


1-16439

Initiation into the Cosmos of Dionysus:
An Archetypal Reading of Selected American Poets

A Thesis
presented to the
Department of English
Lakehead University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

by
Susan Tiura ©
November, 1987



ProQuest Number: 10611330

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10611330

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-44801-6

Table of Contents

		Page
I	Introduction Dionysus and the Initiation Quest	1
	Footnotes to Introduction	16
II	Chapter 1 Walt Whitman	18
	"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"	
	Dionysus: Youth and Renewal	
	Footnotes to Chapter 1	42
	Chapter 2 Emily Dickinson	44
	"Our journey had advanced"	
	Dionysus at the Borderlands	
	Footnotes to Chapter 2	62
	Chapter 3 Ezra Pound	64
	Canto 81	
	Dionysus as Mask	
	Footnotes to Chapter 3	89
	Chapter 4 Emerson	91
	"Bacchus"	
	Dionysus: God of Wine and of the Instinctual Life Force	
	Footnotes to Chapter 4	113

Chapter 5	Wallace Stevens	116	
	"Local Objects"		
	Dionysus: A Divinity Who Comes and Goes		
	Footnotes to Chapter 5	133	
Chapter 6	Robert Frost	135	
	"Directive"		
	Initiation into the Dionysian		
	Footnotes to Chapter 6	153	
III	Conclusion	The Quest for Depth, and Death	155
		Footnotes to Conclusion	162
IV	Bibliography		163

Dedication

For Howard Nuttall, "the father . . .
[who is] Of motion the ever-brightening origin."

Introduction

Dionysus and the Initiation Quest

In his late poem, "Local Objects," Wallace Stevens describes himself as a "spirit without a foyer".¹ His spirit was homeless: "Because he desired without knowing quite what."² Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ezra Pound and Robert Frost are also spirits without a foyer in that they too desire something that is missing. In the poems selected for analysis here, their desire takes the form of an internalized initiation quest for an "absolute foyer beyond romance".³ Each poem is a symbolic voyaging that takes place within the poet. The concept of internalization of journey or quest I take, in part, from the title of an essay by Harold Bloom,⁴ and in part from studies in depth psychology.

I read the poems from an archetypal point of view in that their content is studied as ritual, or as imitation of an initiation quest. An archetypal analysis looks at the poem as having been influenced by other poems, and thus is sensitive to recurrent imagery. A poem written in this mode has its beginning in what might be or what ought

to be, and thus it is characterized by a strong element of desire. In literature the archetypal mode is expressed in the romance form.

This archetypal journey of initiation is not a hero's journey of ego development. The trials are not ones of conquest: the capacity to conquer and be brave is taken for granted and was previously acquired. The new challenge is instead one of acceptance, and the quest is not for power or love, but for meaning. The soul-making journey of individuation often takes place at the mid-point of life in order to allow a mature person to come into possession of a psychic wholeness in which the ego claims of the outer world are subordinated to the claims of the Self. This quest is achieved not by a heroic show of strength but by a submission to powers that are higher or deeper than ego.

This quest for meaning is the via longissima of soul-making, and it appears to be a reflection in the inner world of the quest of the knights of King Arthur for the Holy Grail. The quest describes an errant rather than a linear path. Plato and Plotinus have commented that the path of the soul is circular, and we will see much evidence of this circularity. This aspect of romance that is man's vision of his own life as a quest is the one emphasized in this thesis.

There are many echoes of the quest for the Holy Grail in these poems.⁵ This myth arose in the twelfth century, when man's feminine side began to reach consciousness in a new way. The cult of courtly love embodies the first notion in the Western patriarchy of an enhanced value of the feminine. The myth deals primarily with the difficulty

and importance of the struggle in a man to make conscious and relate to his femininity as it is manifested in the tides of inwardness and feeling.⁶

Behind this myth is the presence of the Greek god Dionysus, sacred to women. Dionysus is called 'the womanly one' in Aeschylus, and 'the womanly stranger' in Euripides.⁷ He is a male god, but the feminine aspect of his nature is revealed in his manner of loving. Eros and Aphrodite are close to him, according to Anacreon.⁸

The Grail is in the care of a goddess or a beautiful maiden, but the Grail, its castle and guardians are bewitched owing to an act of disrespect by a knight toward the feminine. The angry, insulted feminine, hidden away in a bewitched and grim beyond, is to be redeemed by a quest into the threatening, roadless, "other" land. Or, in the language of depth psychology, the ego of man has become split from its base and must find its psychic connection to this root. This it cannot do itself, since its acts reflect the split. It must rely on the Self, the archetype of meaning, for guidance.

The goal of the quest is the Grail Castle, the place of the most precious feminine quality, the epitome of all that is feminine. "It is the highest feminine symbol, the holy of holies in its feminine expression. It is that for which the Knight searches all his life."⁹ The goal is an inner reality or vision, not a place. Thus it is the feminine Grail hunger, or the anima of these poets, that is studied in this paper. It is this great need that weaves an aura of desire or eros around the profusion of feminine images in their poems.

The quest follows the pattern of an initiation rite: Gawain and Parzifal are initiated into the mysteries of the feminine.¹⁰ The Grail legend is thus, from a psychological point of view, a story of how soul-making takes place in a man's psyche. Soul-making is a process of Self-restoration, the Self being the matrix from which all psychic being arises. During this process all sides of a person are combined into a total person. This paradoxical unity of Self is a combination of opposites, masculinity and femininity, and is a secret which cannot be rationally understood. (These opposites are combined in the person of Dionysus.) The mystery of wholeness, a great theme in the myth of the Holy Grail, forms an undertone in the poems studied here.

The person who would reach the Grail must undergo a great journey in which he must search, often painfully, for the ground and fulfillment of his being. There are three distinguishable stages in the journey of initiation. Behind each stage is the presence of Dionysus.

The primary aspect is an agon or conflict. Northrop Frye states that conflict is the basis of romance. He is the main critic who has influenced me in this work. Frye has written extensively on the romance or quest form and he is particularly eloquent when he describes desire as the place where literature begins. He writes that the significant content of a poem in the archetypal mode is the conflict between desire and reality, and such a poem has for its basis the work of the dream. The poet experiences a loss and this leads to a break in the continuity of consciousness, a situation that is analagous

to falling asleep and entering a dream world of increased erotic intensity.¹¹ This loss and the consequent conflict between desire and the reality of the outer world, or between desire and the need for change in the personal inner world, is evident in each poem studied in this paper.

The antagonist the poet must deal with in this conflict is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world, just as the quester is analogous to a mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from the upper world. These encounters can be summarized in psychological language as the ego's encounters with the archetypes of the Self: the shadow, the anima or animus, and the persona. The shadow is the repressed or socially unacceptable part of our person. The anima is the name Jung gave to man's feminine soul image, his inner woman, and the animus is the image of masculine mind in a woman. The persona is the mask we present to the outer world. These archetypes all appear in the poems studied here.

In the traditional struggle against the antagonist, either the hero, or the monster, or both, must die. This crucial struggle between hero and antagonist is the second stage of initiation. This stage of initiation takes the form of a nekyia or descent into the depths (after separation from the continuity of daily life). This is not a literal death, but an innate urge to go below the surface of appearances to the world's interior, the unconscious. This ritual death is symbolized as the act of being swallowed by a monster, or, less concretely, as being taken down into a dark and labyrinthine world and exposed to threatening

beings. The chaos of descent is suggested in various ways in the poems at hand. During descent the most dangerous aspect of the enemy is a sinister, female principle. This is the terrible mother, unbridled and unbroken nature, represented by the paradoxical god Dionysus.¹²

The image of the shadow and the theme of ritual death suggest darkness: the adjective "dark" is used frequently throughout the thesis. Darkness is thematically very important here because it refers to the search into the hidden, underground aspect of mind. Frye has pointed out that the direction of the quest tends to be downward and inward, toward a hidden basis or ground of self-knowledge.¹³

Dionysus is a god who holds life and death together.¹⁴ He is called Lord of the Souls and the central meaning of his cosmos is his relationship to the underworld of the soul. Descent is required to reach the underworld. Since the heroic consciousness of ego has an upward path, this gives a negative designation to descent. It is as if the immersion in the underworld is to be endured for the sake of later advantage on the path of linear development. But Dionysus has a home in the sea of the unconscious and descent is for the sake of moistening. Descent to the depths need not be experienced as defeat but as downward and darkening.

Symbolic death is sometimes rendered by the ritual of dismemberment or sparagmos, the tearing apart of the protagonist. This is communicated either in a sense of absence of effective action, or of action disorganized and doomed to defeat. At this point in the quest

symbols of the Mother, and/or the Father, present themselves to provide passage to further development.

Dismemberment was the fate, time and again, of Dionysus in his form as Zagreus. Jung refers to the divine punishment of being torn asunder like Zagreus. (He has taught us to see Dionysian events as events in the psyche.) The torn and rendered suffering of the protagonist becomes an initiation into the cosmos of Dionysus: the soul sees by means of affliction. This process of division within the self is a body experience. During this process the central control of the old king, the ego, is dissolved. We sever habitual ways and we are able to stop being ourselves. At the same time a spark is activated in the interior world.

The violence inherent in dismemberment, sometimes manifest as hysteria, may be seen to be necessary for the rebirth or renewal that is the goal of the quest. Rebirth is a senseless word without the implied dissolution or ritual death out of which rebirth comes. We will see also that dismemberment is a way of discovering the spirit of the child in the psyche.

The enemy-dragon guards a treasure or threatens a virgin. What is symbolized as virgin is actually a conviction that there is something at the core of our being which is immortal and which has discovered the secret of invulnerability that eludes those tragic heroes who remain stuck in the descent pattern.¹⁵ The treasure is a secret. The secret here is that of the psyche and the secret is safe because it is not communicable to those who have not yet experienced it

for themselves. This third stage is characterized by an anabasis or ascent to self-identification, and is most evident in the poems of Whitman and Stevens studied here. The rising motion has the theme of the restoration to the memory of an aspect of the feminine. When memory is restored the continuity of action that was lost is also restored, and then there is a form of ascent which takes us toward the Self and the recovery of our original identity. (We are mostly unaware of our true individuality.) The closer the romance quest comes to a world of original identity the more clearly some of the symbolism of the Garden of Eden or the Grail Castle appears. In psychological terms, in this homecoming the unconscious progresses towards an imaginal consciousness.

The quester is often accompanied by a guide during the descent. We will see a female spirit guide as the Grail messenger in various poems. Man needs the mediation of a goddess or anima figure to find archetypal means to bring sex and soul or spirit and nature together in one experience. The image of Dionysus is of profound importance for the feminine psyche. Male and female are primordially related in his androgynous consciousness. In his cosmos the world is not divided into spirit and matter: he is called the "Undivided One".¹⁶ (This bi-sexual consciousness experiences soul in all matter.)

Animal companions are also frequent in descent themes and reflect the metamorphic quality of the quest. Metamorphosis, the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing, is an aspect of each poem studied in this paper.

The Dionysus figure suggests that the meaning of the quest is the initiation process, not the possession of the quest object. The quester may be allowed to see the object of the quest, but not possess it. He may possess it briefly before losing it again. He may derive spiritual insight from it when it appears as a talisman which comes and goes. In the stories of Gilgamesh, Odysseus and Gawain, the great initiation story begins after the quest has ended in failure. Thus, initiation is a cyclic process.

In the Grail story the quester sustains an injury to the thigh or the genitals and his male creativity is affected. This results from a situation where he has forgotten to honour the feminine. The disregard of the feminine in its archetypal dimension is associated with disregard for the god Dionysus, the dark son of the goddess or Earth Mother. Both the Goddess and her male companion guard the Grail, the source of life and renewal. Dionysus is described as the moisture principle and is thus the source of fertility. Water, the feminine element, is the place where the primal mysteries of all life dwell. Dionysus is at home in this element.¹⁷ Like him, water has a bright, joyous and vital side, and one that is dark, mysterious and dangerous. The moist nature of Dionysus includes sap, blood, and semen as well. Procreation takes place in it and birth issues from it. (In ritual terms the quest romance is the victory of fertility over the wasteland, or, the renewal of energy in nature.)

Psychologically he is the principle of life, spontaneity and energy, as contrasted with form, measure and restraint. He is daimonic

and ecstatic and promotes abandonment of the ego sense for intensity of experience. The concept of play with its overtones of sexual enjoyment and of a child's activity (Dionysus appeared at times as a playing child to be cared for) is important here. Dionysus and his followers have the function of keeping alive the child and the animal in us. The women in his train were nurses. The Dionysian experience transforms women into nurses who nurture the natural anywhere it is manifest. Dionysus was the youngest of the Greek gods and his childhood is prominent in his myths: no other Greek god is comparable with him in this respect. The image of the child is important here also in that it refers to a view of reality which is not divided. The sense that the child in particular responds to his surroundings to the point of identifying with them is found in Blake's Songs of Innocence and in Wordsworth's Intimations Ode, but it is particularly prevalent in American literature. Emerson and Whitman ("There Was a Child Went Forth") are particularly attracted to this state. Emerson states that "Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise."¹⁸ The dazzling freshness and the vivid clarity of the child's point of view are evident in Emerson's playful "Bacchus". To be like a child means to be born to a new and spiritual life, to be an initiate.

