up to numinous experience. Tom will achieve just this but not before sifting through and decoding certain requisite symbols. For instance, his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities are to be seen not only in the two burial sites but in a day/night dichotomy that emerges as a persistent motif once the two boys had "resolved to keep a lookout for that Spaniard when he should come to town spying out for chances to do his revengeful job, and follow him to 'Number Two', wherever that might be" (167).

The day/night, light/dark motif looms large from here on out as it is the darkness of nighttime that acts as a kind of midwife, heralding the onset of Tom's Number 2 personality. Of most note is when Tom, still reeling from "the adventure of the day," spends a restless night dreaming that "Four times he had his hands on that rich treasure and four times it wasted to nothingness" (168). After coming within sight of Injun Joe's treasure, Tom's fitful night sleep can only be seen as a kind of *onanism interruptus,* albeit one of the oneiric variety, particularly when considered in the light of the "wakefulness

[that] brought back the *hard* reality of his misfortune" (168; emphasis added). Upon waking, Tom muses with a Jungian prescience born of one newly returned from archetypal encounter, believing that the previous day's experience occurred somehow in "another world, or in a time long gone by" (168). Adding to its already mythological-like status, Tom concludes that "the great adventure itself must be a dream" (168).

Tom and Huck make it a point to "shadow" Injun Joe only at night where their means of identifying one another still involve a feline code, that is, a feminine communiqué that consists of a simple "meow." Even at night and even this far into the individuation process the mothers, like a sentry moon, stand guard and exert their influence. Once Tom and Huck locate the whereabouts of a number 2 in "this one horse town," they proceed to keep watch over it through the course of several days in what could be considered good maternal fashion. Curiously, their number 2 is a room in a "Temperance Tavern," a "dry" bar, offering further evidence of the mothers' influence. As the traditional bastion of masculinity, that tavern unlucky enough to fall within the boundaries of St. Petersburg, can expect to be thoroughly emasculated in a manner similar to the change the mothers wrought within Tom. The tavern, therefore, can be seen as a metonymic stand-in for Tom. But, like Tom, it may hold secrets of its own as he, himself, begins to suspect. He is convinced that it is "ha'nted" since he "never saw anybody go into it or come out of it except at night" and "had noticed that there was a light in there the night before" (169-170). To unravel the "mystery," Tom will "nip" all of Aunt Polly's keys and at "the first dark . . . go there and try 'em" (170).

The night that Tom decides to penetrate room number 2 "The blackness of darkness reigned" (171); the time would seem rife for the realization of one's No. 2

personality. In addition to keys, Tom is armed with a lantern, one which provides scant illumination, but is reminiscent of yet another of Jung's dreams:

> It was night in some unknown place, and I was making slow and painful headway against a mighty wind. Dense fog was flying along everywhere. I had my hands cupped around a tiny light which threatened to go out at any moment. Everything depended on my keeping this little light alive. Suddenly I had a feeling that something was coming up behind me. I looked back, and saw a gigantic black figure following me. But at the same moment I was conscious, in spite of my terror, that I must keep that little light going through night and wind, regardless of all dangers. (Jung Memories, Dreams 88)

Jung goes on to explain that the figure following him was none other than his own shadow and that the "little light," the faint flicker of consciousness: "Now I knew that No.1 was the bearer of the light, and that No.2 followed him like a shadow" (88). In Tom's case, though, the roles are reversed; Tom is fast on the heels of his shadow, wishing apparently to engulf his light within the encompassing "blackness of darkness."

So, when Tom enters room number 2, he does so through a back door by way of a back alley, still opting for the path of indirection, a sure sign that he longs to circumvent the control of the mothers while wishing to partake of the masculine. Upon entering, he finds that Aunt Polly's keys do not work but that the door, as if in welcome, opens by merely taking hold of the knob. The fact that none of Aunt Polly's keys fit and that Tom must open the door himself, is an indication that Tom is now taking hold of the treasure

that had eluded his grasp within his dream world; so much so, that, unaware of Injun Joe's inebriated presence, he "most stepped onto Injun Joe's hand" (172); however, Tom still lacks the aggression as well as the necessary archetypal escort (Huck significantly sits at the head of the alley, keeping watch) and so leaves "empty handed." His retreat is not a total loss as he remarks that "Why it's ha'nted with whiskey! Maybe all the Temperance Taverns have got a ha'nted room, hey Huck?" (172) Or, perhaps, maybe all good boys have laying within them, already unlocked, their own Injun Joe, one just waiting for the right time to be roused. Tom's personality No. 1 may be without the treasure he had been searching for, but his personality No. 2 is now well within reach as he is clearly growing toward a greater self-awareness. But just as he finds himself on that brink, he beats a hasty retreat, his intentions derailed by the bewitching allure of the anima.

Once Tom hears of Becky Thatcher's return from vacation – the narrative explanation for her diminished importance within Tom's interior world – his No.2 personality as well as all thoughts concerning Injun Joe and the treasure would seem to recede as "Becky took the chief place in the boy's interest" (Twain 174). Tom's renewed interest in Becky, however, is tied to the treasure in ways he cannot imagine. Among other things, she will provide for Tom the aforementioned archetypal escort who will lead him to the treasure. He first persuades Becky into defying her mother's injunction by visiting the Widow Douglas. He then forces her into further transgression by convincing her to accompany him into McDougal's cave, the entrance of which offers, perhaps not anything in the way of self-conscious allusion, but an eerie intertexual echo of a decidedly sexual nature: "The mouth of the cave was up the hillside – an opening

shaped like a letter A. Its massive oaken door stood unbarred" (176). The very first sentence of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* makes mention of a door "heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes" (45). It is so fortified in order to keep contained its latest inmate, Hester Prynne, who has been found guilty of sexuality not in accord with the prevailing norms. As punishment, she is forced to wear a letter A doused in scarlet, emblematic of the untamed passion that led her to such sexually deviant behavior. Ever since "naming" Injun Joe in court and up until his present reunion with Becky, Tom's passion for finding the treasure has known no bounds, even to the point of endangering his own life. Now, like the unlocked room in the Temperance Tavern, the "unbarred" door of the cave beckons with a prurience that proves irresistible. Indeed, once in the cave, Tom, with Becky firmly in hand, will stray from the "main avenue," going beyond the "'known' ground" (Twain 177). As it turns out, such peripatetic deviance is necessary in order to reach that final stage of individuation where one encounters the very face of God: what Jung termed the Self but what Tom knows simply as Injun Joe.

While Tom is busy mooning over Becky, Huck, all the while, has been occupied in the continued surveillance of Injun Joe. Huck discovers the exact object of Injun Joe's earlier yet ambiguous expression of revenge and, by extension, the very nature of Injun Joe, himself. As it turns out, Injun Joe is after the Widow Douglas and not Tom. It was her deceased husband, who acting as justice of the peace, had many times been "rough" on Injun Joe going so far as to publicly humiliate him: "He had me *horsewhipped*! – horsewhipped in front of the jail . . . with the whole town looking on! HORSEWHIPPED!" (179). As a traditional symbol of virility, the horse has undergone

many a psychoanalytic treatment; it is no coincidence that the body exhumed at the graveyard and which resulted in the murder of Doc Robinson at the hands of Injun Joe, was that of Horse Williams. That pertaining to the equine, therefore, provides the appropriate type of flogging for the likes of Injun Joe, one that would attempt to humiliate him and ultimately "break" him. The experience left such a festering wound that Injun Joe would clearly rather wreak his vengeance upon the husband but is compelled to settle for the surviving spouse:

> . . . I would kill *him* if he was here; but not her. When you want to get revenge on a woman you don't kill her – bosh! you go for her looks. You slit her nostrils – you notch her ears like a sow! (179)

He goes on to add that such a grisly mutilation is to be performed while the woman is tied to the bed. So, not only is there the clear suggestion of sex, no matter how sadistic, but, by reducing her to an animal, Injun Joe manages to exact revenge that perfectly reciprocates in kind, bringing her down to the level of animal as her husband had him. Sex and aggression again serve as the sole motivating force behind Injun Joe's actions, although this time they are laid entirely bare (particularly the former), unadorned and unequivocal.

Tom's youth and inexperience prevent him from seeing Injun Joe for who he really is; put in Jungian terms, he is unable to adequately understand himself, to completely plumb his own psychic depths, and, therefore, is patently unequipped to see through to the end the individuation process. Take, for example, the preceding episode involving Injun Joe's desire for revenge. Earlier, when Tom had run away to Jackson

Island, he had persuaded his fellow fugitives, Huck and Joe Harper, to play pirates. In addition to absconding with treasure from passing ships and, of course, burying it in the most obscure and ghost-ridden of sites, pirates must also concern themselves with the disposing of the crew of the plundered ship. After a manner similar to that of Injun Joe, Tom insists that the men are to be killed. Unlike Injun Joe, the women, on the other hand, are not to be killed nor even abused, sexually or otherwise; on the contrary, the pirates are "too noble" and the women "always beautiful" (93). Another example revealing of Tom's lack of Jungian self-awareness is when Tom began his summer vacation. Starting out with the best of intentions, Tom determined to join the ranks of "the new order of Cadets of Temperance"; however, his sole motivation, far from anything sexual or aggressive, seemed to be sartorial only. Fueled by "the hope of a chance to display himself in his red sash," an opportunity offered by the procession of the very public funeral that would surely attend the imminent death of Judge Frazier, Tom finally packed it in when the ailing judge was "pronounced upon the mend – and then convalescent" (142). Tom was left feeling "disgusted" while experiencing even "a sense of injury" (142). Imagine just how crestfallen he must have been when he had heard that that very night, following his resignation, the judge had died. Granted, it could be said that Tom harbors something of a death wish for Judge Frazier, but, unlike Injun Joe's explicit expression of murder, Tom keeps his under unconscious wraps; far from desiring homicidal revenge after Judge Frazier's demise, Tom merely had "resolved that he would never trust a man like that again" (142). By "a man like that" Tom means one who tows the maternal line, one who will act in collusion with the mothers to keep him in feminine bondage; having already absorbed Injun Joe, Tom is impelled to dig deeper, shedding the

maternal influence with each passing page, but in the end, because of his youth, he will prove inadequate to the task, not "man" enough to consume Injun Joe whole.

VI. The Self

The aim of the individuation process is to ultimately come face to face with the "central archetype," otherwise known as the Self"; simply put, it is "the totality of the personality" (Storr 419). Self is the unifying agent of the entire psychic system, one that fulfills "a union of the two psychic systems – consciousness and the unconsciousness – through the midpoint common to both. . ." (Jacobi 127); furthermore, it is one that stitches together the whole of one's existence and, by extension, one's very cosmos itself:

> But the self comprises infinitely more than a mere ego . . . It is as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to one's self (Storr 419).

Because of its all-encompassing nature, Jung's self found its appropriate parallel in God; in fact, in his *Answer to Job* God acts as the ideal protagonist in whom the individuation process is ideally played out. Like Jung, Tom will be given the same Elijah-like opportunity to make sense of Self, but will unconsciously abjure the privilege for reasons due exclusively to age and upbringing.

Once Tom and Becky enter into the byzantine penumbra of McDougal's Cave, they find themselves in an environment that is both familiar and unknown. A survey of the cave's more well-known sites betrays a foreboding sexuality: "The Drawing Room" is reminiscent of Tom's initial art instruction given to him by a Becky clearly motivated by lascivious intent; "The Cathedral" is suggestive of their Jungian matrimony that took

place not long after; while "Aladdin's Palace" provides the ideal honeymoon suite; it is the cave, itself, where the jinn awaits who could very well make their wildest dreams come true (Twain 190). Wherever they turn, they are met by the protuberances of "stalactites and stalagmites" that had been created by the "ceaseless water drip of centuries" (191). It is a phallic milieu replete with seminal fountainhead, a kind of objective correlative of their combined sexual curiosity, one that ultimately drives them farther and farther into the cave. Spurring them onward are the "vast knots of bats" that represent the vampiric hunger of that same curiosity. When the "lights" of Tom and Becky's candles awake the bats, it is a sure signal that Tom and Becky's own sexual longings have been aroused; but Tom, still slave to the mothers, "knew their ways and the danger of this sort of behavior," and so quickly ushers Becky into the nearest corridor where they find themselves on the bank of a "subterranean lake" (191). Variously symbolic of the uterus and/or womb, the lake represents a retreat back into the world of the mothers; however, it provides little solace now that they realize they have wandered into that part of the cave unknown to either of them and, for all they know, anyone else.

The lake, for all its feminine familiarity, must remain, at least for the moment, off-limits, if not entirely alien to Tom and Becky since theirs is a journey intended to unearth the masculine; moreover, its ever-present peril, combined with an attendant imagery of darkness and death, their trek through the cave makes for a journey redolent with the archetypal echoes of the adventure of Theseus and Ariadne. Wending his way through the Dedalian labyrinth (with the help of Ariadne's thread), Theseus aims to slay the Minotaur, that dreadful beast, half human, half bull, the issue of unholy sexual union. His is an adventure fraught with the same Jungian parallels as that of Tom's own:

> Ariadne is an anima figure; her thread signifies a connecting link between the ego (Theseus) and the anima, or feeling life. In the Cretan labyrinth lived a masculine monster, the Minotaur, representing undifferentiated male instinctuality. The myth suggests that one may dare to confront one's unregenerate lust and power urge only when holding on to the guiding thread of human feeling-relatedness, which gives orientation and prevents dismemberment and dissolution in the chaos of instinctive drives. (Edinger 33)

Tom, for all intents and purposes, is compelled to carry out this same quest, but he will not meet the same fate. He will, however, no matter how unwittingly – and with the indispensible aid of Becky – move inevitably to a showdown with his own custom-made Minotaur.

It is Becky, who, for all her tears of nervous trepidation, urges them onward in good anima fashion with the hope of finding their way back even if it means returning to where the bats may be; meanwhile, a desperate Tom falls just short of exclaiming, "All is lost!" (Twain 192). As they haltingly make their way, Becky effectively upbraids Tom for not leaving any "marks," to which Tom responds with a candor more revealing than he knows: "Becky, I was such a fool! Such a fool! I never thought we might want to come back!" (192). Giving clear voice to his unconscious desire, Tom was hoping that he had what it takes to make that final leap into manhood, sure he had seen the last of the world of the mothers and with it his slavish adherence to it. Thus, Tom's effort to return to the world of light is clearly a regressive one, for until he has encountered self he cannot consider himself free of the mothers. In the meantime, Becky begins to lose heart;

Tom, for his part, has clearly not forgotten the lessons of the mothers and, in fact, seems himself to grow more maternal as Becky "buried her face in his bosom" (193). He goes on to provide such soothing reminders of "home, and the friends there, and the comfortable beds and, above all, the light" (193). One further reminder is a piece of their "wedding cake" that Tom had managed to save from earlier in the day. It is small comfort to Becky, who has all but given herself up to hopelessness. Just when all seems lost, however, "an idea struck him," one, however, that would seem to reverse the lessons learned from the Theseus/Ariadne myth.

Prefigured by a "ghostly laughter" that later is discovered to belong to none other than Injun Joe (Twain 192-94), Tom's final confrontation with the Minotaur would seem anticlimactic or, at the very least, decidedly irresolute. To begin with, the "idea" that would bring salvation and that "struck him" with what would seem all the violence of the staff of King Laius involves not only the long-awaited masculine archetype but the well-worn familiar feminine as well. In his plan to escape the cave, Tom first decides to take "some side passages," reminiscent of the motif of indirection established from the very start, one designed to highlight his rebellion against the mothers and his insistence on straying from the straight and narrow. But, this time there's a twist; like Theseus, Tom "took a kite line from his pocket, tied it to a projection," but, unlike his archetypal forebear, he goes not alone as "he and Becky started, Tom in the lead, unwinding the line as he groped along" (196). As they blindly venture forth,

> . . . not twenty yards away, a human hand, holding a candle, appeared from behind a rock! Tom lifted up a glorious shout, and instantly that hand was followed by the body it belonged to – Injun Joe's! Tom was

> paralyzed; he could not move. He was vastly gratified the next moment, to see the "Spaniard" take to his heels and get himself out of sight. (197)

Like in his dream, Tom once again cannot grasp the desired masculine ethos; or to put it in even more metaphorical terms, he cannot grab hold of the phallic vessel and, as a result, can only see "undifferentiated male instinctuality" in its Number 1 incarnation, namely Injun Joe as the "Spaniard." Just why Injun Joe does not press his momentary advantage is explained by Tom as he argues that "the echoes must have disguised the voice," while he concludes with questionable confidence, "Without a doubt, that was it, he reasoned" (197). The "voice" is uttered in "glorious" ejaculation as if Tom were one of an angelic choir, speaking a language of such loftiness that it proves unintelligible to an archetype of the kind of earthy masculinity of Injun Joe's; so the hand and the body it belongs to quietly recede, forever abandoning Tom's Jungian orbit for the sake of searching for one who shares a common tongue; moreover, Tom's concluding application of "reason" is no reason at all; it is, rather, the type of cognition indicative of the mothers' education, a sure sign that his thinking, for all its attempts to the contrary, is still dictated by a very one-sided feminine ethos, which explains why he is unable to face down Self: he is, in a word, psychically stunted.

One wonders if Tom's final encounter with Injun Joe might not have been brought to a slightly different conclusion had Huck, and not Becky, accompanied Tom. Huck was otherwise occupied; more at home dealing with masculine aggression rather than masculine sexuality, he was busy preventing Injun Joe, just prior to the outlaw's escape into the cave, from carrying out his nefarious designs of disfigurement upon the Widow Douglas. Much to his disappointment, Huck, for all his attempts at trying to

maintain good, shadow-like anonymity, is eventually revealed to be the Widow's savior. In gratitude, she adopts the motherless waif; however, Huck, as shadow, is defined not simply by an obdurate anonymity but by an ignorance of the relative pleasures of maternity. To remain true to his shadow self, he cannot agree to the Widow's terms, no matter how magnanimous and inviting they may be. In the end, it comes as no surprise that Huck, unlike Tom who persistently returns to the world of the mothers, will run away from the Widow and all the fussy, maternal order she represents. In the meantime, Huck, after Tom had successfully escaped McDougal's cave, agrees to return with Tom to those same labyrinthine corridors in the hopes of retrieving the pirated treasure.

It should be noted that Tom's return to McDougal's cave with Huck now in tow, occurs only *after* he learns that Judge Thatcher, acting as the eyes of Argus for the maternal world, has effectively rid St. Petersburg of the threat of Injun Joe once and for all: "Because I had its big door sheathed with boiler iron two weeks ago, and tripled-locked – and I've got the keys" (Twain 200). As keeper of those keys, he could well be considered conforming to the town's namesake, while triple locking the door further confirms his Trinitarian allegiance. In the end, Judge Thatcher's divine stewardship proves final and complete: "When the cave door was unlocked, a sorrowful sight presented itself in the dim twilight of the place. Injun Joe lay stretched upon the ground dead," while, significantly, the blade of his "bowie knife lay close by, its blade broken in two" (201). The phallic threat to the stability of the mother's rule would seem to have been successfully weathered. Yet, it also means that Tom's chance at encountering Self, that is, achieving individuation, is all but lost, unless, of course, it possible to find an adequate substitute.