It was mentioned earlier that the quester derives insight from the Grail when it occurs as a talisman which comes and goes. Dionysus is described by Otto as the god par excellence of comings and goings.¹⁹ The movement of the libido represented by Dionysus comes and goes; the

ego cannot control these movements. (There is a conflict between the spontaneous comings and goings of the libido or the Dionysian consciousness of nature and the civilizing instincts of society.) Dionysus' appearances are moments charged with significance and they shape the design of the poems considered here. Each of these lyrics is a framed ecstatic moment, and longer poems spatialize the moment. This is analogous to the Longinian view of poetry as a series of ecstatic moments or points of apprehension or vision. It turns out that the world inside or behind the monster is a place of oracles and expanding secrets that are dropped into the consciousness of individual man during these privileged moments. Emerson uses the term "radiance" to evoke this peak experience. Wallace Stevens suggests that "Perhaps there are times of inherent excellence . . . balances that happen."²⁰ I will be using the term epiphany to describe this experience, epiphany being the traditional term for the appearance of the divine in human life. The epiphanies come as persons. Epiphany is achieved after the conflict or second stage is worked through. At this point the cyclical world of nature comes into alignment with the ideal world of desire fulfilled.

Dionysus, like Christ, is an image of the Self. The single most important variant of the goal of the quest in these poems is the image of the Self; this is Emerson's, Pound's and Stevens' crystal man. It appears often in Emerson in the image of a circle. The image represents that which is whole or complete and is an expression of the ultimate unknowable meaning of human existence and of the basic mystery

of life. The Self appears only when the ego has been conquered. It is the principle of the whole world, an image of the total oneness of all experience. Jung describes the image of a "great inner man (who) redeems the individual by leading him out of creation . . . back to his original eternal sphere."²¹ In this phase of self-recognition the world and the self are made new, "and the world seems humanized in the after glow of the radiantly found self."²² This image of the Self or central man is an incarnation of Blake's Real Man, the Imagination, and is unlike the goal of poets before the Romantics in its transcendence of ego and in its conception of redemption.

The traditional movement of quest romance before the Romantic movement was from nature to redeemed nature. The sanction of redemption, called grace, was the gift of some external spiritual authority or of a magical entity. This movement has been internalized in these poets so that the motion is now from their own selves to the freedom of the imagination, a superior form of consciousness or a greater knowledge. This kind of power and freedom is identified with the imagination in Coleridge and Wordsworth, with "Reason" in Emerson, and with the "Kosmic Spirit" in Whitman. (In psychological terms the power and freedom come from a transformation in personality that results from a change in the unconscious.) This power of creation and response to creation is reflected in the need of poets to go to the end of potentialities of their being and to activate exceptional states of mind. Frost, for example, uses Thoreau's word extra-vagance to stand

for the need to go beyond formed structures, whether they be the domestication of marriage or the metrical pattern of the poem itself.

This echoes the Dionysian cosmos where women ran away from domestic life to follow him. He enabled them to see the madness in the sane world of everyday life. Thus, Dionysus was called "Lysios", the loosener.

The Dionysian experience is a borderline state in which we find joined that which is usually separated by borders.²³ (Dionysus was known to be riotous, yet he had but one wife.) He rules the borderlands of our psychic geography. All the poems to be studied give evidence of this need to cross borders that the figure of Dionysus symbolizes.

He is a paradoxical figure who offers a variety of perspectives and attributes. Which aspect of him a poet chooses reveals the poet's essential concern as much as the god's emphasis. Whitman emphasizes the child and renewal in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking". Emily Dickinson in "Our journey had advanced" will keep us waiting at the borderlands. Ezra Pound in his Pisan Cantos emphasizes Dionysus as mask. Emerson celebrates Dionysus as god of wine and of the instinctual life force. In Wallace Stevens' "Local Objects" we see him as a divinity who comes and goes. In Frost's "Directive" he is a force who impels us downward and backward in time. In all of these poets, going down and looking backward makes it possible for us to move forward. Frost shows us that looking backward revives the fantasy of

the child archetype who is both the moment of helpless weakness and the future unfolding.

All of these poems are in the archetypal mode. The archetypal mode is expressed in the romance form. There are six phases in romance and these phases form a cyclical sequence in the romantic hero's quest.²⁴ In the first phase there is the birth of the hero, a mysterious newborn infant floating on the sea. In the second phase we are given the innocent youth of the hero who is preparing for action. This is an erotic world or a world of oracles, where experience is presented in terms of mystery: Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" belongs in part in this phase, in part in the third and fourth phase. The third phase is the regular quest theme characterized by conflict and death: Dickinson and Pound's work will be considered here. In the fourth phase where a happier society is more or less visible throughout the action the hero has achieved an integrated body or innocent world which has to be defended against the assault of experience. Emerson's "Bacchus" evidences this high degree of integration. In the fifth phase the monster is tamed and controlled. The world is erotic but experience is represented as comprehended. It is characterized by proverbs and these are at the opposite pole from oracles, since they are human oracles based on experience. The movement of the cycle of seasons has a prominent place and is similar to the second phase in that the mood set is a contemplative withdrawal from action or a sequel to it. Wallace Stevens' poem reflects this phase. In the sixth and pensive phase we reach the end of the

movement from active to contemplative, meditative adventures. Frost's "Directive" belongs here where the quest is presented through a relaxed and contemplative haze; it does not confront us as directly as poems in the third phase do and thus only lightly suggests the Dionysian.

I follow these phases in the disposition of the individual chapters, beginning with Whitman and ending with Frost.

The text of the individual poems appears at the beginning of each chapter. Since the method of analysis used in this paper is that of an explication de texte, a line by line commentary is made of each poem. The text of the poem should be set to the right of the chapter in question to facilitate reference to individual lines as the reading proceeds.

Introduction

Footnotes

¹Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), p. 111-112.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴"The Internalization of the Quest Myth", in Harold Bloom, ed., Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays on Consciousness (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), pp. 4-24.

⁵The details of the quest I've taken from many sources, the chief one being Edward C. Whitmont's Return of the Goddess (New York: Crossroad, 1986).

⁶Robert A. Johnson, He: Understanding Masculine Psychology (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row, 1986), p. 4.

⁷Walter F. Otto, Dionysus: Myth and Cult (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 176.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁰Whitmont, p. 168.

¹¹Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 102.

¹²Carl G. Jung, Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hall (Bollingen Series, Bollingen Foundation, Princeton University Press, 1953-), Vol. V., p. 623, hereafter referred to as C. W.

¹³Northrop Frye, Studies in English Romanticism (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 152.

¹⁴Otto, p. 185.

¹⁵Frye, The Secular Scripture, p. 86.

¹⁶James Hillman, The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 263.

¹⁷Otto, p. 161.

¹⁸Emerson, "Nature", in Emerson: Essays and Lectures, ed. by Joel Porte (New York: The Library of America), p. 46.

¹⁹Otto, p. 197.

²⁰"Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" in The Palm at the End of the Mind, ed. by Holly Stevens (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 212.

²¹M. N. Von Franz, "The Process of Individuation", in Carl G. Jung, ed., Man and His Symbols (New York: Laurel Edition, Dell Publishing, 1971), p. 215.

²²Harold Bloom, "The Central Man: Emerson, Whitman, Wallace Stevens", Massachusetts Review, 7, Winter, 1966, p. 34.

²³Otto, p. 275.

²⁴Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 202.

Chapter 1

Walt Whitman

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"

Dionysus: Youth and Renewal

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING*

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving
his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo, 5
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they
were alive,
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings
I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if
with tears, 10
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting, 15
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter, 20
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briars, 25
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,

And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright
 eyes,
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing
 them, 30
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.
Two together! 35
Winds blow south, or winds blow north.
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together. 40

Till of a sudden,
 May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
 One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
 Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
 Nor ever appear'd again. 45

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
 And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
 Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
 Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
 I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird, 50
 The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yet, when the stars glisten'd, 55
 All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
 Down almost amid the slapping waves,
 Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
 He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know. 60

Yes my brother I know,
 The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
 For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
 Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
 Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights
 after their sorts, 65
 The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
 I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
 Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

70

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging--O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

75

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

80

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

85

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again
if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

90

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

95

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.

100

But soft! sink low! 105
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately
to me. 110

Hither my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere, 115
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful. 120

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy! 125
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

The aria sinking, 130
 All else continuing, the stars shining,
 The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
 With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
 On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
 The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of
 the sea almost touching, 135
 The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the
 atmosphere dallying,
 The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously
 bursting,
 The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
 The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
 The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering, 140
 The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,

To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret
 hissing,
 To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me? 145
 For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have
 heard you,
 Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
 And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder and
 more sorrowful than yours,
 A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never
 to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me, 150
 O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
 Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
 Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
 Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what
 there in the night,
 By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon, 155
 The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
 The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)
 O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,) 160
 The word final, superior to all,
 Subtle, sent up--what is it?--I listen;
 Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
 Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea, 165
 Delaying not, hurrying not,
 Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
 Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
 And again death, death, death, death,
 Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's
 heart, 170
 But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
 Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
 Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
 But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother, 175
 That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,

With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs, 180
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments,
 bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.

* Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass: A Textual Variorum of the Printed Poems, Volume II: Poems, 1860-1867, ed. by Sculley Bradley et al (New York: New York University Press, 1980), pp. 343-351.

In "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" Whitman refers to "The unknown want, the destiny of me", as the basis of the poetic impulse, just as Wallace Stevens, in "Local Objects", indicates "He desired without knowing quite what". Whitman's search for "a clew" (line 158) to this desire takes the form of an initiation quest in "Out of the Cradle". The quest for the secret that is hidden is expressed as a search for "a word", "a hint", "the secret of the wondrous murmuring", "the clef of the universe", in "There Was A Child Went Forth", "Clef Poem", and in "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life". The search, in "Out of the Cradle", echoes the rite of youth initiation.

In "Out of the Cradle", Whitman attempts to emphasize the success of the initiate's confrontation with death and his concomitant birth as man and poet (the third stage of initiation), and he does achieve a rhetorically brilliant base for this. But Harold Bloom suggests and Stephen Black asserts that this victory is shadowed. Bloom refers to "Out of the Cradle" as Whitman's "demonic romance of poetic incarnation", where "demonic" has overtones of conflict and chaos.¹ These overtones will be examined at length. This poem is one of two great poems that Whitman added to the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass written when he was forty years old. ("As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" was added at the same time. Bloom has shown that "As I Ebb'd" also contains descent imagery and shows a breakdown of that great expansive self that Whitman is.)²

"Out of the Cradle" is one of the journeys backward that Stephen Black refers to as being fundamental to the poetic process of Leaves of

Grass.³ The image of the journey is central in Whitman. He introduced the theme of the journey or the "Poem of the Road", in the 1855 edition: "As Adam early in the morning, / Walking forth from the bower refresh'd with sleep, / Behold me where I pass . . ." (I, 136.1). This journey, like the journeys in the other poems that are considered here, is inward and backward.

The title of the poem, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", suggests the cycle of nature. This is our first hint that Whitman is writing about a divine figure who dies and is reborn time and again. (This cyclical movement, lightly touched on in "Cradle", is more evident in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd".) The rhythm of poetic process reflects the life and death cycle of nature: this quality of the process is emphasized in Stevens' work.

Bloom has demonstrated that many central poems in the Romantic tradition divide into three parts, much on the model of Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode". This division echoes the three parts of initiation that were outlined in the introduction. The tri-partite division of "Out of the Cradle" conforms to this model. The three sections are as follows: the prelude (lines 1-22); the main part or "Reminiscence" (lines 23-143); and the conclusion (lines 144-183).

The preface or prelude announces the search for origins and defines the theme of the poem, the world harmony of bird, sea and poet. It translates this theme into poetry, or embodies it in form: the prelude is actually one huge sentence which symbolizes by its structure the cosmic victory the poet hopes to achieve. The preface is composed

of numerous parallel phrases (out . . . of, down from, over, up . . . from, out . . . from) which suggests the maze that the world is to the poet at this point. There is an echo here of the underworld or labyrinth the initiate must penetrate. The contrasting prepositions invite the reader to look in many directions (although "out . . . of" and "from" predominate); out of the maze of the world emerges a powerful ego, the "I" of the poet who has extricated himself from the labyrinth. This victory is indicated in the statement that he sings a reminiscence, i.e., something that has become assimilated to one's mind. The length of the sentence has the effect of making the reader wait for the subject, the "I", and this technique contributes to a feeling of triumph once the "I" is reached. The ego of the poet dominates the cosmos: Whitman's basic attitude to the world is his idea of himself as a microcosm reflecting a macrocosm. But the illusion of a harmonious universe in which opposites are reconciled is sustained only in the prelude.

The poet's problem in the prelude is to bring together many opposing qualities: "Pains and joys", "here and here-after". He intends to combine these opposing qualities in the course of the poem. The threshold of initiation is extremely sensitive and involves a meeting of opposites, and this forces one to acknowledge both male and female sides of one's nature. Whitman has fused these qualities from the point of view of emotion in the prelude. The expressive rhythm conveys his uniting power: it conveys the feeling of being uplifted and of an opening upward, of freedom and light, and of a rising above

the objective world in achieving harmony with it that may be called the sublime. A sense of unity is also communicated in the first line, the rocking rhythm of which suggests the cradle that the sea sometimes is. The rhythm of the sea forms the background, or, as Spitzer suggests, the "undertone" of the whole poem.⁴ The presence of the sea, the need to combine opposites, and the reference to cradle: all these aspects of the prelude announce the cosmos of Dionysus. Dionysus is at home in the sea.⁵ This paradoxical, androgynous god combines many opposites in his nature. An epithet for him is "the one in the cradle".⁶

Bloom feels that the prelude expresses a crisis (he uses the term "crossing of poetic election"⁷ for this) when Whitman throws himself on the sand, confronts the ocean and undergoes a reminiscence. In Bloom's approach to the struggle, the monster Whitman faces here is the death of his creative gift; he seeks renewal or imaginative survival. The act of creation has to be set in motion by something outside of man. It is Dionysus' spirit he seeks here.