Interestingly, when Huck and Tom reach their appointed destination, they find not only "money" but also "guns and things" (Twain 208). Possessing not only monetary value but now an element of sex and aggression as embodied by the firearms, the treasure offers Tom a second chance to realize Self, although now through external symbols only; however, he steadfastly declines the opportunity, and in so doing cuts himself off from any possibility of ever achieving Jungian wholeness. Since the treasure's guns are an obvious symbol for phallic aggression, Tom's unwillingness to take possession of them amounts to a flat-out rejection of not only that matured masculinity so long sought after but the opportunity as well to absorb Injun Joe in such a way as to take personal responsibility for and conscious ownership of his archetypal power. Instead, he convinces Huck, who is initially desirous of walking away with it all, that the guns are better left alone, that they should stay where they are; in the process he reveals a thorough knowingness of their sexual and aggressive tenor:

> No, Huck – leave them there. They're just the tricks to have when we go to robbing. We'll keep them there all the time, and we'll hold our orgies there, too. It's an awful snug place for orgies." (208)

Tom goes on to confess his ignorance of the meaning of the word "orgies," but even before reaching the cave, he had already come across, if not to Huck, at least to the reader, as sexually in-the-know, the result evidently of his exploratory go-around in the cave; for instance, in locating the secret spot in which to enter, Tom, having clearly learned from the earlier admonishment he received at the hands of a sexually instructive anima, proudly points out, like a dog (and not a cat) staking his territory, "one of my

marks" (Twain 205). The very act of reentering the cave now seems so simple it can be cast in the most thinly of veiled sexual terms: "Now, Huck, where we're a-standing you could touch that hole I got out of with a fishing pole" (205). Tom would seem to be as one reborn, newly initiated into a world of experience, a world it would seem informed by the casual tropological expression of sexual and aggressive imagery. So, why does this newly burnished Tom refuse to take hold of "the guns and things," those items which would seem to rightly belong to him, that which would, at least symbolically, bring him to the realization of Self and to psychic wholeness?

The simple answer is that Tom has decided to remain divided; the meaning of No. 2 no longer points to latent and/or manifest personalities but to psychic schism. The treasure being buried at "No. 2 under the cross" activates within Tom a whole complex web of associations that eventually will lead him back to the world of the mothers and the reconstitution of the persona. It is the same backsliding he began with Becky when first learning they were lost in the cave. At that time, Tom was growing increasingly more maternal, a contrasexual claim now irrefutable: referring to that same secret cave entrance, Tom boasts to Huck that

> . . . it's the snuggest hole in this country. You just keep mum about it. All along I've been wanting to be a robber, but *I knew I'd got to have a thing like this*, and where to run across it was the bother. We've got it now, and we'll keep it quiet, only we'll let Joe Harper and Ben Rogers in – because of course there's got to be a Gang, or else there wouldn't be any style about it. (Twain 205; emphasis added)

Tom's desire to start up a gang is in keeping with the feminine, the more social side of himself, which he exclusively associates with the female. Furthermore, the even stronger desire to "have a thing like this" suggests through syntactical ambiguity an anatomical change in Tom to go along with the psychical one, namely the addition of "the snuggest hole in this country." This comes as no surprise, since, according to Jung,

> When the libido leaves the bright upper world, whether from choice, or from inertia, or from fate, it sinks back into its own depths, into the source from which it originally flowed, and returns to the point of cleavage, the navel, where it first entered the body. This point of cleavage is called the mother, because from her the current of life reached us. (Jung Aspects 12)

The feminization of Tom provides the clearest explanation as to why he opts not to take the treasure's guns since they would be inimical to Tom's Protean female anatomy.

The cross would seem the ideal capstone to this feminization process since it is upon that which Christ had hanged, a figure of femininity himself, possessed as he is by distinctly feminine sensibilities like mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. Indeed, ever since entering the cave, Tom has been likened, albeit obliquely, to Christ. To begin with, Tom and Becky are lost in the cave for three days, an adventure evocative of the events of Christ's death and resurrection, specifically the more apocryphal Harrowing of Hell, Jesus' descent into the moribund, involving chthonic surroundings like those of McDougal's cave. More importantly, however, Tom acts the savior for not only Becky but in a way for the whole of St. Petersburg. Once the "good news" of Tom and Becky's deliverance had made the rounds, St. Petersburg would seem to have achieved some

species of spiritual enlightenment if the narrator's loaded locution is any indication: "The village was illuminated" (Twain 198). Upon seeing for himself the corpse of Injun Joe, Tom is moved to pity; not long after, like thoroughly indoctrinated disciples, "a committee of sappy women," in apparent adherence to the Gospel of Tom, petition the governor to pardon Injun Joe, to forgive, in other words, those who have trespassed against them (203).

Tom's ego inflation with the Christ-like archetype is brought about by only the most incidental of altruistic impulses. Jung puts it best when describing how the cross and, by extension, Christ, himself, are not immune to casting their own shadows:

> The cross, or whatever other heavy burden the hero carries, is *himself*, or rather *the* self, his wholeness, which is both God and animal – not merely the empirical man, but the totality of his being, which is rooted in his animal nature and reaches out beyond the merely human towards the divine. His wholeness implies a tremendous tension of opposites paradoxically at one with themselves, as in the cross, their most perfect symbol. (23 Jung Aspects)

The quaternity of the cross is reflected in the fourfold frame of Tom's earlier dream: "Four times he had his hands on that rich treasure" (168). Tom's failure to permanently grasp his oneiric treasure, that is, the realization of Self, foreshadows his refusal to grab hold of the guns. Philosophically considered, he has effectively disowned the "animal" side of himself. Subscribing to the either/or mentality of traditional religion, Tom will remain divided, always opting for the angelic while attracted to but eschewing the

animalistic. So, no matter how intent, consciously or otherwise, Tom may be on absorbing the Injun Joe archetype, he will invariably be drawn to identification with one who is as far from Injun Joe as possible, namely that which Jung termed the Puer Aeternus or divine child; in other words, the Christ-like archetype. But, as Jung has argued, that is only half the battle, like taking only money and not the guns that go with it.

Although utterly crucial to his progress in the individuation process, this point is no is no different than any other in Tom's development: he is not thinking in Jungian terms, not even on the most unconscious of levels. His thinking, ironically, is more like that of an animal, motivated solely by self-preservation; his Christ-like identification is utilitarian in nature only. As one who always attracted the company of women, Jesus provides the perfect solution to Tom's present existential dilemma; his longing for the comfort of the mothers is the expected reflex of the child caught in the grip of primal fear. For all his recent sexually suggestive talk, Tom in the presence of No. 2 under the cross wilts, paralyzed like he was in the presence of Injun Joe. He is faced now with an equally "life-threatening" fear, but one more in line with the Freudian than the Jungian.

Descending into the cave, standing in front of the cross, for Tom proves a Proustian moment, as if he has gone back to an earlier time. Specifically, what is triggered in Tom at the sight of that "mystic sign" (Twain 206) is that early childhood dilemma played out in Freud's oedipal drama, one possessing severe archetypal implications. As we have already seen, within the framework of the Oedipus complex, the son eventually identifies with the father, wanting to grow up to be just like dad; to be like dad means, above all else, being granted the right to enjoy the pleasures of the

mother with seeming impunity. This is the Tom known throughout the better part of the novel, the one aspiring to the status of sexual hegemon; however, before identification can occur, division is what primarily informs the father/son relationship. The son initially desires the mother to the exclusion of everyone else, including dad, which in the child's mind is tantamount to a declaration of war against the father. The father, being bigger and stronger, represents an insurmountable obstacle in the attempt to possess mother; more terrifying yet, he is the undefeatable foe because his strength endows him with the ability to dismember the boy at will. Again, as we have already learned, this is what Freud termed the castration complex, and it best approximates Tom's feelings when faced with the prospect of taking away the treasure's guns; doing so would amount to waging open war on the father in "the bright upper world," while the cross is a reminder of the blood-letting seemingly required by all fathers of their sons.

This is the true meaning of No. 2 under the cross: before Tom can come into possession of the highly sought-after sexual and aggressive power of an Injun Joe, he must *first* serve as his victim, that is, he must first mount his Golgotha before he can ever hope to come into his kingdom, as it were. To put it in more pedestrian terms, he must first pay his dues. This is, in fact, what the fatherless Tom has been in search of all the while: submitting to the demands of a sadistic super ego (to further borrow from Freudian parlance), one made even more intense as a result of single-parent status (since its formation was left solely to the child's monstrous imagination), he first and foremost longs for the chiding hand of the father, the guiding one taking a backseat similar to the way in which the secondary process stands in relation to the primary. Judith Fetterley suggests that Tom actually yearns for punishment since he sees it as an expression of

Aunt Polly's love (281). An expression of love, indeed, but one wherein Aunt Polly merely serves as a paltry stand-in for the missing father whose traditional job it is to scold. This goes a long way in explaining Tom's wayward behavior. His regular flights from maternal bondage are motivated by not just the search for an Injun Joe but also with the hope that upon his return he will incur the wrath of an Injun Joe, to get what is coming to him for having strayed in the first place, to *feel* the presence of a father; however, time and again Tom is left unsatisfied. More often than not, Aunt Polly fails to follow through with the intended punishment and, when she does, it is neither a complete one nor one administered with a severity commensurate with the crime. This is what continues to fuel Tom's misbehavior. Until he receives the punishment/love he feels he deserves, he will continue to intermittently defy the rule of the mothers; however, when actually faced with its fruition while standing in the cave under the cross, Tom takes sanctuary in their collective bosom while content to leave the untamed animal power of Injun Joe buried within a remote impersonal unconscious. In the end the primal fear engendered by the cross leads Tom to choose the mothers' order and submission over the fathers' sex and aggression.

VII. Postscript

Tom's reentry into the world of light and his resumption of loyalty to the mothers, is nowhere better illustrated than in the novel's closing episode. Having already been moved into the home of the Widow Douglas, Huck is determined to free himself from "the bars and shackles of civilization [that] shut him in and bound him hand and foot" (Twain 215). Tom easily dissuades him from this course of action by simply promising him that, if he stays, he can join Tom's gang of robbers. According to Tom, one must be

"respectable" to be a robber, even if that means living under "smothery" conditions, to which Huck responds,

> **"**Can't let me in, Tom? Didn't you let me go for a pirate?"
>
> "Yes, but that's different. A robber is more high-toned than what a pirate is – as a general thing. In most countries they're awful high up in the nobility – dukes and such." (217)

Having evidently given up playing pirates for good, Tom has, in effect, given up the desire for Injun Joe, but there is more to it than that; in making Huck fall in line with the prevailing code of maternal conduct, in going so far as to coerce him into cohabitating with the upper crust of the matriarchy no less, is simply to transform him into another Tom; in other words, Tom is hoping in a way to travel back to a time prior to the realization of a personal shadow, or, for that matter, to a time apriori to the existence of even the persona, itself, his story "being strictly a history of a boy" (Twain 218).

By replacing the pirate with a model more acceptable to the mothers, Tom allies himself with forces, if not strong enough to turn back time, will prove more than adequate to expunge the memory of Injun Joe altogether. Such a force comes in the guise of the robber. According to Tom, "They ain't anybody as polite as robbers" (Twain 205); furthermore, he believes that, unlike pirates, whatever violence the robber may display is one of utmost discrimination. There is an element of the romantic about the robber, at least when it comes to holding women for ransom:

> Only you don't kill the women. You shut up the women, but you don't kill them. They're always beautiful and rich, and awfully scared . . . Well, the women get to loving you, and after they've been in the cave a week or

> two weeks they stop crying and after that you couldn't get them to leave. If you drove them out, they'd turn right around and come back. (205)

True, the situation Tom describes is one inspired partially by his experience in the cave with Becky, but is, more importantly, derived in large part from his reading of pulp fiction. According to such literature, if Tom's hermeneutic abilities are to be trusted, the profile of the robber is one defined in the main by the twin treasures of money and women. So conceived, the model "robber" of St. Petersburg, far from being Tom, the predaceous neophyte, could only be someone more thoroughly schooled in dealing with both money matters and the affections of women, someone as seasoned as, say, Judge Thatcher. "Requested" by Aunt Polly, herself, Judge Thatcher, true to his role as St. Petersburg's keeper of the keys, assumes the position of executor of Tom's new-found wealth. In taking over the responsibility of Tom's money, Judge Thatcher has, in collusion with Aunt Polly, *taken* Tom's money, potentially robbing him of all he owns. This extends to even that which does not even partake of the pecuniary. As instrument of the mothers' will, Judge Thatcher oversees *all* of Tom's assets. While doing so, he unwittingly but effectively robs Tom not of his money but of his chance of ever becoming a man like Injun Joe; for seeing in Tom something of an heir apparent, Judge Thatcher puts Tom within his clutches, a grasp comparable to that which he had struggled against earlier with Aunt Polly. The Judge's hidden agenda is revealed by way of a comparison of Tom to an exalted figure that would tempt Tom into archetypal inflation while underscoring the seemingly unbreakable bonds of the matriarchy that Tom finds himself in the grip of once again.

When Judge Thatcher first learns of Tom's earlier gallantry, namely his willingness to take the blame for Becky's schoolroom transgression and the subsequent submission to Mister Dobbins' relentless flogging, "the Judge said with a fine outburst that it was a noble, a generous, a magnanimous lie – a lie that was worthy to hold up its head and march down through history breast to breast with George Washington's lauded Truth about the hatchet!" In addition to the extremely subtle introduction to castration, "Judge Thatcher," in apparent imitation of Washington's resume, "hoped to see Tom a great lawyer or a great soldier some day. He said he meant to look to it" (Twain 215). Even though he has been given the very patriarchal moniker of "father of our country," George Washington, having sired a country founded on certain principles that represent the prevailing order, must assume in his own way the same role of guardian of that present "order" as does Judge Thatcher his. Under Judge Thatcher's tutelage, Tom seems destined to one day fill his shoes, a fate made all the more enticing by way of comparison with Washington; in order to do so, however, it will require a complete reconstitution of the persona, a return to where it had all began.

In the same manner in which *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* starts at the end by providing a summary of the conclusion of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the close of this novel finds Tom in the very same condition he was in at the very beginning. Before meeting Becky, when Tom was defined solely by way of the persona, he had played army with a group of friends who would later comprise the members of the gang of robbers he plans to form at the end of the novel; during the course of their play, the whole of what seems the entire individuation process is effectively adumbrated:

> Tom skirted the block and came round into a muddy alley that led by the back of his aunt's cow stable. He presently got safely beyond the reach of capture and punishment, and hastened toward the public square of the village, where two "military" companies of boys had met for conflict, according to previous appointment. Tom was General of one of these armies, Joe Harper (a bosom friend) General of the other. (Twain 24)

This episode contains nearly every aspect of Tom's ultimately failed attempt at individuation. His evasive maneuvers take him "into a muddy alley," the predictable course for one prone to indirection. He winds up in "his *aunt's* cow stable," invariably returning to an environment redolent with femininity; not only is it occupied with representatives of the fairer sex, but, as the property of Aunt Polly, they are also impressed into her service, compelled to carry out her bidding like the way in which the mothers of St. Petersburg seem to be of one accord with Aunt Polly. Be that as it may, it is an environment that offers Tom sanctuary, helping him to elude the "capture and punishment" of an "other," or, put another way, a number two, another sex, one possessed of considerable patriarchal power. Afterward, by heading to the "public square," it could only mean that he now returns "squarely" to the face reserved exclusively for the public, namely the persona. Ultimately, Tom, the General (Washington?) emerges victorious from this simulated "conflict," but it amounts to a Pyrrhic victory as he left to "turn[ed] homeward alone" (24). Home can only mean the world of the mothers, while, in making the trek in seclusion, suggests that he is persona only, a manufactured personality, an apparent empty vessel, one denied the conscious company of the likes of the shadow, the anima, other assorted archetypes, and, above all,

the self, the sum total of all archetypes. As such, Tom, although he has survived to play another day, still remains impelled by primal desire as he stands bereft of anything in the way of a father figure, be it one of sexual menace or even punitive threat.

CHAPTER 4:

LITTLE WOMEN: A LACANIAN READING

I. Introduction

Although considered by some a "lesser" writer than her contemporaries, Louisa May Alcott did more than just hold her own against those titans of America's nineteenth century literati. Her achievement is made even more remarkable when one considers that membership into that exclusive club would seem to preclude any trace of estrogen as evidenced by the following canonical roster: Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman et.al. Indeed, Alcott far outstripped them all in sales, if not, as a few have argued, in sentiment as well. General consensus, however, places Alcott among the second tier, a pleasant writer of more than middling capability, but one just not ready to play with the big boys. Ironically, the loudest and most forceful voice leading the anti-Alcott choir belongs to that of Alcott herself. *Little Women* is, of course, the one work for which she will best be remembered, but it is one for which she had little regard. *Little Women* belongs to that class of literature that Jo March, Alcott's novelistic alter ego, would classify as "rubbish," the kind of book one writes "because it sells, and ordinary people like it" (275). Alcott, herself, would be slightly less scathing in her assessment, but only slightly so, derogating it as mere "moral pap" (qtd. in Reynolds 408). Alcott's critique suggests that she regarded *Little Women* as simply hollow commentary, a work without any real substance. Jo concurs, musing that "some overpraise, and nearly insist that I had a deep theory to expound, when I only wrote it for the pleasure and the money" (Alcott 256). Alcott may very well have used Jo as her mouthpiece, but this does not mean that every word of Jo's can be considered a direct echo and/or validation of Alcott's thoughts and feelings. But even if the documentary evidence existed to support conclusively such a singular conflation of creator and

creation, the reader must remain wary. Since when have authors been known to be the best or even the most qualified at discerning their own meaning, much less at assessing their works' own merit? They are artists not critics, and as such stand just much too close to their subject matter to ever hope to render an objective assessment. As will be argued, *Little Women*, despite the author's protests to the contrary, boasts a thematic and rhetorical gravitas comparable to any of the work from those canonized writers already mentioned.

Although originally intended to only keep the family finances solvent and so not regarded very highly by its author, *Little Women*, when closely examined, emerges as a deceptively complex case study. With its four principal characters, it is a multi-part bildungsroman, a narrative sleight of hand highlighted and understood by way of recourse to and application of the psychology of Jacques Lacan. Beginning in the 1950s, Lacan spearheaded a movement he had personally christened the "Return to Freud." On the surface, it marked an attempt at resurrecting the principles of Freudian psychology, but in reality such intellectual excavations in the name of Freud proved to be just that – nominal ones by and large. Lacan holds fast to the nomenclature and the conceptual frameworks of Freudian psychoanalysis but in the end serves up a radical rereading of some of Freud's most foundational principles. In fact, Lacan intended

> . . . not a new attempt to understand the "conscious personality" (the "ego") and interpret its behavior in the light of an understanding of the workings of the unconscious (which many would take to be the whole point of Freudianism), but rather a new emphasis on the unconscious itself as "the nucleus of our being" . . . (Barry 109)

In other words, he took an entirely new psychological tack, one that as this passage claims, differs markedly from Freud on many points, namely in the supplanting of the centrality of the ego with that of the unconscious. One ego-related aspect in particular pits Freud and Lacan in thorny opposition: unlike Freud,

> Lacan does not posit an a priori self or ego, his conception of the origin of the subject does not accord with the ordinary ways we think about causes and effects. If the ego is not present from birth, how does it come to exist? (Mellard 108)

Lacan believed that subjectivity only started to take shape after roughly the first six months of life in what he famously referred to as the Mirror Stage, a formative moment marked by image recognition whereby "An incipient ego takes on its first form through mental identifications" (Wright 173). The implications of such a Freudian sea change, at first, seem merely doctrinaire, but, in the end, they will prove considerable, representing as they do a major, but modest, paradigm shift. It is a shift, moreover, that Alcott adumbrates within the seemingly conservative pages of *Little Women* since it is one that will determine the fate of all her major characters.

At its narrative heart, *Little Women* spotlights Jo March whose central conflict involves coming to terms with who she is as opposed to the image that her contemporary society demands she conform to. Those who form her immediate circle and thereby exert the greatest influence are her three sisters. Each sister will experience her own coming-of-age and emerge, more or less – and well before Jo, I might add – wholly intact or, more to the point, thoroughly mired in her own chosen mode of Lacanian existence. Their respective subjectivities can be seen as aligned with these modes, what Lacan referred to as the three orders of mental functioning: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Each order, as embodied by each sister, will in its own

turn attempt to impress Jo into its unique service thereby effectively providing Jo three go-rounds of the Mirror Stage. As the eldest and the first to be married, Meg is quickly forced into learning the language of the patriarchy, and thus serves as steadfast beacon for the Symbolic, an order of a distinctly linguistic nature. Amy, on the other hand, determined to lead the life of the visual artist, one whose métier is the specular image, stands firmly on the side of the Imaginary, where, as one would expect, images rule the day. For the better part of the narrative neither of these two will be able to gain the upper hand over Jo as she proves herself to be all-too human, behaving in a manner that Lacan believes we all do, that is, continually vacillating between these two orders. This is not to say that Jo never glimpses the third and most elusive order, the Real. Jo's frail, ill-fated sister Beth hovers like a ghost throughout the entire narrative, that is, until her untimely demise from scarlet fever when she enters into what appears to be her proper element. Up until her tragic end, Beth is more of a presence than a personality, notwithstanding the author's attempts at imbuing her character with character. She is, in other words, the very embodiment of Lacan's Real, profoundly ineffable and thus nearly indescribable. It is worth noting, however, that of all the sisters Beth is the one closest to Jo but will ironically be the one incapable of ever bringing her into her world, her order. In the end, Jo will remain as she always has, caught between the first two orders while pining for the third.

Within the novel's very first sentence, the Lacanian conflict that will bedevil Jo throughout is presented to us in miniature. It is Christmas time and the sisters are gathered around the hearth, longing for their father who is off fighting for the Union cause and whose return is not expected anytime soon. Jo is the first to speak: "'Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents', grumbled Jo lying on the rug" (Alcott 3). Jo is more correct than she knows, for when put into Lacanian terms with its insistence on paternal authority, Jo's Christmas

serves the metonymic function of standing in for Santa Claus, who, himself, stands for the magnanimity of paternity, a kind of substitute father, one whose gift-giving propensity may be read as the initiation into the Symbolic order. How? If the Symbolic is always heralded by what Lacan refers to as the nom du pere, the Name of the Father, or the act of naming itself furnished by the father, then entry into the Symbolic marks one's entry into language; it is what Lacan terms "the *gift* of speech" (Tambling 101). So it would seem Jo's writerly intuition is correct, the presents, and not the father, is all that is required; in other words, even though the father in the guise of Santa may be the bearer of presents, it is the presents alone, that is, language, as the gift itself, that makes possible Christmas, not to mention Jo's eventual vocation.

Be that as it may, one can never be sure of one's footing when dealing with Lacan. By employing the kind of linguistic legerdemain for which Lacan's writing is notorious, the opening sentence offers the reader an alternative reading, one that can easily cast the whole of Jo's dilemma in nearly the opposite light. While referring again to the novel's opening sentence and in keeping with Lacan's fondness for wordplay, the reader might imagine a hearing-impaired narrator who, because of Jo's "grumbling," is unable to record her words with any kind of exactitude. So, instead of "presents," Jo might very well have meant "presence." And, if so, then the presence of whom or what? As she had just made explicit mention of Christmas, it is safe to assume that she is in effect ruing the lack of presence from none other than Santa Claus, himself. And, as already indicated, Santa Claus, acting as the magnanimous arm of the ruling patriarchy, allows the reader to further assume that what Jo really pines for is precisely that which her sisters so naturally desire, a paternal presence, one informed by yuletide benevolence, one the reader will eventually come to know as Jo's own father. Until that time, however, Christmas for the March sisters offers only the continued deference of that present of presence.

The reader need only to get through a chapter or two to know that such a state of deferred satisfaction would prove impossible for the irrepressible Jo. So, instead of the previously postulated absence (of father) that "presents" would imply, her true desire, if not demand, is now for the *presence* of the father? With so much potential double meaning abound, it is to be expected that the reader remain skeptical, hesitant to commit to either possibility. In fact, by now it is not unreasonable to wonder if Jo even shares in her sisters' common desire, be it ruing his absence *or* pining for his presence. The reader must not overlook the fact that the narrator insists on adding one small detail that at first seems hardly worth noting, namely that Jo had uttered her words while "lying" on the rug. Again, in channeling the polysemous spirit of Lacan, might the reader now interpret the whole of Jo's words as one deliberate falsehood; like the narrator of *Moby Dick* whose opening salvo declares a name that may or may not be his own, must the reader of *Little Women*, as a result of the equivocation of one opening line, now question the veracity of Jo's and, by extension, the narrator's every word?

At the very least, the reader of *Little Women*, as illustrated through the foregoing analysis, must remain ever alert for the possibility that what she sees may not be what she gets, or simply that one thing may also be another. If anything, she can be sure that, while immersed in Alcott's narrative, she will inhabit an ever-shifting, destabilizing universe courtesy of Lacan. So uncertain that as the story gradually wends its way in and out of the lives of the other three sisters, even the Lacanian reader will find that Jo's dilemma is not a matter of the simple vacillation between the Symbolic and the Imaginary in which, according to Lacan, everyone indulges from time to time. For most functioning adults, the return to the more ancient order of the Imaginary is just that: an act of regression plain and simple, a temporary reprieve from the Symbolic. For Jo, on the other hand, her interactions with her sisters, no matter what order they

may represent, offers up, each in their own turn, a variation on Lacan's conception of Freud's Oedipus complex, which forces Jo to adopt a more conciliatory stance, one that strives for a more middle ground approach, that is, a more Van Rough-like perspective.

II. The Lacanian Oedipus Complex

As opposed to Freud's, Lacan's Oedipal scenario does not require the actual, physical presence of the father in order to begin unfolding the frightful drama nor even to provide a castrating threat. The *idea* of the father, or more to the point, the *idea* of the fatherly phallus serves as the motive force behind Lacan's Oedipus complex. According to Lacan: "We know today that an Oedipus complex can be constituted perfectly well even if the father is not there, while originally it was the excessive presence of the father which was held responsible for all dramas" (qtd. in Rose 131). It is important to note that the phallus is not to be mistaken with the actual male member; in keeping with the linguistic vein, Lacan envisions the whole of the Oedipal drama, the phallus foremost among its most elusive rhetorical ingredients. Its relation to the penis is merely incidental, while its conceptual nature is thoroughly semiotic: "Lacan acknowledges that the phallus is a signifier, not an organ; to confuse them is to conflate a Real function with a Symbolic one" (Wright 322). In its linguistic guise, the phallus is remarkably manifold in function, acting as "the one single indivisible signifier that anchors the chain of signification"; indeed, "it inaugurates the process of signification itself" (Homer 54). For our purposes we need only know that the Lacanian phallus is a signifier of near schizophrenic dimension, involving as it does dual and dueling signification. Like the contronym, which is defined by two antithetical meanings separately and contextually determined, Lacan's phallus signifies its contradictory signifieds depending upon one's psychic relation to it:

> The phallus is thus both the sign of sexual difference and the signifier of the object of the other's desire. The penis takes on the function of the phallus only because that organ can signify (in fact, in order to produce) the exclusion of women. In this process, the penis is displaced from being a real organ, to becoming an imaginary (detachable, present or absent) object, possessed by some, desired by others. (Wright 322)

Herein lies Jo's fundamental conflict: she's not sure whether she wishes to possess or desire, or, to put it another way, to have or to be. As a woman, her Lacanian fate should all but be sealed:

> Women, the mother in particular, must therefore be construed as not having, that is, as lacking the phallus in order for men to be regarded as having it. Women desire the penis as castrated subjects; men can offer them the sexual organ, object of desire, as a means of secondary access to phallic status. (Grosz 139)

Jo refuses to accept only secondary access because she refuses to accept her predestined gender role. This is not to say that she disavows her gender; on the contrary, by novel's end she will confess to a long-held desire for motherhood. What she wants is simply the freedom to choose, to have it both ways. The aforementioned narratological dilemma found within the novel's opening lines indicates of this same conflict, and one that heralds an Oedipus complex, the nature of which depends upon the subject's shifting allegiances between orders of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. This seesaw motivation first introduced us to Jo in the novel's opening pages and will inform her every move from here on out.

Within the first chapter, the March sisters begin planning the Christmas play they will perform for their neighborhood friends. Selecting which play to perform serves as yet another

opportunity for the playing out of Jo's Lacanian dilemma. She first proposes a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* but quickly dismisses the idea, noting their lack of a trapdoor needed for the spectral appearance of Banquo. But before forgetting the idea entirely, Jo manages to rattle off one of the drama's more memorable lines, one involving a hallucination, albeit one thoroughly saturated in the phallic presence of the Imaginary: "Is that a dagger that I see before me" (Alcott 8). The play they eventually settle upon turns out to be one of Jo's own, a work of exceeding bathos, a pastiche entitled *The Witch's Curse, an Operatic Tragedy*. In the following chapter we find Jo performing the play's leading role of Roderigo, a stereotype of the fiery Spaniard. Curiously, at the play's climatic moment, Roderigo, on the brink of suicide, is found brandishing a dagger, one, as opposed to Macbeth's, is very real and as such, accompanied by a very real presence.

Since the piece the sisters opt for involves an actual rather than an "Imaginary" dagger, this would seem to indicate a preference for presence, that is, for possession or for having, provided the female actress continues to assume the very male and anatomically imaginary role of Roderigo. Notably, just as Roderigo is about to drive the dagger into "his" heart, "a lovely song is sung under his window, informing him that Zara [his love interest] is true but in danger and he can save her if he will" (Alcott 20). It is music, the most imagistic of art forms, that draws the phallic dagger from Roderigo's heart, that is, results in its absence, bringing both the drama to a close and with it Jo back to Lacanian female status. For like the daggerless Roderigo, Jo in her own imaginary way feels as if she can save the object of her desire, by repudiating the actual, those things that can be named: in other words, all that which would partake of the Symbolic. For Jo this action carries profound implications of an identity mired in uncertain flux, which will prove yet another variation on the presence/absence conflict.

For most of the novel, Jo acts in a decidedly masculine manner. She feels she would have been better off born a boy: "It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boys' games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy" (Alcott 5). She even consciously attempts to look like a boy: "And if turning my hair make me one [a boy], I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty" (5). For the performance of *The Witch's Curse*, Jo not only played the part of Roderigo but also all the remaining male roles, performing them "to her heart's content" (17). Later, when Jo feels she will lose her sister to marriage, she gives expression to similar transsexual sentiment: "I just wish I could marry Meg myself, and keep her safe in the family" (190); and, "Why weren't we all boys, then there wouldn't be any bother" (191). In response to Jo's desire to have been born a boy, her older (and wiser) sister Meg begins to penetrate the psychology of sister Josephine: "Poor Jo! It's too bad, but it can't be helped. So you must try to be contented with making your name boyish and playing brother to us girls" (5). For its time, Meg's insight is laudatory; however, it only begins to scratch the then unheard of Lacanian surface. If she were alive today, Jo would not be a candidate for transgendered status as one might be led to believe because hers is a motive force reminiscent of that which compels her hero, Roderigo; that motive being the desire *to be* the phallus for another, in Jo's case her mother, a distinctly imaginary mode of existence and one that, similar to the way in which she had inhabited the role of Roderigo, will attempt to co-opt the phallus by means of sexual transposition.

Prior to the child's formal entry into the Symbolic and its triangular relationship – involving as it does both the mother *and* the father – she finds herself securely locked in dyadic embrace with mother only, a relationship Lacan identifies as the Imaginary. Some would argue that this condition is just as triadic as the Symbolic since the object of the mother's desire

remains ever present in the child's mind, making for an imaginary but very palpable third addition. Not unlike Freud, Lacan holds that it is the child's fervent wish to become that object, which for the child is nothing less than the phallus, itself. Unfortunately, for Jo, just like for every other child, she can never hope to be the mother's phallus since the phallus translates into mother's desire, or that which she will by definition forever lack (and so forever desire):

> The mother is always the primal source of the subject's desire, although her role as source is repressed into the unconscious after the passage through the mirror stage and the Oedipal realization. In the beginning, the pre-mirror stage subject is in a relation of being to the mother: that is, the child simply *is* that which the mother desires; after the mirror stage, the child is in a relation of having or wanting to have: that is, it desires to possess that which the mother desires, though the child does not (and can never) have it (the phallus) nor can the mother either, since the lesson of the Oedipal rule imposed by the father is that she too lacks (is lacking) it. (Mellard 147)

Until the child learns the hard lessons of the Symbolic, she is able to turn a blind eye to this annoying yet implacable fact of psychic reality and so while fully immersed in the Imaginary, attempts to fill this lack.

In the interregnum between modes of Symbolic operation, the very grown-up Jo is fueled by just such ill-fated desire. While armored in the Imaginary, her desire for possession of the phallus so overwhelming, she goes so far as to attempt to unseat her father altogether: "I'm the man of the family now Papa is away" (Alcott 6). But like every child's imaginary efforts to pinpoint and provide for mother's desire, Jo's are doomed from the start; the deck is just stacked

against the child. For instance, from a purely developmental perspective, the child finds its movements restricted while the mother's are not; by that I mean the mother must invariably leave her child sometimes, be it in a crib or in a high chair. And when she does, the child is left to wonder where she goes and why she would want to leave her in the first place. Should not the child be her mother's everything, its very reason for existence? Instead, the mother seems to always have something that draws her attention away from the child, whether that be a sibling or more forbidding still, the father; in fact, it is from the father that the child originally conceives of such fruitless imaginary endeavors as providing for mother's missing phallus:

> The imaginary phallus is what the child *assumes* someone must have in order for them [sic] to be the object of the mother's desire and, as her desire is usually directed towards the father, it is assumed that he possesses the phallus. Through trying to satisfy the mother's desire, the child identifies with the object that it presumes she has lost and attempts to become that object for her. (Homer 55)

Jo attempts to take such identification literally. In addition to the efforts she takes with her sisters, Jo goes one step further with her childhood friend and boon companion, Theodore Laurence, more familiarly known as Laurie. His nickname is feminized as is his position within the circle of his newly adopted sisters. But especially with Jo, Laurie will serve as Jo's gendered reflection through the better part of the novel as she strives for possession of the phallus.

Only when the father intervenes with what amounts to a resounding "no" does the child effectively gives up the pursuit of becoming mother's phallus. For all intents and purposes, this translates into nothing less than castration within the Lacanian conceptual universe. Newly separated from the mother, the child finds herself rather unceremoniously ushered into the

Symbolic. The father's "no" is what Lacan refers to as the Name-of-the-Father, which is a "symbolic function that intrudes into the illusory world of the child and breaks the imaginary dyad of the mother and child" (Homer 56). The result is a substitution of signifiers, a semiotic transaction consisting of the mother's desire for the Name-of-the-Father. The Name-of-the-Father is what allows the phallus to assume pride of place within the unconscious, "the 'signifier of signifiers', the term around which all other signifiers revolve" (Wright 322). The phallus can be seen as the Lacanian Logos, the central organizing principle and, as already illustrated through one's experience in the mode of the Imaginary, elusive and out of reach, that which was and never will be possessed, "the 'original' lost object" (Homer 56). Its meaning, if it can be said to possess any, would seem to consist of absence only.

As already pointed out, absence, however, is only half the phallic equation. The other half involves, of course, its opposite, presence, appropriately symbolized by the all-too-tangible but semantically flexible penis. Like the phallus, however, the penis assumes a Janus-faced complexion. The male child (the transsexual Jo included) is at once afraid of losing his while recognizing that mother is without one, thus the penis "becomes metonymically linked to the recognition of *lack*" (Homer 56); that is, the penis implies absence just as much as it does presence. And, just as absence needs presence, the male needs the female in order to complete the system of Lacanian binaries:

> One can neither have nor be the phallus in oneself. It is not an attribute or property of a subject: only through an other's desire for the penis can a man have his possession of the phallus confirmed: and only through another desiring her body can a woman feel as if she is the phallus. This entails the symbolic

> equivalence of the man's penis and the woman's whole body: they are both objects of the other's desire. (Wright 321)

Only within the context of the Imaginary can the sexually ambiguous Jo actually "possess" the phallus; in doing so, she will find herself *being* the phallus. As such, however, she will only make up one half of Lacan's fundamental binary, an untenable condition for someone who refuses to accept half measures. While mired in the Imaginary, she will continue to "lack" the requisite balance needed to achieve that Van Rough-like equilibrium between the masculine and the feminine. Without realizing it, Jo will absorb the necessary lessons from her sisters that will lead her to the one who will enable her to walk that psychic tightrope between having and being; it will amount to her own hero's quest, one of outsized Lacanian dimension.

III. The Imaginary Amy

The first order to be addressed will be the Imaginary since, according to Lacan, it is the first order we as developing psychological entities experience. At the heart of the Imaginary mode is the Mirror Stage. The Mirror Stage is the rough equivalent to the Hegelian dialectic, complete with its own thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In Lacan's model the thesis is the desiring subject, while the antithesis is the mirror image (which in most cases proves to be mother); when taken together, however, they result in a synthesis made up of an ego both self-deluded and irretrievably alienated.

Taking place somewhere between the ages of six and eighteen months, the Mirror Stage occurs when "the child for the first time becomes aware, through seeing its image in the mirror, that his/her body has a total form. The infant can also govern the movements of this image through the movements of its own body and thus experiences pleasure" (Homer 24-25). The

infant up until this time feels herself to be in a state of perpetual disunity. The mirror soon quells the child's anxiety, yet all is not right since such phenomenological totality is founded upon a fundamental disconnect:

> This sense of completeness and mastery, however, is in contrast to the child's experience of its own body, over which it does not yet have full motor control. While the infant still feels his/her body to be in parts, as fragmented and not yet unified, it is the image that provides him/her with a sense of unification and wholeness. (Homer 25)

As a result, the incipient ego will find itself forever alienated from itself as its unified identity depends upon the external image. The image itself, moreover, is "*alienating* in the sense that it becomes confused with the self. The image actually comes to take the place of the self. Therefore, the sense of a unified self is acquired at the price of this self being an-other, that is, our mirror image" (Homer 25).