Stephen Black refers to another aspect of the prelude when he alludes to what he perceives as a lack. He points out that Whitman mentions the three elements of air, earth, and sea in naming his world, but that he omits the element of fire. Black equates fire and sexuality here, and it is true that the poet is searching, at least in part, for his sexual identity.⁸

But the prelude presents us with the romance world of the innocent youth of the hero, and fire in this world is a purifying symbol: "a world of flame that none but the perfectly chaste can

pass".⁹ Sometimes it is a world of thorns and brambles, as it is in "Sleeping Beauty", or "patches of briers and blackberries" (line 7) as it is here. Not the sun but the "yellow half moon" (line 10) belongs here, since the moon is the coolest, most chaste of the fiery heavenly bodies. The moon is easiest to associate with women but male chastity is important too, as the Grail romances show.

This world of youth has a pastoral and rural element, and often there are animals present. These animals include pastoral sheep, lambs, horses, hounds or unicorns, and the helpful birds we have here.

Children are prominent in this innocent world, in part because of their association with virtue and with magic, and in part because their view of reality is undivided. Frye describes this world as neither totally alive like the apocalyptic one nor mostly dead, like ours.¹⁰ It is an animistic world full of elementary spirits. Whitman refers to "the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive" (line 6). For these reasons, I don't miss the element of fire, at this point.

The poet is between the sand and the sea in the prelude. The image of the beach is a central one for Whitman. In "As I Ebb'd" he refers to the beach as "The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe" (line 9). Bloom contends that the image of the beach in Whitman is ". . . the greatest of synecdoches, standing for ocean and earth, for mother and for father, but most of all for himself, Whitman, as human sufferer rather than as poet."¹¹ (I believe Bloom means that the beach is the connection between ocean

and earth, mother and father.) In the prelude, Whitman seems to be evenly positioned between sea and land, or mother and father, but as the poem develops he moves closer to the sea. (Bloom makes the observation that Whitman is always closer to the sea in his poetry when he sees himself primarily as a poet). Mother and Father are each symbols which can provide a rite of passage into adulthood.

Kaplan recounts a recurring dream in Whitman's life: "A stretch of white-brown sand, hard and smooth and broad, with the ocean perpetually, grandly rolling in upon it, with slow-measured sweep, with rustle and hiss and foam and many a thump as of low bass drums . . . Sometimes I wake at night and can hear and see it plainly."¹² The seashore was an influence on all his poetry, "a prevailing gauge and tally for me."¹³ From the time the symbolizing imagination developed in him, he believed that he lived always at the water's edge with the land his father and "the unplumed sea of self" his mother.¹⁴ The symbol of the mother will be his touchstone at the moment of initiation.

By the end of the prelude Whitman has created an intellectual unity that forms the basis of the rest of the poem. In the second part, or main section, he presents the reminiscence itself, the songs of the mockingbird and the listening of the boy. The form of this section is that of a straightforward narrative interspersed with lyrical songs, the arias of the bird. The time in the prelude was the fall, as it is in the opening verse of "As I Ebb'd". The time is now spring since the lilac scent is in the air and the grass is growing.

It is also spring in the poet's life span. (We must remember that spring, for Whitman, includes the idea of new growth that is made possible from the death of the old.) The prelude indicates the poet is experiencing a double time, that time when he was a boy in the past (the moments before he felt the "myriad words" [line 13] aroused in him) and the present when he is a man and a poet (the moment when he feels the "rise of the words from such as they now start the scene revisiting" [line 15]). That the hero is a boy and at the same time he is a man who seeks renewal is a clue that Dionysus is a structure of consciousness here.

The narrative part of this section develops the theme indicated in the prelude by the phrase "A man, yet by these tears a little boy again" (line 18): the boy becomes poet, or the child within the poet begins to speak. A narrative usually presents an historical flow of events expressed through verbs, a moving from one state of growth to another. Instead of verbs, Whitman presents a series of nouns with adjectives or participles. The "she-bird crouch'd" (line 29), "I . . . cautiously peering, absorbing, translating", (lines 30-31). Instead of a linking together and a development of events, there is a listing of seemingly unconnected ingredients. Single moments of apprehension are arrested by the continuing form of the participles. Because participles are part verb, the moment is also one of movement crystallized. This device links together things spiritual and physical--the beach, the sea, the response of the boy, his "thence aroused words" (line 13)--but all is experienced by the reader on one

plane since the arrangement corresponds to the experience of the boy which is chaotic at this point. Whitman's experience of expanding consciousness is handled in such a way that the reader also achieves an expanding consciousness; this is achieved in the upward movement of heroic will in the prelude. The style is also appropriate to the fact that the narrative is a reminiscence, i.e., a fragmented recovery of knowledge by mental effort.

Ezra Pound refers to this method of juxtaposition when he states that only the instantaneous presentation of complexes of images gives that "sense of sudden liberation, that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits, that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art . . ."15 We do gain breadth of soul and wider horizons. I locate this rather in the descent we make through the inwardness of the image. The puzzling peculiarity of the image, rather than the "instantaneous presentation of complexes", draws us down and in.

Whitman uses various devices in the narrative section to draw the bird and the boy together, a necessary manoeuvre if the boy is later to understand the bird so well as to be able to "translate" his song. The boy is presented as "flitting" (line 49) from brier to brier to observe the bird: the use of this word confuses him with the bird. In this way the boy's identity merges with that of the he-bird, enabling the boy to express indirectly his fears of abandonment and loss. There is a suggestion here of the romance motif of the two brothers connected by sympathetic magic.

The central song in which the bird realizes his loss is preceded by a section of the narrative in which the bird is positioned close to the sea. The significance of this position becomes clearer when the boy is brought closer to the sea later on at a point when he is ready to receive an understanding of death that permits him to become a poet, an understanding and a vocation that are denied the bird.

The illusion of unity is not entirely sustained after the aria of the two birds together (lines 32-40). The first ominous note is sounded in the "surging of the sea" (line 48). Since the surging sea is "hoarse", Chase hears here the voices of demonic creatures which are hoarse and sepulchral.¹⁶ The line "The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing" (line 66) is suggestive of death.

The "fierce old mother" of line 173 and "savage old mother" of line 141 refer also to demonic powers that are not entirely under control. The "terrible mother" is an unbridled and unbroken Nature, represented by Dionysus.¹⁷ The sinister overtones of descent imagery and this female presence are at variance with the imagery of ascent that Whitman wants to emphasize.

We see again here the centrality of loss. The rapport of the birds has disintegrated and the he-bird blames air, earth and water in turn for the death of his mate. The loss and confusion that results causes a break in continuity. Whitman tries to unite the bird with the elements of creation (e.g., night and darkness) through an implied parallelism ("O night! . . . O throat!") (lines 79 & 95). But the

potential unity of the bird with creation is belied in the actual "reckless despairing carols" that the bird sings. His songs express a state of world disharmony in which love and death are felt to be irreconcilable: he sings "Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!" (line 101).

The bird sings "death's carols!" and because of this Richard Chase refers to this poem as one of the great poems of death.¹⁸ The loss that is felt acutely here is actually the presence of the void, or the abyss, the unknown underworld we enter in dreams and at death. Chase points out that death is not presented here as a gateway to immortality or a compensating term in the rhythm of life. It is an experience that is immediate and poignant.

We have here Dionysus' presence again. According to Otto he is the god who holds life and death together. He is connected with Hades, not on a literal level but through an invisible meaning for the soul in terms of the ritual death that is part of the initiation process.

Yet the final narrative section before the third and concluding part of the poem communicates the birth of the poet as a man. The initiation pattern in a poet's imagination requires him to return to the origin of his genius: Whitman has done so in the prelude, and this return permits him to react to the grieving song of the he-bird with ecstasy. This is the result of Whitman's journey inward and backward. This section also communicates the birth of the boy who has become a man. He becomes a man through the acquisition of self-consciousness or through an intellectual experience of separation. He theoretically

becomes sexually mature in that he realizes his momentary unity with, yet separation from, the woman. The sound of the moaning sea (the birth pangs of the mother) overcomes all other sounds in this section: the unaccentuated rhyming of the participles is often repeated. The dawning of consciousness is suggested in the fact that the moon is nearly touching the face of the sea; night is nearly over and consciousness or light will soon appear.

The light of dawn aptly suggests the new knowledge which is, in an alchemical expression, lumen naturae or the light of nature. This mystery could not be understood by the full consciousness of daylight, but by the half-light of an awakening to consciousness from the deep unconscious. The light of nature conveys a sense of the co-existence of spirit and sex, male and female, in an individual experience.

Birth is also suggested by the darkness which could be the darkness of the womb. The primal separation of mother and child is the earliest loss, but it is also an awakening, and in this respect the idea of poetic inspiration and the birth of the poet are suggested by the adjective "ecstatic" that is applied to the boy. The line "The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultously bursting" (line 137) suggests orgasm, just as the atmosphere "dallying" (line 136) with his hair suggests sexual play and the emphasis on eros rooted in the human sexual instinct. The attitude of creation toward the boy contrasts with its attitude to the bird: it seemed to ignore the bird's plight, but it dallies lovingly with the boy.

The third section completes the influence of the bird, who is also the "outsetting bard" (line 143), or demon (line 144). The demon is, in this aspect, the daemon, the poetic genius or poetic spirit of the new poet. The bird has "projected" the poet since it has anticipated or heralded him. The bird anticipates the poet who will theoretically be able to unite the cosmos since he will have absorbed the teaching of the sea. The birth of his consciousness or identity as a poet is indicated in the line "Now in a moment, I know what I am for" (line 147).

The poet understands that the bird's song has awakened him by touching important memories. But, as Stephen Black realizes, there is something incomplete about this initiation. Black explains, "he does not realize, and he will not in this poem, that the source of the song is himself, and that the translation was a projection of his own wishes and assumptions . . . meanings remain incomplete until he accepts responsibility for the world he has made".¹⁹ I think that the "incomplete" aspect of the poem derives from Whitman's inability to confront fully the implications of the demonic imagery of sea as terrible mother.

However, he has learned to "echo" or to "translate" the bird's song and thereby to sing lyrically and instinctively. The preceding narrative form has taken on the qualities of the bird's mode of singing the aria. At the same time, his newly gained consciousness of the objective world as existing separate from himself is reflected in the fact that for the first time since the prelude he uses full predication

instead of participial syntax. This ordered syntax is meant to reflect an ordered rational mind that sees reality as object; this central control is opposed to the point of view of the child that participates directly in reality, and to the point of view of the body consciousness of Dionysus.

Line 147--"Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake"--suggests the experience of ecstasy or illumination. Whitman spoke of experiencing visions in adolescence while in a state of suspended consciousness. These Dionysian experiences are triggered in him by a remembered scent, a musical rhythm, by the sea or by the grass. The rhythm of these experiences, i.e., the rhythm of the quest, is sensual and urgent, but their effect lasted all of Whitman's life, and were repeatedly invoked in his poetry.²⁰

In this line (147), Whitman knows his purpose is to see and express the inner and outer world. He expressed his vision in the 1860 edition as a new religion which would synthesize and surpass all others (he was amazingly literal about Emerson's injunction that we too should write Bibles). Lawrence Lipking locates the excitement of poetic initiation in the poet's realization that his own personal history, reflected in his poems, coincides with the universal history of mankind.²¹

The poet addresses the universe, having learned how to do so from the examples of his guide, the bird. He seeks the "clew" (line 158) that is still lurking in the night. This clue is to lead him past the identity he has gained to a further knowledge about his Self. The

use of "clew" instead of clue emphasizes the labyrinthine quality of the particulars of the objective world that he wishes to overcome, since one meaning of this word is a ball of thread or the means of threading a way through a labyrinth. It is with a word that he seeks to conquer "it", his hidden self. By a word, he means the metaphor-making quality that will include the various elements of sea, poet, and bird, a quality the bird does not have. He will know the word, since unlike the bird, he has contrived a situation in which he can control its use. (In the language of the quest he has overcome the dragon or terrible mother and has drunk the dragon's blood since he can understand the language of birds.)

The word the sea whispers to him is "low and delicious", "strong and delicious": it is death. At this point it seems that the meaning of the initiation quest is death. And it was in considering this time and again that I realized Dionysus is such a vital presence here and in the other poems considered here. The dead and the powers of the underworld are present at life's central moments, moments of the greatest vitality, including puberty. At the great moments of change in life we are obliged to look death in the eye. It seems that at every type of birth, life is shaken to its foundations.

Whitman has a marvellous feeling for the voluptuousness of death, and for the deathlike quality of love: the words he uses to describe it are sweet and sensuous, recalling the tone of some poems by Poe and Baudelaire. The long echoing sounds of "demon", "me", "beach", "sweetness", etc. carry the reader through the passage. These words do

not express the violence of death: it is left to the undertone of the sea, the "terrible mother", to do this.

"Death" shows signs of being a magic word for Whitman in this poem. It gives the poet the illusion that he controls what he is naming. He is still under an enchantment, even though the journey upward is meant to break that enchantment by leading to the discovery of one's real identity through remembering. There is in ascent a reversal of the twin (sometimes Narcissus or doppelganger) themes that occur in the descent. But the fact that Whitman fuses his own songs with the song of the bird his brother and with the word up from the waves indicates he does not yet realize that these originate in his unconscious.