More pernicious still is the uncertainty that accompanies such an identity founded upon dialectical formation. Symptomatic of the mirror phase neonate is one who is forever subject to a condition bordering on the psychotic: "From the moment an infant is captivated by an image of the human body and imagizes itself as a whole entity, paradoxically dependent upon others whose judgements [sic] and responses do or do not validate illusions of being, narcissism will be subject not only to paranoia, but to the full range of human affects" (Wright 174). Foremost among those affects of which paranoia is but one, is a brute aggression, the result of a dialectical equation that at once demands that the other, i.e., the antithesis, act not only as the guarantor of our existence but also as one's own "bitter rival" (Homer 26). It is rival because it *is* guarantor;

that is, the ego resents the image that it relies upon for its all-too illusory existence. For Lacan, this fundamentally conflicted ego formation will inform our every relationship from here on out, allowing not only identification but also antagonism with the other: "As a narcissistic structure, Imaginary relations – be they between individuals or societies – are governed by jealousy, competition and aggressivity . . ." (Wright 174). Granted, the battle one wages is at heart an internal one, "between the infant's fragmented sense of self and the imaginary autonomy out of which the ego is born," but it, nonetheless, is one that will invariably be projected onto "future relations between the subject and others" (Homer 26). All is not lost, however, as Lacan acknowledges the palliating efforts of rationalization, idealization, and above all love to counter or at least temper the self-destructive impulses of the Imaginary (Wright 174). In *Little Women,* this brand of ambivalence is most evident in the rocky and fitful courtship of Amy March, Jo's youngest sister, and the young Mr. Lawrence, her future husband. Theirs is a dynamic that can be traced back to its Lacanian origin, namely in Amy's relation to her mother, better known to the reader as Marmee.

Amy, the youngest of the March sisters, is one whose allegiance to the Imaginary is foregrounded early on, the result of both internal and external forces. Again, the novel's first few lines prove telling. Our first introduction to Amy hints at a personality involving a curious admixture of the ephemeral and the eternal. Her first words give voice to a desire for the "pretty things" other girls have, while her next expresses her Christmas wish for "a nice box of Faber pencils" (Alcott 3). The "pretty things" will act as tangible reality of the Imaginary, albeit a reality by its very definition that must remain fleeting, while the "Faber pencils" will aid in a recreated reality, one achieved by an artistic talent that will forever enshrine those same superficial but precious tokens of her fleeting reality.

Amy's seemingly skin-deep desires can be seen as the result of following in the footsteps of her big sister Meg and not those of her mother whose life has been marked by a relentless self-abnegation. Meg, on the other hand, dreams like Amy of "all the pretty things she wanted" (Alcott 3). This comes as no surprise as the reader soon learns that "Meg was Amy's confidante and monitor" (39), a mother substitute who seems to represent all that her mother is not. In fact, Meg is "so fond of luxury" (33) that an entire chapter, entitled "Meg Goes to Vanity Fair," is devoted to her longing for the high life. Of the two sisters, however, it is Meg who will eventually lead the kind of Spartan existence that will make mother proud, while Amy will enjoy the sumptuous living of the upper crust but not without the help of yet another outside entity, yet another mother substitute.

In addition to Meg, Amy's greatest formative influence is her Aunt March, a wealthy dowager with very fixed ideas as to how a young lady should conduct herself. Either out of necessity or (later) through personal choice, the young and very impressionable Amy ends up spending an inordinate amount of time with Aunt March, helping to further wither the already tenuous ties of Marmee's authority. At first, however, Aunt March "worried Amy very much with her rules and orders, her prim ways, and long, prosy talks" (Alcott 179). During her first extended stay at her aunt's – the result of both her sister's illness and her mother's absence – Amy proved inconsolable at first but was soon cheered by her aunt's French maidservant, Estelle, who bedazzled "Amy's beauty-loving eyes" with all her exotic Catholic iconography, not to mention all those "pretty things" adorning her aunt's estate (182). Estelle is moved to give Amy a rosary but instead of putting it to the use Estelle had intended, Amy "hung it up and did not use it . . ." (182). As a symbol for motherhood, the rosary serves the metonymic function as substitute for Marmee for which Amy, at least at present, has apparently no use. Interestingly,

the chapter in which all this occurs is entitled "Amy's Will," referring not only to the will she draws up in her childish anxiety over her own impending, but far-off death, but perhaps indicating as well her volitional preference for her aunt's values over those of her mother.

Amy is far from disowning Marmee and even further from escaping her influence; in fact, if anything, Amy's actions, her adoration of the image, betray an attraction to the mother who serves as source for the Imaginary. For instance, by knowingly consigning her rosary to mere ornamental status, Amy reveals herself as one mesmerized by the embrace of the Imaginary; she finds the decorative of far more "use" than the utilitarian, filling as it does the Lacanian need for mother's presence:

> The first image on which the infant ordinarily fastens tactilely is the mother, especially the body of the mother laid down as a Real, unsignifiable image in the unconscious. Generally, the mother's body, particularly in the anaclitic object of the breast, devolves to the *objet a*, that bodily part which in the unconscious becomes the aim of an oral drive. But the mother may also have a scopic dimension linking visual images to other *objets a*. With the development of vision, the infant almost immediately seizes upon the face of the mother as that which represents her. (Mellard 72)

More on the *objet a* later, but for now the foregoing serves as an apt description of Amy's condition; all those "pretty things" it turns out are but pale substitutes for the original, namely the face of mother: ". . . this image of mother, by the process of metonymy, normally is displaced by other images [see rosary]. One image signifying the symbiosis of infant and mother is usually the maternal breast or bosom" (Mellard 73). Turns out that the "pretty things" taken in by

Amy's scopic breadth, those other *objets a*, are themselves only the shadow of mother's breast but which provide just as much sustenance nonetheless: "Formation of the drives is crucial to the constitution of the subject, for there can be no subjectivity without desire, and desire is caused by the separation of the subject from its first object – the mother or the mother's breast" (73). The further along the Mirror Stage the child progresses, the further along her sense of differentiation from mother will be, thus resulting in an inevitable ambivalence. This is the point of development where Amy finds herself stalled, failing to achieve complete awareness of differentiation, or Otherness, that allows the child to graduate to the Symbolic (74). Amy's is one of arrested development, in other words. Perhaps as the youngest of four daughters, she did not feel she received enough maternal nurturing and will now attempt her whole life long to make up for the perceived deficiency, which would explain her attraction to her Aunt March.

Amy's childhood wish for Faber pencils eventually leads her inexorably as an adult into the Imaginary mode where she is able to satisfy her desire for wealth and privilege, or what Lacan refers to as her jouissance; in other words, if Amy's penury prevents her from possessing the "pretty things" in life, she will recreate them through her art in all their glorious permanence. Such psychic gymnastics will not remain confined to the canvas either but will extend to Amy's interpersonal relationships as well. While abroad, Amy crosses paths with her neighbor, the now thoroughly debauched Laurie, who is at present attempting to run away from his problems not only by traveling as far from America as possible but by taking to the bottle; all this because of Jo's rejection of his marriage proposal. Amy will eventually rehabilitate Laurie but not in the way, say, sister Beth would by forcing Laurie to see the "real" reason for his despondency. Instead, Amy, through a variation of the Mirror Stage, will attempt to reshape Laurie into her own image, as if he were just another one of her sculptured pieces.

In a chapter aptly entitled "New Impressions," Amy's Imaginary makeover of Laurie begins with her own. Throughout the chapter, Amy attempts to bring Laurie into the Imaginary order by unknowingly presenting herself as an alluring figure possessed of statuesque dimension, the very object of his worship:

> " I don't want him [Laurie] to think I look well, and tell them so at home," said Amy to herself, as she put on Flo's old white silk ball dress, and covered it with a cloud of fresh illusions, out of which her white shoulders and golden head emerged with a most artistic effect. Her hair she had the sense to let alone, after gathering up the thick waves and curls into a Hebe-like knot at the back of her head. (Alcott 357)

Amy attempts to hide her sartorial indulgences, knowing that it flies in the face of her mother's Spartan beliefs, yet try as she might she appears just as radiant in hand-me-down condition as she does in the queenly garb supplied her by Aunt March. The "golden head" and the "Hebe-like knot" add a divine dimension to a work made of apparent marble as the "*white* silk ball dress" and "her *white* shoulders" attest; moreover, since the dress belongs to Flo, the reader is, if only unconsciously, put in mind of Florence, not only the showcase for the world's greatest sculpted works but also Amy and Laurie's momentary residence. If the greeting Laurie extends to her is any indication, Amy has achieved the desired effect. At the appointed time, Laurie arrives and addresses Amy, whose "white figure against a red curtain was as effective as a well-placed statue," as none other than "Diana"; she, appropriately enough, returns the favor by greeting him as "Apollo" (358). It should be recalled that Diana and Apollo are sister and brother, and in light of later developments, namely the marriage of Amy and Laurie, adds an incestuous component

that one could have a Freudian field-day with, particularly when one further considers that Diana was known as the most militant among the virgin goddesses. But Amy's Lacanian desire will have none of that. Her mythological reference is revealing only of her longing to return to an earlier time, perhaps one that does not reach as far back as the age of antiquity, but to a time, say, when Amy, so distraught over her sister's illness, wrote up a will, "And Laurie put his arm about her with a *brotherly* gesture which was very comforting" (186); in other words, Amy is unknowingly nudging the relationship to a more familial moment closer in psychological time to that of the Mirror Stage.

Whether she would like to admit or not, Amy is clearly trying to win over Laurie and not just his affections but, in keeping with the Mirror Stage, the very essence of his psychic well-being. To do so, she will redefine the terms of engagement, placing herself in the role of mother and he in the subordinate position of the Imaginary child, the very position, that is, of Amy herself. To begin, his feminized name only helps to realize just such a psychological scenario. Additionally, by leading the life of debauchery that he has, he fits the profile of the Lacanian neonate, one disunified and rootless. He *is* Amy and now, she Marmee. From this point on, Amy will proceed to model the proper behavior, to act as the maternal image which she feels to be one informed by the absolute adherence to the straight and narrow, the very mirror image, one might say, of her own mother. For one suspects, if left to her own conscious druthers, Amy would conduct herself in manner far less inhibited: "Amy was compelled to walk decorously through a cotillion, feeling all the while as if she could dance the tarantella with relish" (Alcott 360). As the product of compulsion, therefore, her deportment is clearly unconsciously motivated but achieves its aim almost immediately:

> Laurie sat bolt upright, and meekly took her empty plate feeling an odd sort of pleasure in having "little Amy" order him about, for she had lost her shyness now, and felt an irresistible desire to trample on him, as girls have a delightful way of doing when lords of creation show any signs of subjection. (362)

Amy can now boast near complete psychic hegemony, no matter how ignorant she may claim herself to be in realizing such design: "Amy did not know why he . . . devoted himself to her for the rest of the evening . . ." (362). For his part, Laurie, older and more experienced, seems more knowing; while referring to Amy's "general air, the style, the self-possession," Laurie concludes it to be all "illusion," suggesting he has been thoroughly schooled in the Imaginary, able to discern its essential essence (362). At the very least, both are aware at some level of "the new impressions which both of them were unconsciously giving and receiving" (362).

In a subsequent chapter entitled "Lazy Laurence" all those untoward aspects inherent in the Mirror Stage begin to manifest themselves as Laurie becomes better acquainted with the mirror image of Amy. For instance, Amy begins to make it a regular practice to upbraid Laurie for his laziness, particularly his neglect of his venerable grandfather back home in America. And since "The two never quarreled" (Alcott 375), their disputes are informed by subtle reproach effected by way of prolonged silences, the sine qua non of the Imaginary. Silence, as opposed to speech, is not only appropriate for the pre-verbal state of the Imaginary but also for the "aggressivity" that always accompanies the Mirror Stage, although theirs is an aggression strictly of the passive variety. So it should come as no surprise that throughout this chapter what is left unsaid proves more important than that which is. For instance, when Laurie falsely accuses Amy of mercenary motives in her quest for a husband, "Amy preserve[s] a discreet silence" (379). When pressed, Amy finally asserts herself with a laconic dignity, to which Laurie responds with

the same kind of wordless rebuke, which "ruffled Amy" (380). And, when Amy reproaches Laurie for the unrequited love he feels for Jo, "Laurie put up his hand with a quick gesture to stop the words . . ." (383). When Amy refuses to desist, "Neither spoke for several minutes" (384). In the end and with proper Imaginary protocol, the most effective means by which the two communicate is through the specular image.

In order to bring Laurie to heel, Amy resorts to what she knows best: the visual arts; in other words, she will take expressive recourse to that which best approximates the means of the Imaginary mode. She begins to draw and, while in the midst of such efforts, Laurie put his hand down upon her sketch and "with a droll imitation of a penitent child, [said] 'I will be good, oh, I will be good" (Alcott 381). Her sketch is revealing on a number of levels:

> Only a rough sketch of Laurie taming a horse: hat and coat were off, and every line of the active figure, resolute face, and commanding attitude was full of energy and meaning. The handsome brute, just subdued, stood arching his neck under the tightly drawn rein, with one foot impatiently pawing the ground, and ears pricked up as if listening for the voice that had mastered him. In the ruffled mane, the rider's breezy hair and erect attitude, there was a suggestion of suddenly arrested motion, of strength, courage, and youthful buoyancy that contrasted sharply with the sublime grace of the "Dolce far nuente" sketch. (384)

The "active figure" in the passage could refer to either Laurie or the horse. Likewise, the reader is left just as much in the dark as to the precise identity of "The handsome brute." Such uncertainty suggests the two are, therefore, interchangeable: that is, Laurie might act at one point the tamer and at another the tamed. In light of Laurie and Amy's on-going speechless disputes,

there is the very clear suggestion that he is not only the rider but also the newly mastered speechless "handsome brute." If that is the case, then, while in the guise of the unbroken beast, Laurie can only conclude that the intrepid rider who dares to bring him under his command can only be the artist herself who exercises complete control over the image. Could this be Amy's unspoken, imaginary message to Laurie, letting him know exactly who is boss? However, like the horse, whose mane is "ruffled," Amy likewise has found herself just recently "ruffled," suggesting a kinship between her and the broken beast? Once again, the passage's ambiguity proves instructive; horse hair and human hair comingle to suggest a subjective fluidity between the two that recalls that which exist between Laurie and the horse.

In a chapter entitled "Calls," the notion of Laurie as the equine equivalent of Amy's mirror image is effectively foreshadowed. Much to Amy's embarrassment, Jo recounts to a group of newly made acquaintances what happened one particular day when a much younger Amy took it upon herself to teach herself how to ride. After finding "all the good beasts gone" that day, Amy was left to choose between three pitiful horses, each with its own deficiency (Alcott 274). Those three might very well be Amy's own sisters who each in their turn has opted for a Lacanian register different from Amy's own and, thus, be considered deficient psychologically. Unwilling to compromise, Amy chooses to go elsewhere:

> She heard of a young horse at the farmhouse over the river, and though the lady had never ridden him, she [Amy] resolved to try, because he was so handsome and spirited. (274)

This neighboring horse bears a remarkable resemblance to neighbor Laurie insofar as his lady, his original owner, never rode him. This brings to mind the power Jo for so long held over the

lovelorn Laurie and her refusal to return his affections, which had left him utterly forlorn, that is, until the arrival of Amy. When asked by her audience if Amy ever rode the horse, Jo responds emphatically "Of course she did, and had a capital time," but soon adds with Lacanian prescience that she "expected to see her brought home in fragments, but she managed him perfectly, and was the life of the party" (274). Jo is more correct than she knows: Amy's adherence to the Imaginary assures she will forever remain "fragmented," while her future relationship with Laurie will reveal her considerable management skills.

In one of the novel's first chapters, "Amy's Valley of Humiliation," taking place when Amy is even younger and only having just made the acquaintance of Laurie, she gives expression to a malapropism that further foreshadows their future romantic dynamic: "'That boy is a perfect Cyclops, isn't he?' said Amy, one day as Laurie clattered by on horseback, with a flourish of his whip as he passed" (Alcott 62). Perhaps this innocent yet solipsistic Amy unconsciously wishes for Laurie to adopt the kind of myopic perspective that focuses exclusively on Amy herself. But thanks to Jo's literary sensibilities, the reader soon learns what Amy had originally meant to say: "That little goose means a centaur . . ." (62). In other words, right from the start Amy sees Laurie as composed of dual substance, partaking of the human and equine, half man, half horse. He is the tamer and the tamed, the mirror image of himself, or, more to the point, he contains within himself the Imaginary potential needed for the kind of relationship found between the Lacanian mother and child.

IV. The Symbolic Meg

Once the child achieves differentiation between herself and mother, and once the father articulates his "no" loud and clear enough, she is ready for entry into the Symbolic mode.

Midway through *Little Women* this is precisely where Meg finds herself situated. She marries the impoverished tutor and family friend John Brooke with whom she will eventually wind up giving birth to twins. During this time, she and John experience their fair share of growing pains. More to the point, they will undergo what can only be characterized as a trial forged in the Symbolic, where Meg must learn its hard lesson, that of its prejudice for the signifier at the expense of the signified and even more profoundly, its attempt at reconciliation, no matter how illusory it may prove to be, of mother and child.

Lacan's notion of the Symbolic is rooted in the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure and the semiotics of Roman Jakobson. In brief, Saussure brought to the fore what he saw as the very arbitrary relationship shared between any word and the concept to which it refers; this is otherwise known in Saussure's linguistic universe as the signifier and the signified, that which when taken together comprises the sign. Lacan will adopt the same nomenclature for his Symbolic mode, but here is where the similarity ends; as opposed to Saussure, Lacan underscores the centrality of the signifier over the signified, that is, he places the means by which meaning is conveyed over the meaning itself. He does so because he finds that the signified is just far too equivocal a proposition. In an oft-cited illustration of the primacy of the signifier, Lacan adduces the public restroom as indicative of the inherent uncertainty of the signified. By citing two identical doors as example, Lacan points out that the only way in which to save one from public embarrassment and a possible misdemeanor charge is with the aid of the signifier. If it weren't for the words "men" and "women," we would all be far less certain when it comes time to heeding nature's call, at least within the realm of the public restroom. So, as much as Lacan has acknowledged a debt to Saussure, such a proposition as illustrated by the choice of bathrooms ultimately flies in the face of Saussurian semiotics since it in effect "reverse[s] the

priority Saussure bestowed upon the signified in the signifier/signified relation," one in which Suassure gave pride of place to the signified in the multi-phased functioning of the sign (Homer 41); moreover, while Saussure believed in an essential symbiosis of the signifier/signified, Lacan viewed the slash separating them as a clear marker of their fundamental division and as an insurmountable obstacle to ultimate meaning. In fact, for Lacan the quest for meaning will always prove a fruitless one:

> What a signifier refers to is not a signified, as there is always a barrier between them, but to another signifier. In short, a signifier refers us to another signifier, which in turn refers us to another signifier in an almost endless chain of signification. If we try to define the meaning of a specific word or concept, for example, we can only do so through other words. (42)

In keeping with the theoretical precepts of Roman Jakobson, Lacan believed we were all trapped in a perpetually vicious, linguistic circle. To understand the meaning of one word, requires that we understand the meaning of others; the dictionary proves as much. In utilizing the principle of metonymy, Lacan believed, that, like the dictionary, one word's meaning lends itself to another, so that we are forever trapped in a linguistic chain, an apt description of the newlyweds Meg and John.