A world of magic tends to centre on a youthful hero who is still over shadowed by parents. Whitman does not evoke an anima or interior paramour per se, but instead we have her psychological connection with the mother, in the fierce and savage sea. Thus I agree with Black that Whitman shows some Oedipal anxieties here. (Whitman's antecedents in initiation, Adonis and Parsifal, had an incurable malady or wound, perhaps of a sexual nature.)

Whitman attempts also to communicate the ambivalent quality of the forces of nature: the once "savage old mother" has become seemingly benign, rocking an infant in his cradle, lisping and whispering. (The reference to "old" suggests we are now no longer in the realm of Dionysus.) This figure carries us back to the one with which the poem began, the figure of the sea as an eternally rocking

cradle. In the course of the poem we have moved from life, or associations of birth, to love and death, then back to the cradle again. But the cycle has not been quite that simple. In the first twenty-two lines was a gently rocking cradle; at the end of the poem, it rocks just as gently, but the idea of age and death has been added, and the cradle is rocked by an old crone. Whitman would like us to feel that life has resulted from death, since the poet, in exercising his power as poet, joins the fact of death with that of love to create a third thing, life--the poem as it were. The action of the poem thus wishes to resemble one vast metaphor in the process of becoming.

The last line of the poem serves to reconcile the poet and the universe. In the structure of "The sea whisper'd me" the subject is unified with the object: sea and me are both different nouns. The use of the word whisper communicates a sense of a mysterious or divine source, since it is an act of speaking in which no vocal cords are used: the word reinforces our feeling for the calling (or vocation) of the boy to poetry. Many pairs of opposites are joined in this last stanza: past and present, boy and man, love and death, subject and object. There is also a reconciliation of light and darkness since the final revelation occurs at dawn. Containment and liberation, the goals of the second stage of initiation, are bound in one inevitable spirit of complementarity. Wallace Stevens expresses it:

Two things of opposite natures seem to depend
On one another, . . .
 This is the origin of change.

C.P. 392.

Change is the metamorphosis we meet as we move through the underworld. The poem recounts the moment the boy becomes man and poet.

Despite all of the brilliant rhetorical devices Whitman uses to communicate unity, the poem does not have a unified tone. Lipking points out that the experience of reading the Deathbed Edition of Leaves of Grass tends to destroy impressions of unity: "What one poem offers, the next takes back."²² This continual shifting of ground suggests a strong involvement by Whitman in the forces of chaos and death.

Whitman was open to the submission required for initiation into the cosmos of Dionysus. The child in him went forth everyday in a most receptive way, and, as a result, he expresses the Dionysian view that death is a part of life.

The boy becomes a poet here at the instant he grasps the fact of death. Whitman, as poet, wants to emphasize the upward, ascending movement to identity that would express this achievement. But his psychic process here wants to descend and stay longer in the dangerous regions of the "terrible mother" of the sea, and thus we are left with demonic undertones that he would prefer not be sustained in us, as readers. But, perhaps in part because of this, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is a great poem in its return to origins and its exploration of the underworld of the unconscious and death.

Emily Dickinson confronted more directly the dangers inherent in initiation. She writes that "A word is inundation when it comes from the Sea - Peter took the Marine Walk at great risk."²³ She faces directly the implications of the word out of the sea, death. She is

stuck between the agon of the first stage of initiation and the conflict or ritual death of the second stage. The third stage of the ascension or exaltation of the hero, the stage Whitman would emphasize here, is absent in "Our journey had advanced".

Chapter 1

Footnotes

¹Harold Bloom, Wallace Stevens: The Poems of our Climate (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 14.

²Harold Bloom, "The Central Man: Emerson, Whitman, Wallace Stevens", Massachusetts Review 7, Winter, 1966, p. 35.

³Stephen Black, Whitman's Journeys into Chaos: A Psychoanalytic Study into the Poetic Process (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 82.

⁴Leo Spitzer, "Explication de Texte Applied to Walt Whitman's 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking'", E.L.H., 1949, pp. 229-49.

⁵Walter F. Otto, Dionysus: Myth and Cult, trans. Robert B. Palmer (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 197.

⁶Ibid., p. 82

⁷Bloom, Wallace Stevens, p. 13.

⁸Black, p. 56.

⁹Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 151-152.

¹⁰Frye, Anatomy, p. 153.

¹¹Harold Bloom, A Map of Misreading (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 98.

¹²Justin Kaplan, Walt Whitman: A Life (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), p. 61.

¹³Bloom, Wallace Stevens, p. 257.

¹⁴Kaplan, p. 61.

¹⁵T. S. Eliot, ed., Literary Essays of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 4.

¹⁶Richard Chase, "'Out of the Cradle" as a Romance' in R. W. B. Lewis, ed., The Presence of Walt Whitman: Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 64.

¹⁷Carl G. Jung, Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Bollingen Series, Bollingen Foundation, Princeton University Press), Vol. V, p. 623.

¹⁸Chase, p. 56.

¹⁹Black, p. 70.

²⁰Kaplan, p. 190.

²¹Lawrence Lipking, The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 18.

²²Ibid., p. 121.

²³Thomas H. Johnson, ed., The Letters of Emily Dickinson, Volume III (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1965), p. 858.

Chapter 2

Emily Dickinson

"Our journey had advanced"

Dionysus at the Borderlands

POEM 615*

Our journey had advanced--
Our feet were almost come
To that odd Fork in Being's Road--
Eternity--by Term--

Our Pace took sudden awe-- 5
Our feet--reluctant--led--
Before--were Cities--but Between--
The Forest of the Dead--

Retreat--was out of Hope-- 10
Behind--a Sealed Route--
Eternity's White Flag--Before--
And God--at every Gate--

* Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), p. 303.

The impulse to enter the realm of Dionysus has its origin in loss.

Finding is the first Act
 The second, loss,
 Third, Expedition for
 The "Golden Fleece"¹

The experience of desire and loss is expressed in several of Emily Dickinson's poems. As the "Golden Fleece" poem proceeds, it discounts or deconstructs everything, even the hero of the quest:

Fourth, no Discovery-
 Fifth, no Crew-
 Finally, no Golden Fleece-
 Jason-sham-too.

The poet here is not at home in the world.

The poem "A loss of something ever felt I-" examines childhood loss. Dickinson felt that her childhood was one of repression and deprivation. In his psychoanalytical biography of Dickinson John Cody suggests that her mother was not emotionally available to her when she was a child. He refers to a retreat backward to childhood as being the crucial fact about the seclusion she chose to maintain when she was older.² (The retreat backward is central also in Whitman's work.)

Dickinson explores her loss because she desires to know it as well as to feel it. As she explores it, she defines its reality by representing its inner state accurately. Loss occurs, it seems to her, arbitrarily, as a result of withdrawn affection, departure, or death. It is not compensated for in the hereafter. Yet the state of loss itself can be understood, and the act of coming to understand it is the act of a mind shaping itself.

Wallace Stevens, in "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction", states that "not to have is the beginning of desire".³ Both Dickinson and Stevens experienced an ongoing break between desire and the object of desire. Stevens solves the dilemma of desire by making it cyclical showing that it imitates the natural cycle of seasons, and, like Dionysus, it comes and goes. Stevens believes in the god and believes that as he always goes away, so he always returns. This movement is natural and necessary to the libido. But for Dickinson desiring is continuous, a state of being that defines being itself for her. She knows the consequences of her mind, and she lets it happen.

"I want" - it pleaded - All its life -
I want - was chief it said

C.P. 358

Desire in Dickinson requires the original object that incited her; it is not transferable to another object:

To fill a Gap
Insert the Thing that caused it -
Block it up
With Other - and 'twill yawn the more -
You cannot solder an Abyss
With Air.

C.P. 266

Dickinson suggests here that if you try to substitute you make a mistake of categories. She does not substitute for the loss but keeps on desiring. When the gap is not filled, the next stage is despair, an emotion which approximates death. "Our journey had advanced" shows her to be on the threshold of despair, between stage two and three of initiation.

"Our journey had advanced" echoes the descent or the demonic aspect of initiation. It is a vision of experience and of unfulfilled desire, the dangerous and dark side of Dionysus that is expressed in suffering, madness and death. Like Whitman, she uses the image of the journey to prepare us for descent. Geoffrey Hartman refers to the image of the journey as one that is particularly apt for suggesting the precariousness and inherent dangers of the transition undergone by the individual as he wanders into his own being.⁴ Like most modern poets, Dickinson does not provide a middle region or a guide for this symbolic journey. The setting of poem 615 is immediately the self, the writer writing. As is usual in Dickinson's work, there is no title; we begin with an indefiniteness. The first line serves the same purpose as her other first lines in that it inaugurates a state of perplexity that requires clarification.

There is already a problem in interpretation with the first word of the poem: "Our" is a lost referent. There are pronouns without apparent referents in several of her poems. The speaker is unlocated and unidentified, and this dislocates us with respect to our usual relation to reality. The omission of an identifiable speaker contributes to what Porter describes, with a negative connotation, as ". . . the larger absence of an identifiable world".⁵ I see, instead of an outer world, that the universe created in her poetry is the mythological inner one of mysterious names and beings. It is, in particular, the archetypal consciousness of Dionysus that she reveals here.

Dickinson's use of "our" reflects her conception of the psyche as a multiple consciousness. She realized that the Soul is able to divide into many parts and expresses here in various ways the dismemberment aspect of the Dionysus myth. She experiences a state of disunity in poem #615 that she elsewhere calls "bi-section". In poem #822 she names two aspects of the mind that traverse the interval between experience and death. She calls these aspects "soul" and "a single Hound, 'Its own Identity.'" Her dog accompanies her also in poem 520, "I started early, took my dog, and visited the Sea." (Visiting the sea is a way of saying she focused her attention on her deepest and most inward psychic processes.) I read "Our journey had advanced" as a journey of Dickinson's soul and its attendant hound, her identity. I see this image of the hound hovering behind "our", the hound being reminiscent of the silent companion that often accompanies the quester during the descent. The companion is sometimes a faithful animal, a familiaris or dumb soul-brother, who understands psychic laws other than those of the dayworld ego and which are death for that world. Here the companion is so silent that it is only part of a pronoun, an inward presence quite unlike the sallying forth of Whitman's multiple selves. (These two aspects of her being would become one if this were an ascending or third stage initiation in the manner of Whitman.)

The power Dickinson sometimes calls soul is identified by Adrienne Rich and Albert Gelpi as the poet's relationship to her own creative power, her daemon.⁶ This is an internal masculine power imagined variously as God, lover, death, master or knight, and realized

in her poetry in much the same way as masculine poets invoke their muse. This is the man within the female psyche, the transpersonal male principle that Jung called the animus. The bringing to consciousness of the animus is a major aspect in woman's development and in the achievement of integration. A woman needs the mediation of a god in her self-discovery just as man needs the mediation of a goddess to free him from his own kind of materiality and to bring spirit and nature together in one experience. (A large part of Dickinson's work describes the process of assuming the powers of the animus into herself, with the result of becoming queen, wife, czar, or duke.)

The journey, meanwhile, "had advanced". The perspective is the passive one of the submissive aspect of initiation. The tense indicates that there is no movement at present; it took place in the past. This backward looking view, or "habit of afterness", is shown by Porter to be representative of her work as a whole.⁷ The crucial affair for her is living after things happen, after loss. She is stalled at this point.

The image of feet, in "Our feet were almost come," suggests the fragmentation and body consciousness of the Dionysian. She uses it often; poems 167 and 510 have the same synecdoche. There is emphasis on the distance between her and her feet, a small but effective way of suggesting she feels fragmented, and is looking down, to what is below, not up. This fragmentation or dismemberment is felt in the body in such a way that each body part manifests its own life.

The adverb "almost" introduces what Hartman calls the liminal moment, the threshold or border between centre and labyrinth that governs the poem.⁸ This is a juncture to make one tremble, and I see it contributing to the disquieting, dissolving quality that Porter attributes instead to Dickinson's choice of adjectives and adverbs.

Kerenyi states that "where Dionysus appears, there appears also the border".⁹ The Dionysian experience refers to a borderline state in which the positive and the negative aspects of dismemberment are found.

Dickinson records numerous intermediate borderline, ambiguous states that may be qualified as uncanny, a term one comes across often in reading her critics. These places are equivalent to the rhetorical tropes of metonymy, synecdoche and even metalepsis, found often in her work.

We ask where we have almost come, and Dickinson answers, "To that odd Fork in Being's Road." Bloom points out that the answer is ironic, since it posits an absence rather than a presence.¹⁰ This fork is related to Frost's road that is no longer a road, "a fork in Being rather than in Consciousness; an odd fork, since Being compels a conjunctive rhetoric just as Consciousness (where your journey can advance) demands a disjunctive rhetoric."¹¹ We are indeed in the realm of the paradoxical god, Dionysus. Bloom refers to the break in the mode of figurative thinking between the irony of "Being's Road" and the synecdoche of "Eternity-by-Term" as a crisis or a poetic crossing. To Porter it is an instance of Dickinson's habitual swerves or evasions of

meaning.¹² He points out that when we anticipate closure in her poems we get a veering into indefiniteness. She does use abstract terms at crucial points to expand mental distance so as to create a space that allows the threshold or border to exist in an expanded liminal moment. Everything is sharp and ambiguous at the same time, like any mythical reality that is apparent only to the imagination.