If Amy and Laurie's disputes are informed by prolonged silences as befit the Imaginary mode, Meg and John's, in accordance with the Symbolic, will give pride of place to the spoken word. In the chapter entitled "Domestic Experiences" we see just that. Indeed, the word *word* appears with such profusion that the reader cannot help but acknowledge its potential as a determining factor within at least the present chapter. In fact, "word" or an apposite synonym

appears on all but one page of the chapter. Significantly, that one page chronicles Meg's attempt to emulate her wealthy friend's lifestyle, one she realizes is beyond her means, but one which she, nevertheless, covets and temporarily achieves by way of an extravagant and impulsive purchase. She is able to obtain the object of her desire by using a line of credit she can ill afford. Needless to say, her flirtation with the rich and famous is destined to be short-lived since, from a practical standpoint, the bill will eventually come due, while from a Lacanian, such behavior, having no basis in reality, *seems* to smack of the Imaginary. Indeed, at first glance this one page would lead us to believe Meg is backsliding into the Imaginary, but, like Lacan, himself, the narrator of *Little Women*, as already witnessed by the novel's opening pages, is not above the occasional deception; for Meg's extravagance is born out of the desire to possess not the actual object but its signification, to exercise, that is, one of the central principles of the Symbolic.

Apart from that one page, the purpose of the chapter known as "Domestic Experiences," is from beginning to end, and with almost clockwork precision, informed by the preeminence of the word *word* and its semantic kin. All begins innocently enough as we learn that John always accompanies his parting kiss with words of "inquiry," questioning what he might bring home for dinner (Alcott 257). From here things take a slightly more anxious turn; at the prospect of asking for Marmee's help with the housekeeping, Meg and John "had laughed over that last *word* . . ." (258). Without Marmee's help, Meg goes it alone in the kitchen whereupon the reader is compelled to "read" the multiple "editions" of Meg's failed attempts at jelly-making (259). Later, when John upbraids Meg for taking her at her "word," Meg again starts to think of mother whom she refers to notably enough as "The word" (262). Her ensuing argument with John is informed by "hasty words," and when Meg tries to make it up by offering him a penitent kiss, it proves at first glance "better than a world of words" (263). When John begins to verbally tally

the family finances after Meg's spending spree, her anxiety increases with John's "every word" (265). Once John discovers his wife's monetary indiscretions, yet another argument erupts that involves "last words" and a very hurtful "few words" (266). Afterward, they had "a long talk" (267). Finally, when Laurie arrives to see the twins, he asks what "name" they will be given and when told, wonders if they might find a "better name" (268-269). And so ends this extremely wordy chapter that sets the stage for Meg's Symbolic instruction.

Similar to that point in the Lacanian development of the child, where the child/mother dyad is intruded upon and subsequently broken up by the imperial Name of the Father, Meg's, likewise, is one that involves the collision of two forces that not only resemble but prove just as inimical as the Imaginary and the Symbolic. It all begins when Meg falls prey to the allure of marriage and the idyll of domestic bliss that holds sway over her imagination. She is determined that John ". . . should find home a paradise . . . always see a smiling face, should fare sumptuously every day, and never know the loss of a button" (Alcott 257). To her perpetual dismay, Meg discovers that she is ill-equipped to sustain such a picture-perfect existence, that the demands of her reality prove just too formidable to maintain such a fantasy. And from here things only get worse. This prompts her to desire the assistance of Marmee, a look backward to the Imaginary, replete with the appropriate infantile garb of one locked in such embrace: "She longed to run home, bib and all, and ask Mother to lend a hand, but John and she had agreed that they would never annoy anyone with their privates worries, experiments, or quarrels" (258). For the time being Meg manages to keep such impulses in check, but her Lacanian allegiances are sorely put to the test when John brings home a colleague, and Meg finds, try as she might, that her jelly simply "won't jell" (260).

When John invites a coworker, Jack Scott, to dinner, Meg receives her first and most important lesson in the Symbolic. Once she learns of the added mouth to feed, Meg, in "a tone of mingled indignation, reproach, and dismay," demands that John "Take him away at once" (Alcott 260). She is beside herself since all her attempts at making jelly have failed miserably. John simply laughs it off, recommending she "Fling it [the jelly] out of window, and don't bother any more about it" (260). In his efforts at lifting her mood, John tries to make a joke out of it but in doing so, commits the unforgivable error of uttering that "one unlucky word . . . that one word [which] sealed his fate": jelly (261). At this point, Meg wishes to beat a hasty retreat into the Imaginary, fearing that, like her culinary efforts, her marital ones won't jell either. So it is only natural that she would have Marmee on the mind. Before storming upstairs and locking herself in her room, she advises John to "Take that Scott up to Mother's, and tell him I'm away, sick, dead – anything"; moreover, while locked away, feeling sorry for herself, "Meg longed to go and tell Mother" (261). She soon thinks better of it, deciding instead to maintain her "loyalty" to John, or, put another way, to keep steadfast to the cause of the Symbolic, of which John is representative.

After Meg abandons John, he would seem to preserve his good humor, whipping up an impromptu meal for himself and Mr. Scott, what Meg would later designate "a promiscuous lunch" (Alcott 261). John proves such an accommodating and amiable host that his guest "promised to come again" (261). The reader quickly learns, however, that John is not the imperturbable, happy-go-lucky man he may first appear to be. Indeed, he was "angry, but did not show it" (261). Having taken Meg at her "word" when she expressed her desire to entertain, John felt betrayed and was sure "Meg must know it" (262). But, as a teacher, he also knew he must be "patient" while providing the appropriate instruction. Clearly, he regards Meg as not

just a wife but one of his pupils as well. Without even knowing it, John has already provided Meg with all the tutelage she needs but not necessarily in the ways of wifely duty but rather in the semiotics of the Symbolic. For her part, Meg, as equally unaware, proves herself, if not a star student, at least a quick learner.

Meg's ill-fated jelly inadvertently gives rise to one of the harder lessons of the Symbolic. John's nonchalance with regard to the ruined dinner, his ability to seamlessly substitute the jelly with a "promiscuous lunch," initiates Meg into what Jakobson refers to as the syntagmatic axis and what Lacan later developed into the chain of signification. For John, in other words, it makes not a whit of difference what the repast consists of as long as it goes by the name of "dinner," even if some might, in judging its contents, refer to it as "lunch." Just as a ladies' and a men's room are both equipped with the same fixtures, yet exclude the use of one gender or the other based upon their designations, John is spared the stain upon his hospitality by giving another name to a meal many feel fit for afternoon consumption. Judging from Meg's actions later on in the chapter, she provides clear evidence that she has unconsciously absorbed this lesson.

When Meg succumbs to the temptations of materialism earlier mentioned, she is not, as previously suggested, regressing to the Imaginary, but rather following her husband's Symbolic lead. In her attempt to keep pace with Sallie Moffat's self-indulgent lifestyle, she purchases a dress for "fifty dollars," but considering the teacher's salary on which she and John rely, she realizes they can ill afford it. To make matters worse, the dress is no dress at all, but merely "Twenty-five yards of silk" that has yet to be made, so that the "recollection of the cost still to be incurred quite overwhelmed her [Meg]" (266). Even though the dress represents at best a work-in-progress, Meg, her misgivings aside, still refers to it as a dress; in a manner that would make

her husband proud, she has successfully manipulated the chain of signification to serve her own purposes. But, unlike her mentor, she cannot very well put her dress to immediate use as he had his meal, thus producing an "overwhelming" anxiety that suggests the need for further instruction.

In order to purchase Meg's new dress, "John had countermanded the order for his new greatcoat," simultaneously attempting to amend Meg's Symbolic efforts while pointing out the folly of those efforts. Upon hearing this, Meg realizes her error almost immediately and "learned to love her husband better for his poverty" (267). The next day Meg "put her pride in her pocket" and visited her friend Sallie, who agreed to buy the silk as a favor. At this point Alcott, in wrapping up the chapter, would have us believe that Meg, like her mother before her, learns to embrace a life of endless self-abnegation; however, Meg's track record suggests that it will take more than just the return of one bolt of silk to quench her desire for the glamorous life. In addition to the expenditure involved in the gift-giving that informed her earlier maternal efforts with Amy, Meg's younger days had been highlighted by an extended stay at Sallie Moffet's for the sake of attending one of Sallie's gala affairs. Her time at Sallie's is recounted in a chapter aptly and ominously entitled "Meg Goes to Vanity Fair." In longing for the high life and indulging in such conspicuous consumerism as she does, it becomes quite clear that, like any compulsive shopper, what Meg is really in need of is something to fill the psychological lack she must be experiencing.

For Lacan, the true object of Meg's search, the lack in her life, is the same as it is for all of us, namely a desire for the Other, which is, itself, the desire *of* the Other. The Other, quite simply, is of course mother whose pull proves timeless and inexorable, even to the point of self-delusion: "Through fantasy, the subject attempts to sustain the illusion of unity with the Other

and ignore his or her own division" (Homer 87). The "division" referred to is the schism which attends the inauguration of the Symbolic; the "illusion," on the other hand, is what Lacan terms the *objet petit a*, which "designates the little other, *autre*, as opposed to the capitalized A of the big Other" (87). It is important to note that *objet petit a* is a something that does *not* represent desire fulfilled (for if it were, then one would no longer desire); instead it can best be approximated as the cause of desire that one believes to be the fulfillment of desire. But for all its welcomed balm, in the end it is "a semblance which fills up the hole that keeps us from being one with ourselves" (Wright 375).

Roughly a year after the disastrous jelly incident, "there came to Meg a new experience – the deepest and tenderest of a woman's life" (Alcott 267) – one that on the face of it would seem to cement her ties to the Symbolic. After giving birth to fraternal twins, a boy and girl, Meg, with the help of John, the nom du pere, christens them both with the names of their parents. The result is that little Meg and little John will forever bear the stamp of the Symbolic insofar as their very names form part of that same chain of Lacanian signification that continually defers meaning; that is, they will always be identified by their names in a way others, who lack such a direct nominal antecedent, are not. By consenting to, if not initiating, such a state of deferred identification, the elder Meg would seem to have signaled her approval and acceptance of the principles of the Symbolic register and with it the law of the patriarchy. Curiously, however, by chapter's end, when the two newborns make their first appearance, Meg is conspicuously absent. Those in attendance include John, Jo, Hannah, and most notable of all, Laurie and Amy. As emissaries of the Imaginary, Amy and Laurie color the blessed event with flourishes of a distinctly non-Symbolic nature. To begin, Amy, in an attempt to distinguish the two, graces them with unmistakable, time-honored images, placing a blue ribbon on baby John and a pink

one on baby Meg. More radical still, Amy and Laurie effectively rechristen the two unsuspecting Symbolic entities. "So as not to have two Megs," Amy suggests they call baby Meg Daisy, while Laurie offers Demijohn for baby John. Note how these two alternative monikers are not names strictly speaking but signifiers for a flower and a drinking vessel respectively. Simply put, they are objects not names; they conjure up images not linguistic units. Ironically, from here on out the two will now be known as Daisy and Demi exclusively. So the question arises: Why does Meg, by now literally wedded to the Symbolic, agree to address them in such Imaginary terms?

The answer, quite simply, is that Daisy and Demijohn act as Meg's *objet petit a*, that is, they are not the fulfillment but the cause of Meg's desire, or, more to the point, Meg's longing for the very Imaginary reunion with mother; however, such attempts have a way of backfiring, cementing, instead, one's relation to the Symbolic. After one's formal entrance into the Symbolic,

> . . . the subject finds substitutes or displacements for the missing thing, now repressed into (and thereby forming) the unconscious. Those substitutions or displacements thus fill the space of Desire, and will ever after represent an alienation of the subject from that which it desires, now symbolized in objects, Lacan's other "little things" representing the *autre* – the *objet petit a*. (Mellard 147)

As the most apt representation of motherhood, Meg's offspring by metonymy represent the *objet petit a*, that is, the Other in miniature. For someone who in one way or another continually pines for mother, Meg has found a fitting substitute for that ever-nagging unconscious yearning.

As a result, her newborns are more of the Imaginary, and so their existence, at least for Meg, remains a little less than palpable, which might account for Meg's aforementioned absence at their narrative debut. For Meg, they primarily serve as a bridge to the Imaginary mode, representing reunion with mother, more image than substance. This would further explain why later on Meg relinquishes almost all practical control of them to John; he will now act as the final "word" over their custodial care and his efforts will not go unappreciated, which will ironically have the unintended effect of drawing Meg ever closer into the Symbolic orbit of her husband.

In the chapter "On the Shelf" Meg finds it next to impossible to convince her Demi to stay in bed. Having "inherited a trifle of his sire's firmness of character," Demi continues to interrupt Meg and John's dinner in the hope of receiving the sugared bribe he knows mother will inevitably offer to get him back into bed. After Demi's third attempt, where he brazenly displays (the image of) "the maternal delinquencies," that is, the sugared treats, John finally puts his foot down and takes matters into his own hands. In vain, Demi tries to escape his father's clutches by hiding behind his mother's skirts. John drags Demi to his room where he refuses to let him leave. After much crying and screaming for mother, the toddler marplot finally surrenders. In the meantime, Meg grows sick with worry, "*imagining* all sorts of impossible accidents" until she works up the courage to peek inside the bedroom where she finds Demi "not in his usual spread-eagle attitude, but in a subdued bunch, cuddled close in the circle of his father's arm . . ." (371; emphasis added). That "circle" is the Symbolic register encompassing and conquering the very sanctum sanctorum of the Imaginary, the bedroom its last bastion. Of course, John is not thinking in these terms, but when he finally emerges, he expects to "find a pensive or reproachful wife"; instead, he is "surprised to find Meg placidly trimming a bonnet . . ." and curiously eager to engage her husband in manly conversation, specifically "with the request to read something

about the election" (371). She attempts to feign interest but inwardly believing "the mission of politics to be calling each other *names*" (372; emphasis added). It is as if her husband's sudden steely resolve has tamed not only her son but herself as well. Short of obliterating altogether the Imaginary within Meg, John has managed to contain the impulse, to effectively put a cap on it. Like her son, who "respected the man whose grave " 'No, no,' was more impressive than all Mamma's love pats" (368), Meg, by chapter's end, willingly submits to the name-of-the-father, although not without qualification: "It was not all Paradise by any means [see Imaginary], but everyone was better for the division of labor system: the children throve under the paternal rule, for accurate, steadfast John brought order and obedience into Babydom, while Meg recovered her spirits [see Symbolic] . . ." (373). Looking past Alcott's oppressively patriarchal syntax, the reader sees Meg as now clearly in the ordered corner of the Symbolic, notwithstanding her newly subdued desire for the unfettered pleasures of the Imaginary.

V. The Real Beth

The last order from the Lacanian menu is the Real, the rough equivalent to the Ghost of Christmas Future insofar as it proves by far to be the most inscrutable of the three. The Real is also the most unwieldy because it is the one Lacan, over the course of his career, continually revised and reconceived. In its original incarnation, the Real was inextricably bound up with the body, in just the opposite position it would ultimately find itself. As originally conceived, the Real and its relation to the subject was always attached to bodily need of some sort: "In his first period, in the 1950s, Lacan described the Real as a brute, pre-Symbolic reality which returns in the form of need, such as hunger" (Wright 375). The need, however, is not to be confused with the object; the breast, bottle, or even the mother are ". . . images or symbols . . . considered to be Imaginary objects, both more and less than the Real object which in and out of itself, is nothing,

unconceptualized, but none the less an absolute" (375). The Real, therefore, is nothing tangible, let alone ideational but rather ". . . something that is repressed and functions unconsciously, intruding into our symbolic reality in the form of need" (Homer 82-83). It must be stressed that at this early stage of Lacanian thought the Real is still real in a manner of speaking insofar as it makes itself felt within the symbolic mode. Indeed, it regularly infiltrates our everyday reality in the form of need. This, as opposed to Lacan's later theoretical development that puts the Real in a class all to itself, separate and very much distinct from the other two orders; in fact, it is not too much to say that in its latter-day incarnation, the Real assumes a scope of near theoretical omnipotence:

> From 1964 onwards the real is transformed in Lacan's thinking and loses any connection with biology or need . . . its predominant meaning in Lacan at this time is as that which is unsymbolizable. The real is that which is beyond the symbolic and the imaginary and acts as a limit to both. Above all the real is associated with the concept of *trauma*. (Homer 83)

The evolution of the Real may be likened to the snowball rolling down the mountain, gaining as it does in size and ever-increasing consequence, almost completely unrecognizable from its original appearance. It is, moreover, a trajectory remarkably similar to that which is involved in the characterization of Beth March, Jo's much beloved sister.

Like the Real, Beth will begin in flesh and blood only to die prematurely, leaving those she touched, especially Jo, in a state of perpetual unfulfilled longing for a presence far removed from its original image. Beth is first introduced in a manner approximating the need of the early Real. Meekly and humbly, she does all she can to provide for others, resembling more a

household servant than a proper member of the March family: "She was a housewifely little creature, and helped Hannah [the March's maidservant] keep home neat and comfortable for the workers, never thinking of any reward but to be loved" (Alcott 37). On the one hand, she attends to the needs of those around her, while on the other, she gives expression to their needs. When Mr. March falls ill while performing his nursely duties for the Union cause, the family is thrown into panic but manage to keep their anxieties at bay by occupying themselves with preparations for Marmee's departure. Beth forces them to confront their need to relieve their common burden, doing so by means decidedly non-Symbolic:

> Beth went to the piano and played her father's favorite hymn; all began bravely, but broke down one by one till Beth was left alone, singing with all her heart, for to her music was always a sweet consoler. (154)

In this context music, like the latter-day Real, moves beyond the merely imagistic and serves as a conduit to the eternal, bringing its listeners to face the limits of their mortality through their collective contemplation of the ailing Mr. March; in other words, Beth has effectively brought to the fore that which ". . . is repressed and functions unconsciously," doing so by "intruding into our symbolic reality" and presenting the unconscious content "in the form of need" (Homer 82-83). In the end, Jo, the budding author, provides the most apt profile of Beth, averring that "There are many Beths in the world, shy and quiet, sitting in corners till needed . . ." (38).

The Beths of the world may often times be overlooked, however, when needed, their presence is felt with unremitting force, accompanied as it always is by "trauma." The hubbub over Mr. March's uncertain fate was only the first in a series of traumatic events with Beth either at its center or on its pivotal periphery. When Beth, in selflessly attending to the needs of her

impoverished neighbors, the Hummels, is stricken with scarlet fever, the March household is turned upside down. To compound matters, Mrs. March at this time is off ministering to her injured husband at a military hospital in far-off D.C. This leaves only Jo and Meg to attend to Beth as little Amy is sent off to her Aunt's. Significantly, when Beth is asked to choose between Meg and Jo as to who will serve as primary caretaker, she unhesitatingly chooses Jo. This is not to say that Meg is immune to Beth's Lacanian influence; Beth's brush with death makes Meg realize just ". . . how rich she had been in love, protection, peace, and health, the *real* blessings of life" (Alcott 171; emphasis added); nevertheless, such insight cannot approach the extent to which Beth has transformed Jo's interior world, culminating in Jo's assertion that "Beth is my conscience" (173). Beth's illness has the added benefit of filling a very felt need on the part of the sisters, one put in no uncertain terms by the ever insightful authoress: "If Mother was only at home!" (166). Unbeknownst to the sisters, Laurie, their all but adopted brother, has orchestrated the expedient return of Marmee for the sake of seeing Beth nursed back to health. Just like every episode from here on out that is touched by Beth, the reunion of mother and daughter must remain, ". . . very hard to describe" (187), as the inability to provide proper expression is the very hallmark of the Real.