The fork in the road is described by Dickinson in a synecdoche, "Eternity-by-Term," in which "term" jars with the "tern" of "eternity". Rhyme is often off-centre in her work and it has the result of frustrating our expectations of meaning and rhyme; both mind and body feel displaced, dismembered, in her poems.

The conjunction of "term" and "eternity" has a number of conflicting significances that Dickinson does not clarify. Eternity ought to be time without term. Bloom points out that "term" as a work goes back to the Latin terminus, to a root meaning of "to get over, break through"; thus, etymologically "term" is a crossing over. Dickinson is being deliberate here. I would like to think that she had in mind as one meaning the pillar that marks a boundary, or the emblem of Terminus, the Roman god of limits, as an appropriate marker for leaving one realm and entering another. The mind of the reader remains apart or off-centre with myriad meanings swirling between "Eternity" and "Term". The limits put on "Eternity" by its juxtaposition to "term" call into question the powers of the work and of poetry itself: she is expressing her distress at ever arriving at meaning. (In the

realm of the Dionysian, as in any myth, there is a multiplicity of meaning.)

Bloom suggests that "pace" in "Our pace took sudden awe," is a metaphor for consciousness.¹³ Pace suggests motion: some aspect of psyche moves. This line is parallel to lines one and two, and "pace" is an echo of "feet"; it maintains the impersonal detached status noticed earlier. The adverb "sudden" reminds me that transitions are swift for Dickinson (all of a sudden there is a shock, a forced entry, or a break in the continuity of identity in her poems), yet, as Hartman points out, the tone is unhurried and there is time to contemplate the situation.¹⁴ (This is like the process of dreams, where "all of a sudden" there is a change, or a happening.) Dickinson communicates here the creation of psychological space through slowness and patience. Soul-making is a long, long journey.

There is an apocalyptic overtone here, in part because of the word "awe". Something happens, since "awe" has as one of its meanings the secret for which she quests. Violent images, such as thunderstorms (poem 1247), volcanoes (poem 601), lightning (poem 1142), and a loaded gun (poem 754), occur in conjunction with "awe".

Violence takes on a new meaning in the realm of Dionysus. Walter Otto refers to the violence with which Dionysus forces his way in.¹⁵ And there is the violence of dismemberment, which may be seen to be a psychological process. (This process is sometimes necessary to loosen dominance of the ego.)

These images point to the destructive aspect of formative, imaginative work. This is the process Stevens calls the reduction to the First Idea; Frye calls it de-creation, and some critics have referred to deconstruction. (This is a fact we fundamentally resist in the dream world; we bring ourselves only with the greatest difficulty to change.)

I feel the presence, in line 5, of the centre of Dickinson's psyche. This is the spot where it reaches down into the unknown, or the underworld. The Queen of the underworld is Persephone, and her name means "bringer of destruction". Persephone, like Dionysus, is victimized. (Dionysus is a victim in the manner in which he dies. He is torn to pieces.) The Persephone experience occurs to each of us in sudden depressions when we are cold, numbed and drawn downward by a force we cannot see.¹⁶ We feel invaded or assaulted from below and we think of death. The rape into the underworld is one mode of experiencing a kind of death, and the movement of breakthrough for a woman is also symbolically a rape. Dickinson had been in Demeter's green fields with her playmates and flowers and, all of a sudden, "awe" appears, the world opens up and the bottom falls out.

A very strong image of destruction in her work is the "Loaded Gun" in "My life had stood - a loaded Gun". The exploding violent force of the gun expresses the all-encompassing shock of the break in continuity of the Persephone experience. The "I" of the "loaded Gun" poem is masculine and feminine at once. (At the level of the initiation archetype, masculine and feminine are interchangeable.¹⁷ It

is just as appropriate for the feminine nature or anima of masculine poets to respond to transforming power as for Dickinson's masculine nature or animus to experience a call to action.) The gun shot, the emptying volcano, the thunderstorm all provide a violent yet also a healing effect, as they point to the experience of the masculine image.

Frye associates "awe" with the paganism that makes her feel that there ought to be a god for every mood of the soul and every department of nature. She refers to "our confiscated Gods" (poem 1260). The appearance of "awe" is connected to Dionysus in poets, Dionysus being the male counterpart of Persephone. "Awe" has the effect of changing or transforming where it strikes. (Dionysus occurs now as a panther, a lion, now as a tree, a snake, now water.)¹⁸

"Awe" is a term that denotes an encounter with presentiment, and I agree with Porter that it is just such encounters that enable Dickinson to surprise. The coming of Dionysus is surprising; so is his going away. Surprise as an aspect of the appearance of Dionysus is well described by Emerson in "Poetry and Imagination": "Hence the shudder of joy with which in each clear moment we recognize the metamorphosis; because it is always a conquest, a surprise from the heart of things."

Bloom attributes this quality of surprise in Dickinson's poetry to the process of thinking in antithetical images.¹⁹ In a metonymic or antithetical image such as "term" and "eternity" there is a meeting of opposites in such a way to provide the shock to consciousness which

forces one to become aware of the presence of the Self and the need to subordinate the ego.

In line seven, "Before--were Cities--but Between", "Before", in a spatial sense, suggests the cities were in front, yet to come, but "before", in a temporal sense, literally means "behind". The city, traditionally an image of the fulfillment of human desire and a goal of the journey, is plural here, in anticipation of yet another quest to come.

There is a forest between her and the object of her vision. The phrase "The Forest of the Dead" (line 8) evokes the vegetable world that exists in descent, a forest that is often a sinister place such as the one at the opening of the Inferno. Frye points out that in the descent aspect of Romance the object of pursuit becomes the surrounding forest, or a sinister female body, and the seeking of identity may be the same as destruction. The image of the sinister forest is similar to that of the labyrinth in that they are both images of lost direction, images that in our time have negative and unsettling connotations. The original model of the labyrinth is the process of thinking itself, when the process is subjected to any deeply disorienting stress.²⁰ I am reminded of the labyrinth also because of the beast at its centre: the Cities may represent destruction. There is no surety that all will be well on entering the cosmos of Dionysus. He is Lord of Souls, brother of Hades.

Traditionally, the wisdom sought in descent is connected with the anxiety of death, along with a desire to know what lies beyond. We

are introduced to "the Dead" in line eight. In many poems Dickinson identifies her animus, the "man within", with death. She often begins a poem with death or a moment near it. As Hartman affirms, the life of her mind seemed centered on the moment preceding death, which is any or every moment: "Life is death's threshold to her mental structure."²¹

Dickinson often expresses her experience of death as a sense of loss. The first act of her conscious mind was an awareness of loss and isolation, and poem 959

A loss of something ever felt I--
The first that I could recollect
Bereft I was--of what I knew not

connects her forward to Wallace Stevens and backward to Emerson, poets who were also stimulated by loss or imaginative need, and to whom the word "poverty" is central. Hartman describes this sense of loss in a startling way when he defines consciousness as "the place at which being reveals itself as wounded."²²

Why is her being wounded? Perhaps Dickinson is wounded because she is wholly identified with her loss, or grief. This would suggest that she is undergoing the beginning of the painful struggle of a woman to separate from her possessive emotions, the struggle which alone can give birth to love and meaning. When we are shocked out of some happy identification with another, a union we thought of as an unbreakable state, we are beset by the temptation to a surrender, and a despairing search for what has been lost. We demand that it be restored to us exactly as it was, without any effort to discover the meaning of the experience.

The region of death to be entered is a forest in this poem, but it is in her work more usually a sea, sometimes a "Maelstrom-in the- Sky", "a wild Night and a new Road", (letter 351) and in poem 11, an underworld guarded by a dragon. In the final analysis the dragon or enemy of the quest is the cycle of time and nature itself, and the treasure it guards is the knowledge of self or immortality. Yet, "Immortality contented / Were Anomaly" (poem 1036) in Dickinson. Immortality, it turns out, is a process of constant desire, and it is what remains after the Fall.

There was no gainsaying the experience of loss, no going back before it: "Retreat--was out of Hope--" and "Behind--a Sealed Route". The wanderer is stuck in an unvarying pattern in the descent, and she experiences increasing alienation and loneliness. There is a possibility that one may never get out of this lower world, once described by Dickinson in an image that anticipates Frost as "the deepest cellar / That ever Mason laid" (poem 1182).

The quester is accompanied by a demonic accuser who sometimes takes the form of the reproachful memory. This memory is demonic because it has forgotten or lost the original memory of what it accompanies.²³ It suggests to us that the darkest knowledge at the bottom of the world is the vision of the absurd. Eternity, as object of the quest, may be an enemy. From this point of view only death is certain and nothing before or after death makes much sense. Like the

mariner in The Ancient Mariner, she can neither forget nor renew. This is "a world where one progressively loses one's freedom of action, the lowest stage of which is imprisonment, paralysis, or death itself."²⁴

"Sealed" is a term that one often meets in Dickinson; it connotes finality, blankness, and mystery. Gelpi cites the solitary confinement of the dungeon and the tomb of a consciousness shut in on itself in poems that echo this term.²⁵ Bloom points out that the sealed route of retreat has contrary significations: it can mean that Dickinson has no hope of turning back, because the road is sealed off, or it can mean that a retreat is available because of hope, in that the route back to life could be unsealed by the Apocalypse.²⁶ Once conscious of having lost, one can't go back to who one was before that event.

"Eternity's White Flag" (line 11) is before us. The white flag of truce suggests this situation is like a battle and her enemy, "Eternity", is expressing a wish for a parley with her, perhaps even wants to negotiate a peace. Dickinson is in conflict with eternity in this poem; she wants so profoundly for the identification of desire not to be broken. For me, of all these poets it is Dickinson's Agon that feels the most difficult to surmount. Dickinson is haunted by the idea of eternity, a concept which cannot be represented by space or time categories.

She presents an image of a white flag. White is an enigmatic, colourless blank, a liturgical colour, and it occurs in her lexicon in

concert with other abstract words: the "white Exploit" of death, the white Election", "that white Sustenance-Despair". The white flag is a conceptual image, and may be related to the "transumptive chain" of blankness that Bloom follows in Milton, Coleridge, Emerson and Stevens, denoting in turn blindness, dejection, strength, and auroral despair.²⁷ Her inner world is a ruin or a blank for Dickinson in this her demonic mode, so that things appear opaque and meaningless.

Three times the poet brings us near eternity; three times we are brought to a limit, and three times that limit is displaced. The initiation ritual characterizes the descent theme, and here it is enacted by the poem itself. In stanza I our feet had "almost come". In stanza II the "Forest of the Dead" intervenes, and in stanza III the vague white flag and the gods are in the way. The poem is condensed at the point of eternity, or, in Hartman's words, "In this little quest-romance Eternity is always before you."²⁸

Dickinson exhibits here the deep irony or parody that is the most pervasive tone in her work and of demonic descent imagery in general. A trinity usually implies growth, development and movement, and thus has dynamic connotations.²⁹ When dealing with temporal or developmental events there seems to be an archetypal tendency to organize events in a three-fold pattern.

Gates like doors are places of "going through" or "passing over" and symbolize in initiation the transition from one mode of being to another, from the profane to the holy. The gates are a

variant of the bridge that the dead must cross in the course of their journey to the underworld. This crossing is extremely difficult, with many obstacles en route. Passing through the gate would take one past the threshold and make transition to the Self possible.

Although the limit is also a threshold, an opening to a possibility, we feel many limits here. We do not know if the Gods will open or block the gate; his very appearance as a gate god is as a blank. (He is here the Dionysian god of confrontation, the god of deathly silence.) Dickinson's destiny seems to be, as Hartman says, to stay profane, on the threshold of vision, outside the gates but in sight of the promised land.³⁰

The door to what lies beyond, like the final rhyme, "god gate", is left slightly ajar, as if to suggest the secret is not entirely hidden. (To see through the aperture would be an opening up.) The telling of the quest will continue: "Emerging from an Abyss, and re-entering it--that is life, is it not, Dear?" (Letter 1024). The journey does not stop but continues to another confrontation of the poet with the abyss, as she reaches into herself to find another self to replace the certainty of the one lost before the Fall. (Whereas Wordsworth, in The Prelude turns his sight from the abyss and is self-consoled, Dickinson steadies her sight on the abyss again and again.)

Bloom describes, in a majestic way, Dickinson's final adventure, which will be "a quest indistinguishable from the quester,

and yet the quester will know herself as a shaman might, surviving so long as her totemic hound survives."³¹

Chapter 2

Footnotes

¹Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), p. 414. Subsequent references to Dickinson's poetry are to this edition.

²John Cody, After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 29.

³Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 382.

⁴Geoffrey Hartman, Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 317.

⁵David Porter, Dickinson: The Modern Idiom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 52.

⁶Adrienne Rich, "Vesuvius at Home", in Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), p. 166.

⁷Porter, p. 10.

⁸Hartman, p. 350.

⁹James Hillman, The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 200.

¹⁰Harold Bloom, Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate (Ithaca and London: Cornell Paper backs, 1980), p. 18.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Porter, p. 109.

¹³Bloom, Wallace Stevens, p. 18.

¹⁴Hartman, p. 350.

¹⁵Walter Otto, Dionysus: Myth & Cult (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 79.

¹⁶Helen M. Luke, Woman Earth and Spirit: The Feminine Symbol and Myth (New York: Crossroad, 1986), p. 49.

¹⁷Joseph L. Henderson, Thresholds of Initiation (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), p. 189.

¹⁸Otto, p. 110.

¹⁹Bloom, Wallace Stevens, p. 18.

²⁰Angus Fletcher, "The Image of Lost Direction", Centre and Labyrinth: Essays in Honour of Northrop Frye (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 339.

²¹Hartman, p. 152.

²²Ibid. p. 54.

²³Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 122.

²⁴Ibid., p. 110.

²⁵Albert Gelpi, The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 243-244.

²⁶Bloom, Wallace Stevens, p. 19.

²⁷Harold Bloom, The Breaking of the Vessels (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 9.

²⁸Hartman, p. 349.

²⁹Edward F. Edinger, Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973), p. 182.

³⁰Hartman, p. 350.

³¹Bloom, "Death and the Native Strain in American Poetry", p. 88.

Chapter 3
Ezra Pound
Canto 81
Dionysus as Mask

CANTO LXXXI* (lines 97-154)

Ed ascoltando il leggier mormorio
 there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent,
Whether of spirit or hypostasis,
 but what the blindfold hides 100
or at carnival
 nor any pair showed anger
 Saw but the eyes and stance between the eyes, 103
colour, diastasis,
 careless or unaware it had not the
 whole tent's room
nor was the place for the full ΕΛΔΩΣ
interpass, penetrate 108
 casting but shade beyond the other lights
 sky's clear
 night's sea
 green of the mountain pool
 shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's space.
What thou lovest well remains,
 the rest is dross
What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee 116
What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage
Whose world, or mine or theirs
 or is it of none?
First came the seen, then thus the palpable 120
 Elysium, though it were in the halls of hell,
What thou lovest well is thy true heritage
What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee

The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
 Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down. 127
Learn of the green world what can be thy place
In scaled invention or true artistry,

Pull down thy vanity, 130
 Paquin pull down!
 The green casque has outdone your elegance.

"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"
 Pull down thy vanity
 Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
 A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
 Half black half white
 Nor knowst'ou wing from tail
 Pull down thy vanity
 How mean thy hates 140
 Fostered in falsity,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 I say pull down.

But to have done instead of not doing
 this is not vanity
 To have, with decency, knocked
 That a Blunt should open
 To have gathered from the air a live tradition
 or from a fine old eye the unconquered flame
 This is not vanity. 152
 Here error is all in the not done,
 all in the diffidence that faltered . . .

Ezra Pound felt that the Hebrew and Greek religions had obfuscated the Greek spirit, including the spirit of Dionysus. It was this great loss that sparked Pound's initiation quest. He felt that we'd lost a feeling of closeness to the gods, that "the gods no longer walked in men's gardens".¹ Like Keats before him, and like Wallace Stevens too, Pound desired that groves be sacred. Stevens and Pound shared a longing for the mysteries of a cosmic life-principle, a religious consciousness which embraces nature and the spirit and binds man to both. This nostalgia for the numinous is the desire for the Dionysian experience. Pound felt that this experience was more common in the past.

Pound's work is characterized by great resonances backward: the quest is a constant pattern of his imagination. According to Wyndam Lewis, Pound was a man in love with the past.² John Berryman indicates that Pound "feels back" along the ancient lines of advance.³ Pound set himself the amazing task of discovering the best of all surviving poetry from all parts of the world, a project worthy of Whitman's drive to subsume the world in his poetic personality. The journey back to sources of being, becomes, in the *Cantos*, the image of Odysseus' voyage down to the ghosts who, when given blood, will speak and tell him how to get back to Ithaca. (Ithaca, incidentally, represented to Pound a restored European culture.) This is the perilous journey, stage two of initiation. In a letter to his father explaining the plan for the *Cantos* Pound writes that a live man goes down into the world of the dead.⁴ There had been two previous major

descents in literature: the descent of Homer's Ulysses in the Odyssey, and Dante's descent in The Divine Comedy. Pound's descent was to be the third in this line, and he felt the consequences would be important to civilization as a whole. He saw himself, quite literally, as a Messiah or deliverer, retracing and then re-gaining the bases of a viable culture. Pound would help realize a new civilization by synthesizing Greek myth with the subsequent history of the world. (We see again here the connection between descent to the underworld and the journey back in time, and the centrality of this movement to the making of an archetypal poem.) He would probably not appreciate my quoting the Bible to substantiate his programme of cultural renewal, but the verse in Revelations (20:2) "The dragon chained for a thousand years demands to be received", describes his feeling about the oi chthonoi or gods of the underworld. This dragon, in the form of Dionysus, lives in each of the poems considered in this paper.

The lyric love of the past is symbolized in his work by Aphrodite, the erotic goddess of personal, subjective relations. There is a sympathetic relationship between Aphrodite and Dionysus.⁵ She is his "mother" in some tales, his consort in others. The female figure of a man's soul that is called anima is a strong presence in Pound's work. The white goddess of sky, earth, and underworld permeates the Cantos. She personifies both the creative and the destructive, and is at times the "terrible mother" of unbridled and unbroken nature which is represented by Dionysus when he is mad. In Canto 81 of the Pisan

Cantos it is her function as goddess of the earth that is most important.

This female figure is at the centre of the concept of the cycle that is common to individual and historical life. This cycle is the basis of symbolism in several modern authors: we see it in Joyces' Finnegan's Wake, in Yeats's work, in Graves's White Goddess. (In Stevens' poetry, it applies to the life of the individual imagination only.)

The cycle of the nations and empires in the Cantos is assimilated into the rotation of life, death and rebirth. Pound once described the Cantos as "a poem including history."⁶ For Pound, as for Dante, history is marked by recurrence when it is meaningful.

I think it is in part because Pound emphasizes history in the Cantos that the cosmic element he desired is not communicated as well as it is in the other poems studied in this thesis, despite Pound's reference to such cosmic regenerative symbols as the tree. (His constant injunction to artists to "make it new" is another instance of his cosmic desire for regeneration. He echoes God: "Behold I make all things new", Revelation 21:5.)

The cycle is the controlling image of life in Pound. He wanted to characterize truly massive happenings, and tended to read all phenomena as indices of the same large process; the cycle assisted him in this reading. He uses the symbol of the cycle to express metamorphosis, the fact that things do not always remain the same.

The figure who typifies metamorphosis, and, in particular, the descent aspect of it, is Dionysus. Pound will have had in mind in the Cantos Dionysus' descent in Aristophanes Frogs where the god goes down in search of poetry to save the city.

Canto 47 in its multiple suggestion of Dionysus repeats the descent theme of Canto I, where the new Odysseus goes down to the dead. Dionysus appears in his incarnation of Zagreus, lord of the underworld; there are references to a lynx and a lyre which are sacred to Dionysus. The theme of descent is repeated in two of the Pisan Cantos 81-83, the fullest treatment of the theme.

Dionysus is a figure for cosmic and chthonic energies which are never under total human control. He was called Lysios, the loosener.⁷ He sets free, dissolves, and collapses what has been. We first meet him in Canto XI where he is en route to Naxos: his presence is announced by the feral smells of his wildcats. He is present whenever Pound refers to the alters of Zagreus (the suffering Dionysus), to Bacchus, Lycaeus (who beat Dionysus' followers), Iacchus (the roarer), Bromios, or Pan (a playmate of Dionysus). The violent aspect of this god is directly present in the Cantos where Pound incorporates the Provençal legends of cannibal feasts, the serving up of a child or lover as food. There is a submerged violence throughout many of the Cantos. Pound often presents the image of the panther, Dionysus' favorite animal. The panther, as an image, combines beauty and grace of movement with a bloodthirsty, savage desire to kill.

Pound was very alive to the need to keep instinct and intelligence together that Dionysus represents. And he was not aiming at historically reconstructing how the Greeks took the Dionysus figure, but was attempting to give this god imaginal location in our world.

Pound realizes, at the end of the Cantos (Notes for Canto CXVII and sequence) that he has not obeyed this god sufficiently. (Perhaps he has obeyed too well the destructive aspect of Dionysus.) The cult of authoritarianism and the irrationalities of racism in The Cantos are evidence he did not give an ethical dimension to his perception of how the Dionysian could operate in the outer world.

Dionysus is emblematic of each poet's return to what Bloom repeatedly calls his "subsuming precursors". The impulse for the journey back is combined in Pound with a quality of mind receptive to the work of previous poets, and this results in an intertwining of the critical and poetic components in his work. He has the facility of surrender, even of abandonment, to the movement of another mind; this ability marks the starting point of the critical process, and is the submission aspect of initiation. In his translations of classical and Provençal texts and in his Chinese poetry, Pound was able to discern the life in the text, and thus he resumes not only the tradition but the feeling that gave rise to the tradition.

In achieving such a degree of identification, the critic attains the point of view of the writer and gives us experience from the inside. The outburst of life that occurs as a result seems to be the manifestation within the actual inferior self or some earlier and

superior self that Pound identified with his own soul. That he feels he is at times some dead master is indicated in his early poem: ". . . Thus am I Dante for a space and am One François Villon, ballad-lord and thief . . . So cease we from all being for the time, And these, the masters of the Soul, live on."⁸ Pound revels here in that aspect of Dionysus that frees him from the confines of his adapted individuality and enables him to stop being himself for a time. This procedure of Pound's seems, on the face of things, to be only laudable. But, for me, there is something also of an exchange of his original identity for its shadow or reflection when he identifies so fullsomely with a poet from the past. This can be dangerous, and will be seen to be so when Dionysus appears as mask.

Pound shares Emerson's quandary in that in this quest for the bits of Dionysian spirit that are like sparks shining, he neglects his own poetic self, that is the carrier of the quest. It took him many years to find an equivalent to a "Sordello" to give voice to the Cantos, and it is not until Canto 47 that we hear Pound's own voice. It is only in the Pisan Cantos that we feel a renovation of self. (The voices of Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, and Stevens are those of very individual poets; they did not have the same difficulty finding their own voices.)

Bloom identifies this dilemma in Emerson, and he suggests that the dilemma has become a fundamental question for American poets.⁹ Certainly, it is a question that applies to each of the poets studied here. In becoming a poet, is one joining oneself to a company of

others, or truly becoming a solitary and single one? Emerson believed that poetry comes from an influx from previous poets. Yet he also eloquently addressed the fear of influence in elaborating his concept of Self-Reliance. In an archetypal poem, the poet can achieve both community and individuality at once.

For Pound the goal of the journey back is "beauty" or vision in some form or other, often an ideal beauty which combines the figure of the anima (the anima or sleeping maiden) with the sense of harmony and order. Pound was very strongly inclined to the paradisaical aspects of life, and these are quite evident in the Provençal literature he studied. Many of his personae in the poems written previous to the Cantos are failed visionaries. One encounters the word "vision" at every turn in The Spirit of Romance. The "Medallion" section of "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" is a tribute to Venus, the embodiment of his early dream of beauty. In the Cantos it is the goddess Artemis, "beauty as of mountain lakes in the dawn" (Canto 110), that presides. Artemis, like Dionysus, appears in the midst of pandemonium. Both can represent the wild spirit of the dreadful in their approach.

A quality of longing is an aspect of the Provençal culture and the Petrarchan Courtly Love convention where Pound found his spiritual home. We find there the Eros theme of the soul's ascent to a vision that has been promoted by some form of human love. A theme of the lover being raised to a higher world by his mistress may have a sexual or a sublimated aspect. Since Pound often commented on the phallic nature of the directing consciousness, we expect to see an emphasis on

the sexual aspect in his poetry. The sovereignty of Dionysus is recognized not only in the juice of the fruit issuing in wine but also the sperm of living creatures. (A thyrsos was crowned with wreathes and carried around in his cult.)¹⁰ Like Stevens, it is an earthly paradise Pound seeks, a paradise where, as Orpheus, he may hear an erotic music that might restore his Eurydice to him. He achieves this in the Pisan Cantos. (There is also a sublimation of the sexual instinct in this process, since the poet inspired by love is not ultimately seeking a sexual partner but is a creature returning to his creator. To return to his creator, man has to return to himself and seek the source of creative powers which are close to the sexual instincts.)

Pound refers to a tension or an "electric charge" that increases his psychic sensitivity. He uses the image of the vortex, which he adopted from his reading in nineteenth century physics, to express his creativity. (Emerson uses the same image in an essay on Swedenborg in Representative Men.) In this image the activity of the poet moves from a broad receptivity to the concentrated effort of creation; it may be thought of as a vortex of energy. In Pound the vortex is expressed in the image of the sea shell, a helical emblem of the living rising out of the sea, the "nautillis biancastra" of Canto 74 which appears many times in the Cantos. Whether he cites the white cockle shell of Aphrodite or the birth of Venus from the waves, Pound is referring to the creative process of image coming from the unconscious.

It is instructive to note further Pound's comments on this erotic mode of energy, sometimes called by him Tao, the way, or the system. It is also Zōē, not only the élan vital of vegetative life but also the interiority of that life. Dionysus is the soul of nature, its psychic interiority. Both Pound and Emerson identified their minds with this psychic interiority of nature. Emerson writes about this aspect of the poet in his essay on Goethe in Representative Men: "I find a provision in the constitution of the world for the writer or secretary who is to report the doings of the miraculous spirit of life that everywhere throbs and works."¹¹ Following the analogy between personal and natural cycles, the creative and the organic, Pound emphasized the recovery of the vital powers of the natural process as a source of restoration not only for the poet, but also for European cultures. The descent in the Cantos results from this ambition.

Process, the essence of an organism, is a metaphor taken from biology. Pound makes various reference to organic form in referring to his method of composition. The comparison Pound makes of the personal and natural cycles, the creative and the organic, is, properly speaking, an analogy. They are not identical, not the same. They tell of each other, but they are not each other. Their base is not naturalistic, since nature itself is a metaphor. I think that Pound, in his literal approach to these matters, made the analogy an identity, and this results in some of the confusion of the failure of communication in the Cantos.