Beth survives her encounter with scarlet fever but only temporarily so, while the closer she comes to death, the more "unsymbolizable" she becomes. When Jo returns from her sojourn in New York City, she observes that ". . . there was a strange, transparent look about it [Beth's face], as if the mortal was being slowly refined away, and the immortal shining through the frail flesh with an *indescribably* pathetic beauty" (Alcott 348; emphasis added). Put into Lacanian terms Jo is growing more attracted to and more knowing of the Real. Yet no matter how strong the attraction, the Real, by its very definition, must remain unknowable. In anticipation of

Beth's imminent passing, the two sisters journey to the shore in a kind of last hurrah. During their time together, Beth, remaining true to the Real, intimates to Jo that "I don't know how to express myself . . ." (351). When they return from the shore, Jo felt "there was no need of any words . . ." (352). This is not because of some understanding so mutual that it need not be spoken, or even because it reveals the first symptoms of the Imaginary, but rather because there is nothing there for words to describe in the first place. Beth is now beyond all recognition, as ineffable as the Real. This would explain why, prior to their departure, Jo had likened the apparent gulf separating her and Beth to a veil that had dropped between the two of them. It is not an impediment but the Lacanian veil, indicating an absence, and in Beth's case, one ultimate and final. Which gives rise to the question: How might Jo, after Beth's eventual demise, keep her dear sister's memory alive if there is nothing there to remember?

Jo's desire to remember Beth will result in the convergence of all three orders. As a writer, the means by which that memory will be conveyed will come courtesy of the Symbolic, while its creative content will prove entirely Imaginary; finally, the subject she strives to portray is one that will prove impalpably Real.

VI. The Composite Jo

As we have seen, over the course of the novel, Jo's story interweaves and overlaps with those of her sisters. And just as much as Jo has affected and helped determine the direction of the lives of Amy, Meg, and Beth, they, in turn, have exerted an equal, if not greater influence over Jo since they have in their myriad Lacanian guises helped to shape her very psychological makeup. At turns, Jo has dipped her feet in the waters of the Imaginary and the Symbolic and has even tried wading in the Real. Put another way, she has tried on the various

Lacanian orders to determine which is the best fit. On occasion the reader may witness these Lacanian costume changes within the span of just a single chapter, but more often than not the shaping of Jo's psyche is clearly demarcated with whole chapters devoted to the respective imperial efforts of Lacan's three separate registers.

Such a chapter is the one earlier referenced that chronicles Meg's Symbolic journey entitled "Calls." In it Amy, by now all grown up, attempts to lure Jo into the Imaginary, more precisely back into the delusional dyad of mother and child. The chapter starts off with Amy reminding Jo of her promise "to make half a dozen calls with me today" (Alcott 270). These are social calls, something the increasingly hermetic, ever introspective Jo abhors. She tries her best to wriggle her way out of it but in the end honors her word by curiously and ominously invoking Shakespeare: "If it was fair – that was in the bond; and I stand to the letter of my bond, Shylock" (270). Curious that her words would allude to a bond that would be subsequently broken and ominous that that same allusion would underscore the use of the word *letter*, reminding the reader just precisely in which direction her Lacanian proclivities lean.

These "calls" Jo is forced to make all involve visiting older, more matronly women as befits the Imaginary. Significantly, upon their departure, Hannah remarks that the two look "pretty as picters" (Alcott 272). Amy has fitted them out like gallery images, perfectly poised to assume the role she believes "mother" will find pleasing. Indeed, when Jo questions what to do about her trailing skirts, Amy responds more like a museum curator than a concerned sister:

> Hold it up when you walk, but drop it in the house; the sweeping style suits you best, and you must learn to trail your skirts gracefully. You haven't half buttoned

> one cuff, do it at once. You'll never look finished if you are not careful about the little details, for they make up the pleasing whole. (272)

And just in case there was any doubt concerning the artifice of Amy's enterprise, Jo sees fit to paraphrase those memorable lines from Keats's "Endymion" that bespeak of artistic, i.e., artificial permanence: "You are a thing of beauty and a joy forever" (272). Once again Jo asserts her writerly sensibilities, a bad omen for one about to enter the preverbal world of the Imaginary where the pose that is struck is more important than the sentiment that is vocalized.

Sure enough, Jo's first official foray into the world of social custom proves a complete and utter disaster. During her first call, Jo unconsciously attempts to simulate the Imaginary mode as she sees it, certain that it must approximate ". . . the part of a prim young lady on the stage" she had once played (Alcott 272). Like the child mesmerized by her first reflection, the all too literate Jo bides her time at the Chester's adopting the monosyllabic register of the child, responding to Mrs. and the Misses Chester's questions with just a simple "Yes" or "No" (272). Ironically, it is Amy who ". . . telegraphed the word 'talk', tried to draw her out . . ." but in vain (272). Again, like the child rapt by her own image (provided by way of either an actual mirror or mother herself), "Jo sat as if blandly unconscious of it all" (273), unaware of everything but the part she is playing. Their next stop, the Lamb's, proves just as ill-executed, even though Jo promises to correct her behavior: ". . . and now I'll imitate what is called 'a charming girl'. . ." (273). Jo embarrasses Amy beyond all mortification by recounting the story of Amy's attempts at teaching herself how to learn to ride. And, just when the visit couldn't get any worse, Jo responds to Mrs. Lamb's praise of Jo's latest literary endeavor with condescending contempt: "Sorry you could find nothing better to read. I write that rubbish because it sells, and ordinary people like it" (275). Needless to say, Mrs. Lamb does not take kindly to Jo's assessment of her

work and its readership. But, then, any attempts like Mrs. Lamb's to bridge the Imaginary and the Symbolic, two modes of psychic operation forever at loggerheads, must be doomed from the start.

The sisters seem to sense as much. Upon approaching their next stop, when Jo asks how she should behave, an exasperated Amy curtly responds, "Just as you please. I wash my hands of you" (Alcott 276). This suits Jo just fine as she is given "An enthusiastic welcome from three big boys and several pretty children" whereupon they all set off for some outdoor frolic. Amy, meanwhile, keeps herself shut indoors with the older members of the family, reveling in the surrounding images of noble lineage. Conversely, Jo, giving free expression to her Symbolic tendencies, passed the time in narrative repose, listening to the boys' "college stories" and repaying them in kind by relating "one of Laurie's pranks" (276). When it comes time to leave, Amy discovers Jo reclined on the grass, where she finds her in such soiled state that she forgets her recent resolve and resumes her efforts at sculpting Jo into a compatriot of the Imaginary. Like she had with Laurie, Amy assumes the role of the nurturing mother. Wiping away the crumbs from her sister's bonnet, Amy persuades a somewhat reluctant Jo to accompany her to their last stop, the home of their dreaded Aunt March. Before entering, Amy, "with a maternal air" (278), reminds Jo that "Women should learn to be agreeable, particularly poor ones, for they have no way of repaying the kindnesses they receive" (278). Unbeknownst to Amy, herself, such words will prove of immediate utility.

Upon entering Aunt March's capacious abode, Amy wrests from a petulent Jo the promise that she "compose" herself and not worry their Aunt with "new ideas," to which Jo only begrudgingly agrees to "try." When they enter, they find Aunt March otherwise occupied in discussing with their Aunt Carrol a matter of some gravity that evidently concerns their nieces if

the elder ladies' peremptory silence is any indication. Once seated, it doesn't take long for Jo to give in to impish temptation while Amy assumes an "angelic frame of mind" (Alcott 279). When both aunts inquire into Amy's willingness to assist in the upcoming local fair, they find Amy not just appropriately laconic but immediately "agreeable." As if the question were posed to *her*, Jo responds with a very contrary and wordy rejoinder: "I'm not [willing] . . . I hate to be patronized, and the Chesters think it's a great favor to allow us to help with their highly connected fair" (279). Jo would have been wise to heed her sister's recent advice, for "If Jo had only known what a great happiness was wavering in the balance for one of them, she would have turned dovelike in a minute" (279). Turns out, just as Jo and Amy had entered, the aunts had been debating over which of the two would accompany Aunt Caroll on her Grand Tour of Europe. Interestingly, Alcott leaves the reader wondering who might be the happy recipient; it is left to the following chapter, appropriately titled "Consequences," to answer this question and in doing so will underscore the opposing Lacanian natures of Jo and Amy.

The better part of "Consequences" is given over to the unwelcomed results of Amy's involvement in the Chester's' fair, but Jo too will experience her share of consequences before the chapter is done. The episode begins with Amy having set up her table of artistic wares adoringly displayed, which immediately earns the envy of Miss May Chester. Soon after, the elder Mrs. Chester requests Amy remove herself and her things to a table further away from the main traffic of patrons. Although utterly humiliated, Amy does as she is told without argument, her pride and desire to remain agreeable keeping her anger in check. Once the outraged Jo learns of the injustice, she and Laurie along with a band of cohorts conspire to buy out the whole of Amy's table. Meanwhile, May Chester has since come to regret her selfish behavior and has appeared before both Amy and Jo thoroughly contrite. All is forgiven and so is closed yet

another episode illustrating the contrary natures of the two sisters; the chapter, on the other hand, still has some way to go in demarcating those differences.

The remainder of "Consequences" is all about Amy's "reward" and Jo's loss. Not long after the events at the Chester's fair, the March family receives a letter from Aunt Caroll, where they learn, much to Jo's supreme disappointment, that their aunt has chosen Amy as the one to accompany her to Europe. Jo proves inconsolable, arguing that "it's my turn first" and that "it would do me so much good" (Alcott 290). Marmee informs her of the conversation she had with Aunt Caroll just the other day when the wealthy dowager had confided in her that Jo was her first choice but then "she regretted [Jo's] blunt manners and too independent spirit," referring to the defiant tone Jo had adopted during her and Amy's visit. She goes on to add that "Amy is more docile, will make a good companion . . ." (290). Viewed one way, Aunt Caroll's decision has relegated Amy to the unflattering status of domestic canine, a comparison that proves all too apt; for like the well-trained dog, the child mired in the Imaginary proves just as docile and steadfast, a condition that best approximates the very "agreeable" Amy and one that couldn't be any more at odds with the sensibilities of Jo. These two chapters simply throw into stark relief what Jo has all along intuited, namely that she is just not cut out for an Imaginary existence; as a budding writer, it would seem her natural home is within the Symbolic.

It is only appropriate that the reader learn of Jo's call to the Symbolic within the chapter that recreates her journal, that is, where acting as her own narrator, she begins to ply in earnest what she and her family believe to be her true talent, or, as seen through a Lacanian lens, she continues her transsexual quest to possess the phallus, committing to the pen as her surrogate "detachable penis." The chapter in which this takes place is entitled, not surprisingly, "Jo's Journal." In it, we find Jo making her way in New York City, her consolation for missing out on

the Grand Tour of Europe. Here in the big city, the small town, self-deprecating author believes she "shall see and hear new things, get new ideas, and, even if I haven't much time there, I shall bring home quantities of material for my rubbish" (310). Like so many before and after her, Jo believes New York City to be her own tailor-made muse and would-be source of inspiration. And, indeed, once there, Jo takes up residence in a boarding house where she seems able to give free rein to her literary proclivities. Appropriately enough, her new lodgings offer her a view of a church tower, a daily reminder of the patriarchal phallus Lacan believed ever attends the Symbolic.

This is not to say, however, that her new environment is altogether lacking the feminine touch. Her landlady, we are told, treats her in a "motherly way" (Alcott 313). As well she should since it turns out she is an intimate of Marmee's; in fact, she might very well prove a co-conspirator. For she "gladly accepted Jo" but only after the trip was decided by convening a "family council" and referred to in the potentially ominous terms of "The plan" (311). Might that "plan" involve her future landlady acting as Marmee substitute? More forbidding still, the very name of the woman to whom Jo will be entrusted, Mrs. Kirke, if treated as a disyllabic, alludes to one of the more formidable women of the ancient world. Circe, the enchantress, proved herself not only a worthy rival for the wily Odysseus but also more than a match for his world-weary crew, changing their appearance into that of swine. So it should come as no surprise that, no matter how Symbolic Jo's intentions may be, this chapter is dominated from beginning to end by the Imaginary mode, marked as it is by one of its signature motifs, that of the disguise, both real and implied.

The motif of the disguise is Alcott's answer to the Lacanian veil. For disguise suggests not only the concealment of something untoward or unwanted but also highlights that which one

fundamentally lacks, either the presence or absence of the phallus, which the veil conveniently accommodates:

> The problem for Lacan is how does one symbolically represent 'lack' – something that by definition is not there? His solution is the idea of the 'veil.' The presence of the veil suggests that there is an object behind it, which the veil covers over, although this is only a presumption on the part of the subject. In this way the veil enables the perpetuation of the idea that the object exists. Thus, both boys and girls can have a relationship to the phallus on the basis that it always remains veiled and out of reach. (Homer 56)

It bears repeating that the relationship between subject and object is one that is fundamentally deceptive since ultimately there is nothing the veil hides nor conceals, obstructs nor obfuscates. This is the same idea that the great Irish writer James Joyce some 70 years later would pick up on. According to Sheldon Brivic in his landmark study *The Veil of Signs: Joyce, Lacan, and Perception,* Joyce will single out the Circe episode as one ripe for Lacanian application: "The two most climatic chapters of *Ulysses* feature images of reaching the other side of the veil. They are rending images in "Circe," while the passage is quiet and thoughtful in "Ithaca" (114). The rending of the veil, Brivic argues, has the effect of bringing together the novel's two central male characters in a union akin to that of father and son (114-115). In *Little Women,* Alcott has a similar tale to tell, one that begins in earnest within the pages of "Jo's Journal," a meditation on the nature of disguise or more precisely, the Lacanian veil.

At the start of "Jo's Journal," Jo, by functioning as narrator, assumes in a metafictional manner something of a disguise, namely the author hiding behind a chosen voice; moreover, as

"author," she also has final editorial say, that is, she decides what to include but, more importantly, what to leave out, in effect, what to leave hidden. Thus she presents an image of herself that at best can be described as partial and at worse, misleading. In fact, by chapter's end the reader is left more than ever in the dark as to who the real Jo is. She makes the very deliberate decision to bring her journal to a close by recounting the boarding house's New Year's masquerade, an event that she nearly misses for want of something to wear. Fittingly, Mrs. Kirke comes to the rescue by working her Homeric magic; Jo is transformed by way of an "old brocade" and some "lace and feathers," and the effect proves so enchanting that, while under the spell, she keeps "disguised [her] voice" until the unmasking (323). Not surprisingly, "For Lacan, masquerade is the very definition of 'femininity'" (Rose 135). So the element of disguise need not be regarded as solely a binary matter of disclosure versus concealment, but when put in Lacanian terms, may very well keep hidden only that which one lacks, namely the phallus. In no one is this more telling than in the character of Professor Bhaer, the character who will serve for Jo as conduit to the Symbolic.

Just as Mrs. Kirke acts as Jo's home-away-from-home mother, Professor Bhaer will (at least initially) serve as surrogate father for the seemingly fatherless Jo, eventually providing her the much needed and long deferred Name-of-the-Father. Newly arrived from his native Berlin, where he worked at the University, Professor Bhaer is "very learned and good, but poor as a church mouse" (Alcott 314). He has come to America at the behest of his sister, where he "gives lessons to support himself and two little orphan nephews whom he is educating here" (314). Jo would later discover this other identity of his, thinking she has seen past the disguise, as it were, and therefore feel ". . . proud to know that he was an honored Professor in Berlin, though only a poor language-master in America" (329). In addition to playing the part of the struggling

pedagogue, Mr. Bhaer finds himself not immune to the bestial enchantments of Mrs. Kirke. He frequently assumes the guise of a kindly Papa Bear, one who tends to the needs of children and one who is more often than not to be found, from among the boarding house's many rooms, in the "den," where is housed his vast collection of books and where he and Jo will conduct the majority of their subsequent encounters. He first attracts Jo's notice by his "fatherly look" (315), the perfect remedy for one who "felt a trifle blue" after moving to the big city where she "lost sight of Father's dear old face" (313). Not long after making his acquaintance, Jo becomes his pupil as she tries to learn German. As a result, she too finds herself falling victim to the transforming effects of the boarding house as she is put into a subordinate and thoroughly infantilizing role, if her textbook is any indication: the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson (321). More like a parent putting his child to bed than a tutor providing instruction, Professor Bhaer reads Jo the *Constant Tin Soldier* in such a way "so I could laugh" (321). For her part, Jo, like the child just learning to read, ". . . didn't understand half he read" (321).

Judging from the rhetorical flourishes of the journal writer, it would appear that Jo and not Professor Bhaer, much less Mrs. Kirke, is the one responsible for perpetuating the parent/child dynamic:

> After that we got on better, and now I read my lessons pretty well, for *this way of studying suits me*, and I can see that the grammar gets tucked into the tales and poetry as one gives pills in jelly. (321; emphasis added)

Like the child who demands her medicine go down smoothly, Jo would seem to be in need of what the very bookish Mr. Bhaer has to offer, specifically the Name-of-the-Father that at this point she only unconsciously senses will aid in the eventual fulfillment of her literary ambitions.

This is his real disguise and so would explain why she presents herself at the masquerade as Mrs. Malaprop, the character in the whole of literature most in need of linguistic instruction. Through *her* disguise, in other words, she signals to the Professor the desire to maintain their present level of engagement. Not until his Lacanian influence is made more consciously explicit, however, will Jo feel the need to renegotiate the terms of their relationship. For now she is content to maintain the status quo. For his part, Professor Bhaer would seem to be operating on a slightly different wavelength, if his choice of costume is any indication.

During the masquerade, in yet another in a long line of Ms. Alcott's Shakespearean references, "Mr. Bhaer was Nick Bottom" (323). In *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, the character of Nick Bottom has over the years served for many an audience as pure comic relief, nothing more and nothing less. From the moment he enters, he plays the oblivious buffoon, culminating in the ignominious transformation of his head into that of an ass's, courtesy of Puck, foremost of the woodland fairies. At the start of Act IV Nick Bottom falls asleep and when he awakens, believes his metamorphosis to have been only a dream but one of disquieting existential epiphany; his human head having safely returned, he vows, ". . . I / will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this / dream" (4. 1. 211-213). For his part, Professor Bhaer, once he sheds his own ass's head in the following chapter, will, in his own way, present Jo with the same literary challenge.

Until that time, Jo attempts to make it on her own in New York City. The chapter titled "A Friend" follows the disappointing path of Jo's early career as published author, one that is launched under not only the most inauspicious but also the most disguised of circumstances. To begin, she presents her very first manuscript as a work authored by "A friend of mine . . ." (325). Then, when it is roundly rejected on the grounds that it is too moralistic, she reluctantly agrees to

excise all those passages of didactic import, which eventually meets with the approval of Mr. Dashwood, the editor-in-chief of the *Weekly Volcano*, a periodical whose name is a cruel reminder of the patriarchy's seminal authority over all things linguistic. Once published, Jo's first outing proves an unqualified success, leading her thereafter to supply Dashwood and his readership with a steady stream of ever-increasing sensationalist dreck. For the New England maiden of unvarnished rectitude, however, such efforts do not sit well with conscience. More than that, she suspects a degree of inauthenticity in these literary endeavors of hers, that is, she senses something that smacks too much of the Imaginary:

> She thought she was prospering finely, but unconsciously she was beginning to desecrate some of the womanliest attributes of a woman's character. She was living in bad society, and *imaginary though it was*, its influence affected her, for she was feeding heart and fancy on *dangerous and unsubstantial* food, and was fast brushing the innocent bloom from her nature by a premature acquaintance with the darker side of life, which comes soon enough to all of us. (328; emphasis added)

By "darker side" the narrator would seem to be referencing the editorial staff of the *Weekly Volcano*, but perhaps it is that side of Jo in which she finds herself still in the dark. Her literary efforts might be "unsubstantial" because they rely on the illusory nature of the Imaginary, and thus "dangerous" because they represent a decided step backward for one determined to move forward, namely in her literary ambitions; however, having long trucked in the Imaginary, Jo is more than well acquainted with that attractive Lacanian sanctuary. In the Symbolic, she still

finds herself in the dark, the psychic region with which she can unequivocally claim "premature acquaintance"; in other words, she just hasn't gotten to know Professor Bhaer well enough.

As a man of many layers, the Professor proves to be someone difficult to fathom. For his is a finely-honed intellect coupled with a gently nurtured sensitivity. As a result, nothing much gets by him, either mentally or emotionally. He has easily deduced Jo's literary enterprise, one that, judging from her vacant byline, would seem to suggest she is none too proud of and therefore would hope to keep clandestine. Not that the Professor would ever make such knowledge known to anyone else, much less the author herself, at least not directly; instead, he goes about rending her Lacanian veil only by degrees. According to the narrator, this is because he is "a diffident man and slow to offer his own opinions" (Alcott 331). Diffident because he would appear by nature to be an unusually compassionate man, one reluctant to bring up matters that might prove potentially unsettling or embarrassing. For example, when in the presence of the Professor, Jo picks up a copy of what she thinks to be the latest edition of the *Volcano* and immediately blushes; the ever shrewd Professor, who has "met her down among the newspaper offices more than once," is quick to read her look: "Now it occurred to him that she was doing what she was ashamed to own, and it troubled him" (332). Taking pity upon her that proves distinctly paternal, the Professor "was moved to help her with an impulse as quick and natural as that which would prompt him to put out his hand to save a baby from a puddle" (333). His help comes only by way of the most tempered, most circuitous of correctives. He condemns such writing as is to be found within the pages of journals like the *Volcano* and goes on to punctuate those sweeping, censorious remarks with dramatic flourish: Crumpling up her paper and tossing it into the fire, he expresses the wish that he might "send the rest after him [Jo's paper]" (333). No matter how careful he is to keep his comments generic, they nonetheless sear into the very

particular heart of Jo, who resolves from that point onward to give up sensationalist writing, whether it be for the *Weekly Volcano* or for any other such periodical.

Fishing around for an alternative literary medium, however, proves an exercise in frustration for Jo. When she attempts to assume the role of the writer of morality tales, she soon finds that her efforts end up reading more like essays or sermons and so concludes that "she would have done masquerading in the stiff and cumbersome costume of the last century" (Alcott 334-35). She next tries her hand at crafting children's stories for which she finds herself just as ill-suited. For "much as she liked to write for children," she finds that she is simply not able to keep to the genre's unbending agenda (335). In the end, she decides to take a temporary break from her writing and allow herself to blithely follow not only the intellectual but moral dictates of Professor Bhaer. Here the reader discovers the true meaning of the chapter's title as well as the inspiration for Jo's greatest work, the one that will define her (aka Alcott) as a writer:

> He [Bhaer] helped her in many ways, proving himself a true friend, and Jo was happy, for while her pen lay idle, she was learning other lessons besides German, and laying the foundation for the sensation story of her own life. (335)

Not sensationalism but the sensation of everyday life is what is important here; Jo wishes to get back to the real, the world of sensory apprehension, one of direct connection with others. To do so, however, will require that she take her leave of the Professor and return to the reality of her New England roots.

On the face of it, Jo must bid farewell to the Professor and, for that matter, Mrs. Kirke and every other boarding-house inhabitant, as her stay was only intended to be a temporary one. Yet there is another, more Lacanian cause for her departure. For someone newly catapulted into

the Symbolic, who desires to write "the sensation story of her life," she must flee the orbit of the Professor who, in ushering her into the Symbolic, has effectively castrated her. His Name-of-the-Father, no matter how muted and indirect, nevertheless, proved efficacious; however, to achieve that desired end, meant assuming Jo to be the girl-child that she is and thus demand due submission to the Law-of-the-Father, which in turn demands conformity to the Lacanian female model. Unfortunately for Jo, that model is one defined in the main by lack. As a result, she is effectively denied access to the pen insofar as it functioned only as the Imaginary, "detachable" penis substitute and one, therefore, barred from the Symbolic.

Once Jo is beyond the psychic reach of the Professor and back in her childhood transsexual milieu, she takes up the pen again and begins to take steps in realizing what will amount to her life's project. Such an endeavor will be informed by that ever-elusive but all-too attractive register of the Real since Jo's story will have at its center her beloved but ailing sister, Beth, the very embodiment of the Real. Her terminal sibling proves the ideal muse since "the most apt illustration of our relation to the real is our relation to the fact of death" (Mellard 158). Unfortunately for Jo, ". . . those qualities of the Real are beyond human apprehension in any direct way" (156-57). Jo's first compositional effort proves as much as it amounts to a pastiche of perspectives of anything but the Real. As Beth finally begins to succumb to scarlet fever, Jo pens a eulogy entitled "My Beth." The poem is filled with laudable enough sentiment, but it is inundated with solipsistic expressions such as "Leave me," "bequeath me," "Give me," "forgive me" (Alcott 390), suggesting Jo remains far from the detached, egoless world of the Real; in fact, the poem's maudlin preoccupation with pain, further suggests that Jo is confusing the Real with realism. But ". . . Reality, for Lacan, equals 'fantasy' and draws one into the domains of the

Imaginary and the Symbolic, both of which are specifically human realms, the Real is not the same as Reality" (Mellard 157).

After Beth's passing, Jo is guilty of slipping into just such human error as she will alternately take recourse to both the Imaginary and the Symbolic in her attempts to come to terms with her devastating loss. Upon her deathbed, Beth charged Jo with taking her place in the family dynamic, and, to her everlasting credit, Jo does her best to honor her sister's wish:

> Brooms and dishcloths never could be as distasteful as they once had been, for Beth had presided over both; and something of her housewifely spirit seemed to linger round the little mop and the old brush, that was never thrown away. As she used them, Jo found herself humming the songs Beth used to hum, imitating Beth's orderly ways. (Alcott 405)

But such an existence cannot sustain itself for long as it is one that, as the narrator had so succinctly put it, is merely imitation and not the real thing, certainly not Lacan's Real: "To remain caught up in mourning too long is to remain trapped in an unhealthy Imaginary relationship. One has to let go of the desired object, accept the loss or lack of the beloved" (Mellard 172). Jo would seem to sense as much, which is why she finds herself increasingly drawn into communion with her father and by extension the Symbolic. Since last they were together, their relationship has undergone a noticeable change:

> . . . for the time had come when they could talk together not only as father and daughter, but as man and woman, able and glad to serve each other with mutual sympathy as well as mutual love. Happy, thoughtful times there in the old study which Jo called the church of one member. (Alcott 405)

Jo and her father's relationship has evidently graduated to a level of Symbolic maturity – clearly the result of Jo's recent apprenticeship served under Professor Bhaer. But what is even more telling is Jo's rechristening of the family study as "the church of one member," a title intended to convey the near-sacred bond newly formed between father and daughter; Jo evidently feels they are now of one mind. From a Lacanian perspective, however, that "one member" is, of course, the male member, itself, or more to the point, the phallus, that signifier of signifiers:

> The phallus is both the signifier of the differences between the sexes and the signifier which effaces lack and thus difference. It is the term with respect to which the two sexes are defined as different, and the term which functions to bring them together, the term of their union. (Grosz 136)

As opposed to the Professor, Jo's father offers that other side of the Symbolic, which "effaces lack" and which Jo requires if she hopes to successfully compose her life's story.

Professor Bhaer follows Jo to her New England home, effectively meeting her on her own terms. The hope is that Jo will be able to realize that same side of the Symbolic revealed to her by her father. Things start out promising enough. In the chapter appropriately entitled "Surprises," the Professor comes knocking one day out of the blue but fails to catch Jo completely unawares as evidenced by her invitation to join the present family gathering: "Come in, and make one of us" (Alcott 420). On the surface, Jo is simply offering the Professor to join in on the festivities; on a deeper level, she reveals a degree of Lacanian knowingness expresses an unconscious desire for the two of them to become as one. But, make no mistake; her invitation is fueled by the same Symbolic ethos she now experiences with her father. In an ironic twist that Lacan would undoubtedly relish, she is, in effect, making claims upon her surrogate

father as she had earlier done with her own father, even though, as standard bearers of the Symbolic, fathers, be them biological or otherwise, are by Lacanian definition, lawgivers, not law receivers. Simply put, Jo is attempting to break the mold, or worse, to turn psychic reality completely on its head. Nowhere is this better seen than in the Professor's proposal, an exercise in the vicissitudes of the Symbolic made even more malleable by an unusually apt yet unruly objective correlative.

The chapter "Under the Umbrella" is where the Professor finally pops the question. Since coming to town, he had become a regular fixture in the March household with all of its inhabitants unanimously certain that a marriage proposal was forthcoming. But "then he stayed away for three whole days" (Alcott 438), which proved a source of no small consternation for Jo who had all along attempted to keep thoughts of romance in practical check. Likewise, for this present crisis, Jo is quick to put up her customary stoical guard: "Disgusted, I dare say, and gone home as suddenly as he came. It's nothing to me, of course; but I should think he would have come and bid us good-by like a gentleman" (438). Up until this seeming abrupt and ungentlemanly departure, both he and Jo had made it a regular habit of daily running into each other in the course of their afternoon promenades. So now with all the desperation of a spurned lover, Jo "put on her things for the customary walk one dull afternoon" (438), in the vain hope of meeting her erstwhile paramour. Just before taking her leave, Jo is reminded by Marmee to "take the little umbrella," since "it looks like rain" (438). Significantly, she forgets to bring the "little umbrella"; in light of later events, such oversight would seem her way of saying that she will not settle for the *objet petit a*, or worse, the "detachable" penis, but only the true desire of the Other, no substitutes accepted. Once again, her terms and her terms only.

Sure enough, mother knows best, for almost as soon as Jo ventures outdoors, she finds herself caught in a downpour with no protection other than her "new bonnet" that would soon be sacrificed to the elements if she didn't find an umbrella in time. Just when all seemed lost and "with increasing dampness about the ankles, and much clashing of umbrellas overhead," in a quixotic flash, there appeared above her ". . . a somewhat dilapidated blue one [that] remained stationary above the unprotected bonnet" (Alcott 439). The shabby, albeit full-size umbrella that provides Jo her much-needed relief belongs to none other than the Professor. And just like that it was ". . . as if the sun had suddenly burst out with uncommon brilliancy, that the world was all right again, and that one thoroughly happy woman was paddling through the wet that day" (439). For one who just moments before found herself knee-deep in mud and (safe to say) self-pity and fearing the world was passing her by, Jo is now transformed by the man she will agree to walk through life with, "even though she had no better shelter than the old umbrella . . ." (443).

Theirs is no ordinary union. To begin with, thanks to its sexually-larded central symbol, the scene is just drenched with an ambivalent sexual imagery that could portend either elation or enervation. The umbrella has long since served many a writer and filmmaker as a not-so subtle phallic symbol, its openings and closings a seemingly apt parallel to tumenscence and detumescence. The fact that this umbrella is the property of Professor Bhaer and in dilapidated condition no less suggests a kind of enfeebled impotence that the Professor brings to the relationship even before the exchange of vows, suggesting that the good Professor might have issues of his own:

> 'Having' a penis, i.e., being a man, is no guarantee of warding off lack. On the contrary, rendering them equivalent has problems of its own, manifested in

> anxieties about sexual performance (impotence fears) as well as a sometimes desperate search for the other through whom the man can have his position as the possessor of the valued/desired organ confirmed. (Grosz 138)

Nevertheless, the blue of the umbrella can, indeed, symbolize sadness, a longing for Jo, but perhaps one motivated, at least in part, by a sexual frustration just longing for release. And then the rain, the whole reason for the need for an umbrella in the first place. Is it meant to signify an impediment or a purification? Will it rain on their marital parade or will the rain help to cleanse them of their past, enabling them to achieve equal status on the Symbolic level? The narrative extends far enough into the future to confidently assert that Jo and the Professor have, at the very least, renegotiated the terms of their engagement, if ever so unconsciously and imperceptibly.

The fact that the two of them partake of the umbrella, suggests a more egalitarian affair than the parent/child relationship earlier nurtured in the big city of New York. From the outset, Jo makes it painfully clear that her dear Fritz will not necessarily be her only priority: "I have my duty, also, and my work. I couldn't enjoy myself if I neglected them even for you, so there's no need of hurry or impatience" (Alcott 449). Unwilling to give up her professional life, Jo is truly the proto-feminist. She even goes so far as to suggest that Fritz continue his work even if that means a prolonged separation: "You can do your part out West, I can do mine here, and both be happy hoping for the best and leaving the future to be as God wills" (449). Not only the first feminist but the first recorded bi-coastal couple! Alcott was undoubtedly ahead of her time. Finally, as a kind of coup de grace, Jo, "*stooping down*, kissed her Friedrich under the umbrella" (449; emphasis added). So perhaps not so egalitarian after all. Secure on her own home turf, Jo would seem to clearly have the upper hand, calling the shots as she sees fit. Yet Jo is no way a control freak; keeping her options open is her way of expressing her Lacanian proclivities. She

demands to have it both ways, to come and go between the Symbolic and Imaginary, to be and to have the phallus, that is, to simultaneously boast both absence and presence, a psychological sleight of hand thoroughly illustrated in the novel's final chapter.

The novel's closing chapter "Harvest Time" finds both Jo's mental health and station in life markedly improved. To begin with, she is now happily married to Professor Bhaer; she is also the fortunate heir to her Aunt March's estate, Plumfield. As opposed to her surviving sisters, however, Jo is at present without biological offspring; nevertheless, she finds her hands ceaselessly occupied with the welfare of the children of others. For she and the Professor have since turned Plumfield into a school for wayward boys. But as Jo herself proudly insists, it was her idea from the outset:

> just understand that this isn't a new idea of mine, but a long-cherished plan. Before my Fritz came, I used to think how, when I'd made my fortune, and no one needed me at home, I'd hire a big house, and pick up some poor, forlorn little lads who hadn't any mothers, and take care of them, and make life jolly for them before it was too late. (Alcott 451)

In one way Jo is simply remaining steadfast to her beliefs. Earlier, when she tried her hand at writing children's stories, she soon abandoned the pursuit because ". . . much as she liked to write for children, Jo could not consent to depict all her naughty boys as being eaten by bears . . . because they did not go to a particular Sabbath school . . ." (335). Even though "Some are naughty," her "young bears" (452) are not compelled to submit to any prescribed creed, and they certainly are not devoured by bears but only nurtured by the Bhaers. They are so tenderly cared for that in the estimation of the narrator, "It [Plumfield] became a sort of boys' paradise" (453).

What is most striking about Jo's new enterprise is that it caters only to boys and specifically those of the motherless variety. Such a focus group would seem to suggest that its members fill a need for their benefactor just as much as she does for them. Jo's present situation is just the opposite of what it was when she was growing up. Instead of attempting to be the man of a house full of women, she is now doing her level best to play the matron to a house full of men. Her new names reflect as much. Her husband has taken to addressing her by the diminutive "Professorin" (445), while her "boys" affectionately refer to her as "Mother Bhaer" (454). She would seem to relish these new forms of address just as much as she had when she was known by the more masculine moniker "Jo." It is as if she has traded in one gendered identity for another, closing the door on the one while opening up the other. And so it would seem when Amy reminds her of the life she had ". . . pictured so long ago. Do you remember our castles in the air?" (457). Jo responds "in a maternal way" that would seem to bespeak an embarrassed, world-weary regret: "Yes, I remember, but the life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me now" (457). Put in Lacanian terms, Jo seems to have all but submitted to the lack inherent to the Name-of-the-Father to the exclusion of possession; having surrendered to the Symbolic and the patriarchal order it represents she has agreed to content herself with only *being* and not having the Phallus.

But all is not lost as Jo has not entirely shut the door on her previous life and her demand to have it both ways. The very fact that the novel closes with her surrounded by those who bore witness to that life suggests that side of her will be kept alive if only within the tradition of the family's folklore. That it may psychologically persist within the conscious mind of Jo herself is evidenced by her declaration that "I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I'm sure it will be all the better for such experiences and illustrations as

these" (Alcott 457). Jo is referring to those around her who helped create the story of her life, those who figured into all those "experiences" and "illustrations" which make up her storehouse of memory and that will provide the necessary moral (and psychological) fodder for her future readers. Foremost among those figures is the Jo of old, the pre-Plumfield Jo, the one who desired to be the "man" of the family, to possess the phallus, so much so, she transexualized her life-long friend for that very purpose. (And, metafictionally speaking, severely curtailed the narrative presence of her father). By resurrecting her past by way of the printed word, bringing back the masculine Jo, the new Jo will effectively manage to juxtapose the Imaginary with her present-day Symbolic sensibilities, to be both present and absent, to both have and to be the Phallus. She will be counted as yet another variation of the Van Rough model.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSION: BALANCE HARD-WON

As an incipient subgenre, young adult fiction of the nineteenth century is not nearly as rich and varied as it is today. Nevertheless, there is far more of it than what I have proffered here. In addition to the host of Tom Sawyer and Jo March sequels that Twain and Alcott provided their eager audiences, Washington Irving jumpstarted the century by giving us such classics as "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle," tales that even today continue to both delight and frighten children of all ages. Then there are all those regional writers of the latter half of the century whose works tend to occupy that middle ground between the adult and the young adult, works like "Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" penned by Bret Harte, Mark Twain's contemporary and one-time friend. Other writers of "local color" include Alcott's New England sisters, Mary Wilkins Freeman and Sarah Orne Jewett. Then there is Willa Cather, whose short stories and novels always seem to have the struggling adolescent in mind, most notably in "Paul's Case" and *My Antonia*. Just as popular at the time but far less enduring are the works of Francis Woodworth and Jacob Abbott. If your tastes tend more toward the racist, there is always Joel Chandler Harris's "Uncle Remus." Finally, in capping off the century, no list would be complete without the mention of that perennial, pseudo sci-fi favorite of young people the world over *The Wonderful World of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.