The starting point of the creative process is the epiphany. Pound described it in various places as "the bust through from the quotidian . . . into the divine or permanent world" (Letter 210). Frye defines epiphany as an archetype presenting simultaneously an apocalyptic world and the cyclical order of nature, or sometimes the latter world alone.¹²

The cyclic principle of metamorphosis allows not only for transitions upward or ascents from rock to vegetation to animal and human life, but also from man to "divine states of mind". Joyce calls this moment "the sudden revelation of the whatness of a thing", the moment in which "the soul of the commonest object . . . seems to us radiant."¹³ Jung identifies these divine powers imprisoned in bodies as nothing other than Dionysus dispersed in matter.¹⁴ (The experience of psyche in all matter is a function of a bisexual, Dionysian consciousness.)¹⁵ Wallace Stevens is also expressive on epiphany:

Perhaps there are times of inherent excellence,
Perhaps there are moments of awakening,
Extreme, fortuitous, personal, in which
We more than awaken . . .¹⁶

Pound's comments on the concept of epiphany indicate that his theories and techniques are lyric-centered, as are those of the other poets considered here. Poetry is seen to be a series of ecstatic moments or points of expanding apprehension, a discontinuous series, since the epiphany originates in the dream rather than in the will or in consciousness. Pound meets Poe in this respect.

In Pound's poetry of "luminous details", the conjunction of these details or "privileged moments" replaces narrative. Pound

separates the image or epiphany from the quest for it and leaves us with the product, *so* to speak. Thus we often do not have the process or the evolution of the epiphany in his poetry, and in this respect, it is unlike that of Dickinson, Stevens and Whitman where we are very aware of a process. Instead Pound focuses on the peaks, a curious defense in one who was so intellectually aware of the depth dimension.

(The method of juxtaposition or radical metaphor was to Pound a "presenting of one facet then another until at some point one gets off the dead surface of the reader's mind to a part that will register."¹⁷ He wants to surprise the reader so that our ego control is jolted, and thus become more open to the appearance of the Dionysian.)

For Pound the epiphany is the moment in time at which the self of the poet accepts language as its sole mode of existence. Yet language is not a source. It is self and language together, two focal points, which give rise to the work. Neither can by itself find access to the source. If one confers upon language the power to originate as Pound did, one runs the risk of hiding the self; Pound was so attracted to the moment of the sublime that, until the time of *Pisan Cantos*, his self, and, in particular, his shadow is not taken into account.

Traditionally, the ascent up the mountain culminates in epiphany, a spontaneous vision, and this vision is sometimes symbolized by an unspoiled or redeemed female. This image is identified with the moon, which is the traditional boundary between the temporal and eternal worlds. The image of the moon is central in Pound's mythology.

There are various feminine images in his work. At the end of Canto 1 there is an image of Aphrodite, goddess of the sea, "Bearing the golden bough of Argicida" (Canto 1, line 76) as she prepares to embark on a voyage which is a mirror image of that of Odysseus. The apparitions of Aphrodite and her roses signal various "beauties", but it is Persephone who incarnates the secret of the rebirth that Pound seeks for Western culture.

Persephone was Pound's emblem for his poetic virility. Plato in his Cratylus suggests that one etymology of her name is "seizing that which is in motion". Pound was perhaps thinking of his catching the image as it appears in the process of creation. Persephone stands for a permanent returning to the underworld or to the unconscious. She belongs for part of the year to Hades (who is unified with Dionysus) and who is the God of the depths. He represents a void. This void is an interiority or depth that is unknown but nameable.

Persephone is raped into the underworld. This is to say that the confrontation between the upper world and the underworld is experienced as violence, or, as a violation. Her myth expresses the experience of the underworld as overwhelming, but it is a necessary experience. Her rape is the central initiatory mystery in the Eleusis myth, a counterpart to the Dionysus myth.

Helen Dennis has pointed out the multitude of references to the Eleusinian mysteries in the Pisan Cantos. These mysteries were sacred to Dionysus in their lesser or first stage.¹⁸ The greater mysteries

were sacred to Demeter and her daughter Persephone (referred to in the Cantos as Koré, the goddess of the dead), and they took place in the fall, whereas the lesser initiation took place in the spring. The goal was the vision of Eleusis, and Pound's vision of eyes in Canto 81 suggests he wanted us to bear in mind this goal of the greater mystery. In Canto 82 there is a union with a chthonic female deity, in the manner of Whitman; this represents a profound image of descent.

As goddess of the underworld Persephone rules over birth, procreation and death. As Demeter's daughter she rules over the seasons and thus animates trees and plants; she rules in fact over all living organisms. Guy Davenport has pointed out that Persephone, or Koré, and her trees are persistent images of the power of renewal in Pound's work. There is an alignment of girl and tree in the early poem "The Tree"; there are trees everywhere from his first poems in the book for Hilda Doolittle to the conclusions to the Cantos in the Rock-Drill and Thrones sequences. (This chthonic, mysterious force whose harmony man must search for and adhere to is also invoked in those instances when Pound addresses his goal of building the ideal city.)

Persephone's mother, Demeter or Ceres, is mentioned in the first line of Canto 81. "Zeus lies in Ceres bosom": in the dawn, the hills identified as earth's breasts conceal Zeus, the sun, or the act of love from which Koré and wheat will be born. Flower and leaf suggest the presence of Persephone. The tree petrified or carved, or the images of stone, suggest the maturity of her mother Demeter. Both are included in the reference to the quest in Canto 47:

"First must go the road to hell / And to the bower of Ceres' daughter Persephone."

The personification of the other aspect of woman, woman the destructress, is Circe. She reigns in Cantos 1-30 where the modern world is depicted as a wasteland and the life forces of Persephone are in retreat. In Canto 47, a pivot for the entire work according to Hugh Kenner, Circe directs Odysseus to hell, the bower of Persephone. Circe is the feminine as formless and chaotic in Canto 29, and in Canto 39 she is dark and dangerous. Perhaps the most important advice in the Cantos is Circe's injunction to Odysseus in Canto 39 that in order to return to Ithaca, Pound-Odysseus must first set sail to the realm of Persephone and Hades to hear the prophecy of Tiresias. Death as nekylia or descent into the depths, not death as an end, is required. Tiresias, like Dionysus, shows the connection between bisexual consciousness and death. He can see through life into death. James Hillman explains: "Approximation to the hermaphrodite is a death experience; the movement into death proceeds through bisexuality. Death and bisexual consciousness are what Dionysus involves."¹⁹

The feminine principle is connected in Pound's imagination with the city of the imagination. The whole intent of his exploration of the past is to find the basis for a return journey which will itself be the process of building a new civilization. The city is an inclusive symbol of civilization. The "city of Dioce, whose terraces are the colour of stars" (Canto 73) is an image of an apocalyptic world in which inner desire and outward circumstances coincide. It is the

eternal that exists on top of the cyclical. This is a great vision, and in contemplating it the disclaimers attached to Pound and all his work seem mistaken.

Pound expected to enter this world, until the time of his detainment at Pisa and the writing of the Pisan Cantos. His studies of the histories of Venice and Florence, and the theme of Italy as a high culture, inform many of the earlier Cantos. He venerated those men he deemed great political heroes (including Mussolini); he considered them great because they had the desire and the power to further his vision of the city. It is in the image of the city that I see and feel Pound aspiring upward with the same verve as Emerson: "The roots go down to the river's edge and the hidden city moves upward / White ivory under the bark" (Canto 83, lines 72 and 73).

The human world is an ordered community in the ideal city. (Pound was attracted to totalitarian arrangements because of his desire for civil order.) The mineral world of the city, often represented by one building or temple or one stone, has a glowing quality. There are many incidences of stone, marble, and crystal in Pound's images. The vegetable world of the city is often represented by the tree of life: Cantos 85 and 135 mention the ash-tree Yggdrasill, the "world-tree". The references to herbs, basilicum and thyme, form part of this construct and also suggest metamorphosis.

Pound moves his goddesses toward the image of the city. It is from the conjunction of city and goddess that Pound's definition of civilization derives. (Each of the first thirty Cantos either ends

with the image of a city or a tower wall, or else contains such an image.) The dark images of ruin contrast with the bright images of Aphrodite's copper walls, Danae's tower, Sigismundo's Rimini, Chinese dynastic temples and the cities of Florence and Venice.

The African city Wagadu, destroyed four times and rebuilt each time with a new name, is the final image of the city in the Cantos. By Canto 107, the cities through whose histories the Cantos have moved become temples containing light. Guy Davenport expresses this movement well: "It is now clear the poem rests more clearly in a deeper, stiller sense of humanity, the city and its continuity, symbolized by the goddess of field and citadel wearing the sanctuary of her people as a crown."²⁰

At the same time that Pound introduces the city in the Pisan Cantos he refers to the image of eyes, "The suave eyes, quiet, not scornful": this image is developed in Canto 81.

Everything in the Cantos is seen to be in a deteriorating state until we reach the Pisan Cantos, written while Pound was kept in the Detainment Training Centre in Pisa after being arrested for treason. The abrupt break in continuity in his life created the disjunction in him that permits a descent, leading him to a confrontation with self and an evaluation of his prior motives. His compulsion to be continually doing and to war against usura was halted, and in the detainment camp he had no more distractions to save him from examining his emotions.

He begins the Pisan Cantos with a lament for the death of Mussolini. The death had been a great blow to him since, to Pound, Mussolini had represented the possibility of a cultural renaissance. Appropriately, it is at this point that Pound brings in the city "Now in the mind indestructible," (Canto 74, line 432) the city called Wagadu that was lost in reality but remained in men's hearts. The vision of the city is connected to the vision of the eyes.

There are numerous references up to this point to eyes of goddesses, and to women in paintings, but Flory shows that the eyes here belong to the women Pound has loved. (In his poem "Dan Un Omnibus de Londres", "Les Yeux d'une morte / m'ont salué." In "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley", "The eyes of this dead lady speak to me.") The early cantos 1, 3, and 6 have images of eyes, but without the intensity of this passage where Pound remembers the eyes of women he has known and loved.

Pound's reminiscences of moments of friendship and love, in combination with his self-criticism and his attempt to see as his wife and his lover have seen, constitute a purification. In formal terms, the process of redemption is an identification with Man and results in a detachment from the cyclical image he has created. Pound achieves that quality of the initiated that bears a love embracing the whole universe from heaven to hell. Love is the driving force of the Pisan sequence, and even the references to his immediate surroundings--the green world of plant and animal life, the morning and evening star--are suffused with affection. He says in Canto 80, "Amo ergo sum." The

symbolism of the Garden of Eden here alerts us to our coming closer to a world of original identity.

The Detention Training Centre becomes the land of Dione, the long meadow a field of lynxes, and the orchard a pomegranate field, until "there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent . . . saw but the eyes and stance between the eyes . . . Sky's clear / night's sea / green of the mountain pool / shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mark's space" (Canto 81, lines 98, 103, 109-112). We see the eyes and the stance between the eyes--only that part of the face that would be covered by a carnival mask.

A mask is a symbol of Dionysus and it suggests that an epiphany of Dionysian quality is different from that of other gods because of its assault on the senses, its urgency and its connection to duality and paradox.²¹ Otto states that it is only those who are elemental and belong to the earth who present themselves in the mask.²²

The suggestion of carnival is rich in undertones. The initiate must undergo a ritual death, and the carnival symbolizes a reduction to a world of chaos where ordinary social life disappears into the form of sexual license or carnival. When Dionysus entered Thebes, he generated this kind of terror or excitement in women. Identities became uncertain. Young women left their family attachments and personal relationships to take to the streets and hills. When the carnival is present and the masked dancer invites, James Hillman tells us that we are in the role of Persephone being chased by the invisible spirit's

demands.²³ The spirit is masked in order to stimulate inquiry and the search to discover; this is the spiritual response asked for.

Pound sees love without anger manifest in these eyes and this gives him the strength to make the great affirmation that "What thou lovest well remains, the rest is dross / What thou lovest well is thy true heritage . . ." (Cantos 81, lines 143-144). Pound is thinking here of the Eleusinian mysteries and their culmination in a vision of Koré rising from the ground. The ritual purgation and humiliation of the act of initiation applies in a very personal way here.

This emphasis on the initiate having seen the image of eyes links Pound to Emerson. Emerson's epiphany in chapter 1 of Nature, "I become a transparent eye ball . . ." parallels a section of Canto 83: "The eyes, this time my world / But pass and look from mine / between my lids / sea, sky and pool / alternate pool / sky / sea . . ."

It is in these Cantos that Pound bears out the third part of the three-part structure of the initiation. He writes, in the introduction to The Economic Nature of the United States: "For forty years I have schooled myself . . . to write an epic poem which begins 'in the Dark Forest', crosses the purgatory of human error, and ends in the light . . ." It is in the Pisan Cantos that he does achieve the light.²⁴ (This is the light of nature, not of consciousness.)

In Canto 82, the main precursor is Whitman (as it was in Canto 47). There are reminders of Whitman all through Pound's work. Pound's cultural omnivorousness, his attempt to make a complete inventory of the world's aesthetics, is an ambition worthy of his ancestor Whitman.