I have no doubt that if put to critical scrutiny the foregoing works, like the ones already analyzed here, would reveal themselves to be likewise meditations on the quest for equipoise between the feminine and the masculine; that under the halcyon guise of innocence that typically masks young adult fiction, lies certain psychological viscera dramatized in these works for the

sake of providing, if not moral, then cognitive instruction. For young adult fiction exerts the same efficacious influence, serves the same psychological function, as the traditional fairy tale upon the unconscious of the developing child. According to Bruno Bettelheim in his groundbreaking but highly controversial work *The Uses of Enchantment*,

> It is here [in the child's sexual awakening] that fairy tales have unequaled value, because they offer new dimensions to the child's imagination which would be impossible for him to discover as truly on his own. Even more important, the form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life. (7)

The process by which this last is achieved is similar to the manner in which I have approached representative young adult fiction of the nineteenth century, namely one premised on the notion that there is an innate and ongoing transactional investigation between reader and text. Again, as Bettelheim puts it: "In a fairy tale, internal processes are externalized and become comprehensible as represented by the figures of the story and its events" (25). Once accomplished, the fairy tale, as well as the work of young adult fiction, has successfully served its office. For Bettelheim, the task of the fairy tale and its reader is no different than that which is inherent in the relationship of every analyst and analysand (or, for that matter, every work of young adult fiction and its reader):

> The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his own solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this moment in his life. The content of the chosen tale usually has nothing to do

> with the patient's external life, but much to do with his inner problems, which seem incomprehensible and hence unsolvable. (25)

"Content" may be incidental for the fairy tale's targeted audience, but is absolutely essential to the reader of young adult fiction; indeed, comprehension of the psychological relevance of young adult fiction rests in the reader's understanding of its content's pragmatic value, its real world application. This is best illustrated in the pages of that novel that has for over a century now entertained both adult and non-adult: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Ever since the publication of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, readers and critics alike have regarded it as a success but one not without qualification. While some found it "coarse" and "vulgar," others, even Twain's contemporary readers – never mind modern ones – took particular exception to his copious (many would say gratuitous) use of racial epithets, specifically the over 200 times the word "nigger" appears within the narrative. Offensive as Twain's diction may be for many, of more ubiquitous concern is the turn of events involved in the last part of the novel, which is mainly responsible for its often qualified assessment.

That last part has proven so troublesome that in the Norton Critical edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* under the heading of "Criticism" there is a subsection entitled "The Problem of the Ending." Essays by such respected critics as Leo Marx and James M. Cox are included, while the interpretive efforts of such luminaries as Lionel Trilling and T.S. Eliot are frequently cited. At issue is the final fifth of the novel that takes place at the Phelps Farm. Tom Sawyer's Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas have invited Tom, who they haven't seen for many years, for an extended stay. But when Huck shows up at their doorstep in order to free Jim who happens to be in their custody, both aunt and uncle mistake him for their long-absent nephew. When Tom

finally does appear, he mischievously assumes the role of Huck. For he quickly sizes up the situation, hatching an elaborate but quixotic plan to free Jim, which, for reasons unknown, he feels requires the need for such disguise. Thus, Tom sets the stage for a conclusion of burlesque proportions.

On the whole, the Phelps are a benevolent sort and restrain Jim only because he is a runaway slave but do so only by means of a lightly secured chain from which he could easily extricate himself. This does not stop Tom from concocting all manner of unnecessary action to free Jim. After what seems an endless parade of preparation, in which Tom and Huck turn the Phelps's home upside down and drive Aunt Sally to utter distraction, they are finally ready to free Jim. During their escape attempt, however, Tom is shot in the leg and, while Huck fetches a doctor, Jim refuses to leave Tom's side, in effect sacrificing his freedom. All three fugitives are returned to the Phelps farm where the whole truth is eventually revealed, including the fact that during the entire time of Jim's captivity, Tom knew he was a free man, having been informed that Miss Watson, Jim's "owner," had freed him in her will.

What readers object to is that, even though Huck is ignorant of Jim's newly freed status, he knows full well that Tom's plan is entirely unnecessary and may, indeed, get them all killed but goes along with it anyway. This especially does not sit right with the reader who has just learned that Huck, prior to arriving at the Phelps farm, has performed his own act of self-sacrifice, albeit one enacted in the privacy of one's own conscience; it is a moment made even more moribund since it involves the willing perdition of Huck's own 14 year-old soul. His conscience getting the better of him, Huck drafts a letter to Miss Watson, informing her of the whereabouts of her runaway slave. Initially, Huck feels "washed clean of sin for the first time,"

but when thinking about all the kindness and affection Jim had bestowed upon him during their trip down the Mississippi, his heart now gets the better of him:

> It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:
>
> "All right, then, I'll go to hell" – and tore it up. (Clemens169)

How can such a noble deed so quickly be forgotten, to the point where Huck will even serves as willing accomplice in Tom's machinations? The average reader understandably has a hard time reconciling the actions of the private with the public Huck.

The cause for consternation for both the casual and the critical reader is that they have come to expect from the narrative a certain plot development, what is known in literary argot as a bildungsroman, a coming-of-age novel, one where the protagonist measurably grows from start to finish, a story of maturation, in other words. This is perfectly understandable given the growing egalitarian affection between Huck and Jim over the course of their journey, one that clearly culminates in the letter-tearing episode; however, as we have seen, the novel's ending effectively subverts those expectations and for good reason: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is *not* a bildungsroman but instead, a zeitroman. A zeitroman, literally translated, is a novel of the times, a reflection of one's own milieu, warts and all.

For most, the setting of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is the antebellum south. Yet, on a more expressionistic level, the novel could well be considered to take place in postbellum America, specifically the time of Twain's own readership. Published in 1884, *Adventures of*

Huckleberry Finn appears a mere two decades after the end of the Civil War. Officially, the practice of slavery had been abolished, the nation's black populace now legally free in every state of the union. Nonetheless, this did not stop many from still treating that same populace as if it were the chattel it once was considered. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* captures this same mindset. Huck and Jim's trip down the Mississippi may seem like progress but it is, after all, "down" river, where they encounter far too many who believe Jim to be just a pawn, if not actual property. But as the ending conveys, even representatives of the so-called abolitionist north still regarded ex-slaves as not entirely human, even mere playthings for their amusement, while others, no matter how principled, sat silently by.

A similar but not an entirely identical perspective can just as easily be applied to the works analyzed here. Like *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* young adult fiction, if carefully crafted, can provide explicit, real-world instruction for those tempted to wander astray into the pitfalls of psychic imbalance and thereby exert a deleterious effect upon those around them; in other words, once the historical context of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, and *Little Women* is taken into account, then suddenly these stories take on the Janus-faced function of both bildungsroman *and* zeitroman, that is, they become profiles in both the psychological and the sociological. But unlike *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and others of its kind that are of a more mature bent, young adult fiction, is not an either/or proposition nor an upper/under card event. Because it is intended to mirror the mind of its reader, young adult storytelling is able to entertain with far greater facility both perspectives simultaneously as it claims the kind of open mind that its older literary siblings simply cannot. The sad fact is that the older we get the more close-minded we become and the more rigid our agendas grow. To borrow from the phraseology of Walt Whitman, the young (as well as their literature) "contain

multitudes." In fact, in these "immature" works the reader witnesses the intersection of two types of storytelling that results in a hybrid third, a new breed of narrative wherein the environment shapes the protagonist but where the protagonist, not content to be considered merely tabula rasa, pushes back and in so doing recreates, often radically so, that same environment. Such literature anticipates the principal tenets of twentieth century social psychology; as such, it is one that will see its full fruition not until the turn of the century in the movement known as modernism, seen most notably in the works of William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Henry James to name but a few. One need only to recall how Thomas Sutpen, a hardscrabble Southerner, has redefined our notions of the genteel South or how Jay Gatsby, strolling streets paved with gold, has forever stained the American Dream; and, never mind the terrorists, the inexperienced and impressionable Isabel Archer has now managed to make us think twice about booking that long-awaited tour of Europe. But until such time when characters of this ilk could make themselves explicitly felt, the literature of the nineteenth century, particularly the works in this present study, reveal this new narrative in embryo.

Because of their male protagonists, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* may be treated in tandem. If both narratives are commentary on the times in which they were written, then it makes perfect sense that both Tom and Miles would fight so tenaciously to achieve that sacred balance between the feminine and the masculine. For theirs was a time of extreme and near utter imbalance, one their creators fought, if only like their creations, ever so unconsciously, to rectify. It was no small feat since at the time America was caught in the grip of Manifest Destiny, the belief that it was Americans' God-given right to take what was not theirs. This was indicative of the national mindset throughout the nineteenth century and accounts for the widespread approval of what at this point can only be referred to as

an ethos of imperial masculinity. For further proof, one need not look far: the unconstitutionality of the Mexican War and the inhumanity of the Fugitive Slave Act are but two variations of the Manifest Destiny mindset. Criminal though they may have been, these actions were endorsed and implemented with arrogant impunity by many of America's political leaders of the time; moreover, it goes without saying that such institutional corruption was made possible only through the tacit approval of its citizenry. America at this time lacked a balanced approach to matters both domestic and abroad because its inhabitants, like the crew of the Pequod, fell under the sway of their all-too masculine-minded leaders, while effectively turning their backs on any palliating approach of the feminine. Yet, ignoring the one at the expense of the other can only result in a national profile informed by, at the very least, the occasional neurosis or, at worst, a schizophrenic break with the political realities of both domestic and international affairs. The creation of the Van Rough model represented on the part of the literary class an attempt to restore order by advocating a more temperate, middle of the road approach. But, as already illustrated, it was those writers of young adult fiction who would act as the nation's analyst in order to restore not just order but also psychic balance. For at what better moment to conduct their special brand of intervention than at an early age when readers were still impressionable and malleable enough to change their points of view? This was the task it would seem both Longfellow and Twain set for themselves and which, as we have seen, they could boast only a modicum of success.

For all intents and purposes, both Miles Standish and Tom Sawyer find themselves at the close of their respective narratives held in captivity. Cowed into submission by the trauma of the Freudian primal scene, Miles Standish – if the poem's final tableau is any indication – remains perpetually enfettered by not just a newly emboldened father but an imperiously-minded mother

as well. Considered as a zeitroman, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* holds a fate for its protagonist that would seem the likely outcome of one who flexed his muscles just one too many times in the presence of a far mightier entity. After having spent the better part of the poem bullying his friend and beating up Indians, Miles finally gets his comeuppance at the hand of displeased parents who are bent on towing the oedipal line and in doing so effectively unmanning him. It is a cautionary tale for a newly-formed nation to put a check on its growing hubris by reconsidering such ill-advised legislation as, say, the Monroe Doctrine. Likewise, Tom Sawyer, for all his heroics, psychological and otherwise, finds himself at narrative's end back in the cradle of the mothers by assuming, in good Jungian fashion, the role of the infantile archetype, Puer Aeternus. Tom's rebirth comes as such welcomed relief that it is even given government sanction by the town's ruling magistrate, Judge Thatcher, St. Petersburg's most influential "mother." As zeitroman, Tom's uneasy and protracted relationship with Injun Joe and its grisly resolution can be viewed as Twain's condemnation of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Injun Joe, for all his transgressive acts, prompted as they were by the ruling class, did not in the end warrant the slow, agonizing demise he was forced to suffer. Like the native population of Twain's time, Injun Joe, no matter how reprehensible he may be, is locked away, swept under the rug, as it were, left to simply wither away while the reader is left to wonder if the punishment fits the crime. For the Indian Removal Act represents a national sin, one that would seem beyond all redemption, preventing any return to innocence short of archetypal identification the likes of which Tom engages in at the end of his narrative. But, then Jung would be quick to remind us that identification with the archetype is not only illusory but also dangerous.

Longfellow and Twain are to be commended for keeping the feminine alive and well, but the way in which they both decide to conclude their bildungsroman/zeitroman suggest that the

masculine is just far too hegemonic and that the best course of action is to simply take refuge in the feminine rather than use it to combat, i.e., balance, nineteenth century imperial masculinity in which both Tom and Miles find themselves in thrall; for now the best they can do is to hunker down in the hope of seeing out this cultural maelstrom of one-sided masculinity. So, as enlightened as these two authors may be by acknowledging and so exalting the feminine, their apparent cynical take on their times casts something of a pall over their attempts at seeking psychic balance, never mind achieving civic equilibrium. It might be that their very gender prevents them from forecasting a sunnier outlook; in short, they might just have too intimate a knowledge of their own gender's expectations.

Louisa May Alcott, on the other hand, offers a far more hopeful vision within the resolution of her coming-of-age/sign-of-the-times novel. The Lacanian compromise reached at the end of *Little Women* suggests that Jo March might be on her way to helping lead a nation out of its century-long myopia. A mere twenty years after the Seneca Falls convention, Jo has taken advantage of her new-found autonomy to provide shelter and instruction for orphaned boys in need of the kind of hard-won balance that seemingly she only can properly inculcate. The end holds out hope as it involves, like Seneca had, a gathering organized and spearheaded by women, in this case Jo and her sisters with Marmee at its center. Meeting at Jo's newly-acquired estate, Plumfield, they have met on Jo's turf, and, therefore, on Jo's terms; in fact, it is Jo and the other March women who are given both literally and figuratively the last word. As a zeitroman, *Little Women* casts Jo as the literary equivalent of an Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and, as we in the present day have borne witness to nothing short of four ever-widening waves of the feminist movement – the result of that initial gathering at Seneca, which, itself, can be considered in large part the

impassioned fruits of Ms. Stanton's labors – I think it fair to say that *Little Women* is a novel wherein hope springs eternal.

As this study I hope has clearly shown, we have the literary class of the nineteenth century to thank for helping to preserve America's feminine touch in the face of overwhelming masculine imperialism, at least within the minds of its relatively narrow readership of young adults. These select American authors have been able to show like no other just how important balance between the feminine and the masculine is for the sake of maintaining the mental health of both the individual and the community. That said, I think it is safe to say that well before the nineteenth century and well beyond the boundaries of America, writers of all stripes and sizes have attempted to convey the absolute need for that same balance. What is the Aristotelian Golden Mean, if not a mere variation on this theme? But, at the risk of sounding too parochial, it is here on these shores during "the long nineteenth century" where the battles lines seem so sharply drawn and the battle so intensely internecine. I deliberately cite Hobsbawm because the project that was taken up so deftly by Longfellow, Twain, and Alcott did not end with them; in other words, the nineteenth century did not necessarily come to a close at 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 1899. Today, more than ever, when it seems we have returned to that same imperial masculinity that defined the nineteenth century, are writers of this kind of young adult fiction most needed, and, if a quick scan of the *N.Y. Times Book Review* is any indication, I am not alone in this opinion. Its urgency can best be measured by a simple look at the bestseller's lists; those whose work best rhetorically espouses the essential balance between the masculine and the feminine are those who consistently sit at the top of those lists. Who is Katniss Everdeen other than the new Van Rough? Her on-going battle with the ruling patriarchy backed only by a band of orphaned wanderers would seem to be a matter of simply picking up where Jo March left

off. To a lesser degree, Jeanine Matthews, protagonist of the *Divergent* series, offers more of the same. And these are just two examples of a score of bestselling dystopian novels recently released. As zeitromans, their post-apocalyptic-like settings suggest discontent with the present order or, better yet, disorder. As bildungsromans, their female but very militant protagonists suggest we have moved even closer to achieving balance, if not on the community level than certainly on the individual psychic plane. In this, it could well be said, is to be found the general achievement of the nineteenth century or, at least, the particular achievements, crowning as they were, of writers like Longfellow, Twain, and Alcott.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Volume II*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986.

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage Books. 1977.

Brevic, Sheldon. *The Veil of Signs: Joyce, Lacan, and Perception*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Breger, Louis. *Freud: Darkness in the Midst of Vision*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.

Brunner, Jose. "Oedipus Politicus: Freud's Paradigm of Social Relations". *Freud: Conflict and Culture*. Michael S. Roth Ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.

Buell, Lawrence. Introduction. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Selected Poems*. Lawrence Buell Ed. New York: Penguin Books, 1988, pp. vii-xxxii.

Calhoun, Charles. *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.

Clark, Beverly Lyon, ed. *A Norton Critical Edition: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.

Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1977.

Cushman, Phillip. *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy.* New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1995. Print.

"Disney use Subliminal Messages in their Animation." *Jim Carrey – Information*. 20 April 2009. Jim Carey – Information. 16 Feb. 2012 .

Doyle, Jennifer. "Jo March's Love Poems". *Nineteenth Century Literature*. December Vol. 60, Issue 3, pp. 375-402, 2005. *JSTOR Journals.* http://ezproxy.drew.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.10.1525.ncl.2005.60.3.375&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Edinger, Edward. *Melville's Moby-Dick: An American Nekyia*. Toronto, Canada: Inner

City Books, 1995.

Fetterley, Judith. “The Anxiety of Entertainment”. Modern Critical Views: Mark Twain. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986. 83-92.

Fleming, Fergus. *The Way to Eternity: Egyptian Myth*. London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 1997.

Fordham, Frieda. *An Introduction to Jung’s Psychology*. Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1966.

Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Scarborough Books, 1982.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Translated by James Strachey, New York: Avon Books, 1965.

———*Moses and Monotheism*. Translated by Katherine Jones, New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

Gay, Peter, editor. *The Freud Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1989.

Gregory, Horace. “Introduction”. Evangeline and Selected Tales and Poems. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. New York: Signet Classics, 1964.

Grosz, Elizabeth. "The Penis and the Phallus." *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reader*, edited by Sue Vice, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1996, pp.136-150.

Gussow, Adam. "Beaten Boys and Frantic Pets". *The American Scholar*. Autumn, Vol. 74 Issue 4, p. 94, 6 p., 2005. *Literature Resource Center*. http://ezproxy.drew.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.137406086&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Hirsh, Edward. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964.

Holy Bible. New King James Version, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1985.

Homer, Sean. *Jacques Lacan*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Penguin Books, 1986. Print.

Hopcke, Robert. *A Guided Tour of the Works of C.G. Jung*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1989. Print.

Jacobi, Jolande. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Jung, Carl Gustave. *Aspects of the Masculine*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

———*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Ed. Aniela Jaffe. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

———"Psychology and Alchemy" The Collected Works Vol. 12. Ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham. New York: Pantheon Books, 1953.

——— *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Kaplan, Justin. *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: The Free Press, 1996. Print.

Laszlo de, Violet, ed. *The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung*. New York: Modern Library, 1959.

Meltzer, Milton. *Mark Twain Himself*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1960.

Mellard, James M. *Using Lacan, Reading Fiction*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. “The Courtship of Miles Standish”. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Selected Poems*. Lawrence Buell Ed. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. *The Continuity of American Poetry*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987.

Pearson, Norman Holmes. “Both Longfellows”. *Evangeline and Selected Tales and Poems*. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. New York: Signet Classics, 1964, pp. 270-282.

Reynolds, David . *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Rose, Jacqueline. “Feminine Sexuality: Introduction.” *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reader*, Edited by Sue Vice, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1996, pp. 130-135.

Storr, Anthony, ed. *Jung: Selected Writings*. Great Britain: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983.

Tambling, Jeremy. *Literature and Psychoanalysis*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2012.

Toews, John E. “Having and Being: The Evolution of Freud’s Oedipus Theory as a Moral Fable”. *Freud: Conflict and Culture*. Michael S. Roth Ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf,

1998.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Signet Classic, 1980.

Vice, Sue ed. Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reader. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, 1999.

Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. "*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*: A Nightmare Vision of Boyhood". *Modern Critical Views: Mark Twain*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986. 93 – 106.

Wright, Elizabeth. *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*. New York: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1987.

Wright, Elizabeth Ed. *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1992.

May 2017

VITA

Full name: John Stephen Hier

Place and date of birth: Morristown, NJ, February 16, 1964

Parents name: Patricia and Donald Hier

Educational Institutions:

School	Place	Degree	Date
Secondary: West Morris Mendham H.S.	Mendham, NJ	H.S.	June, 1982
Collegiate: William Paterson University	Wayne, NJ	B.A.	August 1989
Graduate: William Paterson University	Wayne, NJ	M.A.	May, 1993
Drew University	Madison, NJ	D. Litt.	May, 2017