He wrote of Whitman in "A Pact": "We have one sap and one root / Let there be commerce between us", and he referred to him as his spiritual father.²⁵ Various critics suggest that the Cantos are a twentieth century "Song of Myself", although I find "Passage to India" is a closer analogy. Pound could be repelled by Whitman, and often asserted his (Pound's) cultural superiority to him, but he gave him his greatest compliment when he said that when he, Pound, expressed certain emotions in poetry he found himself using Whitman's rhythms. (That rhythm is the elusive, meditative and resonant rhythm of lyric.)

In Canto 81 Pound has felt his life to be united with the general rhythm of growth and has recognized his own passion in that of Dionysus. He has thus in a sense passed the gates of death into another land, and life and death are no longer an antithesis to him. It is Whitman's poem that best helps him confront the relationship between poetic utterance and death. The union with the chthonic, feminine deity in Canto 82 is the emblem of this state of mind.

Kenner calls Canto 82 "a structural x-ray" of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking". (Apparently Pound knew this poem of Whitman's by heart.) The canto begins with the voice of Whitman's consciousness, two lines from "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking": "O troubled reflection in the sea! / O throat! O throbbing heart!" Pound recapitulates a favourite theme of Whitman, the dissolution of the poet into the fertile cycles of the earth. Pound continues: "How drawn, O GEA TERRA, / What Draws as thou drawest / till one sink into thee by an arm's width / embracing thee Where I be let the

thyme rise / and basilicum / let the herbs rise in April abundant
 " (According to Hugh Witemeyer these metaphors of vegetation
 are habitual to Pound when he is in his Whitman vein.)²⁶ (Vegetable
 growth is the main theme of Cantos 85-95.) The bird that sang night
 after night "in the moonlight on Paumanok's grey beach" (the moon
 presides over this union too) now sings through Pound. This is the
 image of bird as vocation of the poet. Leaves of grass are replaced by
 "herbs", no less grass for that. The Word is the same for each poet,
 "death, death, death, death". The longed-for mate in Whitman's elegy
 becomes Pound's earth bride. The wind prevails in each poem (one
 critic has suggested that the indentation of the Cantos follows the
 movement of the winds). There is a cosmic consciousness at work here
 and at this point Pound is more successful in recapitulating Whitman
 than in echoing his classical poets.

The earth calls Pound back to her. The earth and the principle
 of the feminine are related. It seems that, psychologically, one of
 the goals of the descent is connected with the mother and the mother's
 encircling body of earth or ocean or underworld. There is a return to
 the mother as if to retrieve a valuable part of oneself which has been
 left behind or never developed. The movement to the mother is
 downward. But we are left with the impression, well expressed by
 Eliot, that the way up and the way down are the same; if one succeeds
 in either, one gets both.

When I read Canto 83, I was reminded of a marvellous statement
 of Bloom's: "The anxiety of influence descends as a myth of the

father, and the anxiety of demand manifests itself through concealing images of the mother as Muse."²⁷ The myth of the spiritual father (Whitman) and the myth of the mother occur at the same time in this Canto, and for me it is the most memorable of all, yet Pound omitted it from the 1966 edition of Selected Cantos!

In the Pisan sequence, thanks to the guides, the precursor father Whitman, and the sustaining image of woman, we do witness 'Being coming into being', the ascent to identity. Pound achieves his paradiso, "Elysium, tho' it were in the halls of hell" (Canto 81).

Pound did not pursue the masked eyes of Canto 81, or his vision would have darkened. There is a destructive aspect to this empty mask that appears and disappears. Dionysus was presented in the mask because he was known as the god of confrontation. Pound only briefly confronts the final secrets of existence and non-existence as they appear in these eyes. He doesn't have Dickinson's stamina to confront the abyss time and again.

Most often he prefers "the sublime in the old sense", despite his command to "make it new". Bloom claims that Wallace Stevens is better at "making it new", better at what Bloom continually refers to as the freshness of transformation. In Dantesque terms Pound wanted to write the Paradiso, "to build a dream over the world". Eliot has an Inferno in The Wasteland and a Purgatorio in "Ash Wednesday" and The Four Quartets. Joyce has an Inferno in Ulysses and a Purgatorio in Finnegans Wake.²⁸ They are more willing to speak of the physical, anxious, horrible and grotesque aspects of love and death.

However, just as Emerson provided the touchstone for poetic theory in America in the nineteenth century, Pound restored to the poetry of our century a theory of knowledge founded on the perception of particular feeling. As a result, poetry is given "its true place as the central act of creative vision and knowledge" and "becomes, for the reader, revelation, and for the poet, discovery."²⁹ Pound writes, referring to the appearance of the Dionysian: "Properly, we should read for power. Man reading should be man entirely alive. The book should be a ball of light on one's hand."³⁰

Chapter 3

Footnotes

¹D.D. Paige, ed., The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941 (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950), p. 431.

²Wyndam Lewis, "A Man in Love with the Past", in E. San Juan, Jr., ed., Critics on Ezra Pound (Florida: University of Miami Press, 1972), p. 17.

³John Berryman, "The Poetry of Ezra Pound", in Critics on Ezra Pound, p. 43.

⁴Walter Neuman, "E. P. and Magic: Old World Tuckoma New World Poem", in Paideuma: A Journal Devoted to E. P. Scholarship, 2nd Ser. (Fall, 1982), p. 211.

⁵C. Kerényi, The Gods of the Greeks (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951), p. 176.

⁶Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 96.

⁷Walter Otto, Dionysus: Myth and Cult (Texas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 203.

⁸Quoted by Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (California: University of California Press, 1971), p. 484.

⁹Harold Bloom, A Map of Misreading (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 168.

¹⁰Otto, p. 164.

¹¹Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Goethe; or, the Writer" in "Representative Men" in Porte, Joel, ed., Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays & Lectures, The Library of America, p. 746.

¹²Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 367.

¹³Richard Ellmann, "Ez and Old Billyum", in New Approaches to EZRA POUND: A Co-ordinated Investigation of Pound's Poetry and Ideas, ed. by Eva Hesse (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 73.

¹⁴James Hillman, The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 293.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Wallace Stevens, "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" in The Palm at the End of the Mind: Selected Poems and a Play (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 212-213.

¹⁷Ezra Pound, Guide to Kulchur (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 17.

¹⁸Helen Dennis, "The Eleusinian Mysteries as an Organizing Principle in the Pisan Cantos", in Paideuma: A Journal Devoted to E. P. Scholarship, 2nd Ser. (Fall, 1982).

¹⁹Hillman, p. 281.

²⁰Davenport, "Persephone's Ezra", in New Approaches, p. 176.

²¹Otto, p. 91.

²²Otto, p. 88.

²³James Hillman, The Dream and the Underworld (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1979), p. 177.

²⁴Quoted by Kenner, p. 495.

²⁵Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 89.

²⁶Hugh Witemeyer, "Clothing the American Adam: Pound's Tailoring of Walt Whitman" in Ezra Pound Among the Poets, ed. by George Bornstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 104.

²⁷Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 5-16.

²⁸Davenport, Geography, p. 162.

²⁹Ezra Pound, The Spirit of Romance (Connecticut: New Directions, 1952), p. 92.

³⁰Ezra Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 17.

Chapter 4

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Bacchus"

Dionysus: God of Wine, and of the Instinctual Life Force

BACCHUS * [1847]

Bring me wine, but wine which never grew
In the belly of the grape,
Or grew on vine whose tap-roots, reaching through
Under the Andes to the Cape,
Suffer no savor of the earth to scape. 5

Let its grapes the morn salute
From a nocturnal root,
Which feels the acrid juice
Of Styx and Erebus;
And turns the woe of Night, 10
By its own craft, to a more rich delight.

We buy ashes for bread;
We buy diluted wine;
Give me of the true,--
Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled 15
Among the silver hills of heaven
Draw everlasting dew;
Wine of wine,
Blood of the world,
Form of forms, and mould of statures, 20
That I intoxicated,
And by the draught assimilated,
May float at pleasure through all natures;
The bird-language rightly spell,
And that which roses say so well. 25

Wine that is shed
Like the torrents of the sun
Up the horizon walls,
Or like the Atlantic streams, which run
When the South Sea calls. 30

Water and bread,
 Food which needs no transmuting,
 Rainbow-flowering, wisdom-fruited,
 Wine which is already man,
 Food which teach and reason can. 35

Wine which Music is,--
 Music and wine are one,--
 That I, drinking this,
 Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
 Kings unborn shall walk with me; 40
 And the poor grass shall plot and plan
 What it will do when it is man.
 Quickened so, will I unlock
 Every crypt of every rock. 45
 I thank the joyful juice
 For all I know;--
 Winds of remembering
 Of the ancient being blow,
 And seeming-solid walls of use
 Open and flow. 50

Pour, Bacchus! the remembering wine;
 Retrieve the loss of me and mine!
 Vine for vine be antidote,
 And the grape requite the lote! 55
 Haste to cure the old despair,--
 Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
 The memory of ages quenched;
 Give them again to shine;
 Let wine repair what this undid;
 And where the infection slid, 60
 A dazzling memory revive;
 Refresh the faded tints,
 Recut the aged prints,
 And write my old adventures with the pen
 Which on the first day drew, 65
 Upon the tablets blue,
 The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.

* Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Bacchus," in Gay Wilson Allen, *et al.*, eds., American Poetry (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 125-128.

Emerson expressed liberation from the norms of everyday life as "strong eros struggling through, / In dens of passion and pits of woe."¹ In the poem "Bacchus", he asks eros, in the form of the god Bacchus, to "retrieve the loss of me". Emerson emphasizes that aspect of Dionysus that is the instinctual life force, liberated from the central control of the ego. It is the freedom and joy of the Dionysian structure of consciousness that is expressed in this poem. After the somber Dionysian of Dickinson and Pound, the sweet side of the god will be evident here.

In Nature Emerson prophesies a poet who incarnates the Dionysian ideal of the power and freedom of inspiration; the theory presented in this essay has helped make possible the initiation poems studied in this paper. He promises for each of us the original relation to the universe we know as a child, and he suggests divinity is possible for the self through our surviving capacity for ecstasy, in which we "stand outside" the ego. He celebrates instinct as superior to the will, and Reason (Intuition) as superior to Understanding (rational logic). He calls for a poetry of apocalyptic release: "Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us."² This Dionysian quality is the most vital element in his first volume of poetry, Poems, published in 1846, the same year in which "Bacchus" was published.

"Bacchus" does not illustrate the difficulties and conflicts of the first two stages of initiation, but the apocalyptic quality of the third stage of the initiation quest is the vital element in the poem.

By way of introduction to "Bacchus", I would like to cite Bloom's marvellous encomium on the poem, which he sees as Emerson's

greatest and most ecstatic poem, a furiously energetic rhapsody worthy of its title and subject, and one of the most audacious chants of poet incarnation and self-recognition in the language, a poem worthy of the Coleridge of Kubla Khan, or of Emerson's own Orphic poet, though the mysteries celebrated in this lyric are more properly Dionysian than Orphic.³

Bacchus was one of the Greek names given to the god called Dionysus, a god who, like other Greek gods, had the power to transform himself into any shape. He appears often as a young boy, but also "as fair as any girl" according to Ovid. The celebrations of his cult were orgiastic, but what appears to be orgiastic in his rites was a symbol of man's willingness to allow the spirit of nature to speak to him in a language totally different from reasonable logic. Hence the cup of Dionysus, which he extends to his followers, is not the giver of drunkenness if rightly tasted, but the container of a priceless, secret knowledge. This cup contains an initiatory secret of the existence of spirit in nature. Dionysus was the reborn son of Zeus. His second birth from his father's thigh was a spiritual rather than an historical one, and thus he represents the rite of passage to a spiritual rebirth. (He also symbolizes a rite of passage from the Mother to the Father, reflecting the puberty rites of antiquity.)⁴ Emerson, in a poetic incarnation of Bacchus, will play on each of these associations throughout the poem.

The first act of the poet is to demand wine. Wine was sacred to Dionysus and was also sacred to the white goddess whom we meet in the form of Fate in "Merlin". The vine is also called "the wild mother".⁵ In Druid mythology the vine was given the meaning "I am a hill of poetry". Wine is a cultural product resulting from special attention, industry and devotion and thus symbolizes those respected activities that make man human and capable of civilization; Emerson's use of the term "craft" in line 11 suggests this use of the symbol.

The wine called for "never grew / In the belly of the grape." This wine is the source and nature of poetic inspiration (in his personal life, Emerson had little sympathy for sensual stimulants, although he did enjoy an occasional glass of wine). Wine stimulates by virtue of the volatile substance called "Spirit"; a spirit or a god dwells in it and produces the ecstasy of intoxication. This aspect of Dionysus gives animal awareness, and a dissolution of consciousness that may lead to the ecstasy of spiritual assault. Thus wine is a symbol of the spiritual means of existence. The classical world thought of this spirit as Dionysus, in particular the suffering Dionysus Zagreus whose divine substance is distributed throughout the whole of nature. Emerson connects this principle with the imagination in "Poetry and Imagination":

The act of imagination is ever attended by true delight.
It infuses a certain volatility and intoxication into all
Nature.⁶

(The notions of the volatility of the wine and the shape-shifting quality of the god are illustrations of the concept of metamorphosis in

commentaries on Emerson's work.) The same essay ("Poetry and Imagination") also subscribes to intoxication and ecstasy:

O celestial Bacchus! drive them mad,--this multitude of vagabonds, hungry for eloquence, hungry for poetry, starving for symbols⁷

The wine must "savor" or taste of all the earth; it is characterized by "acrid juice" and is associated with the "belly" of the grape: body sensations are emphasized as a concomitant of the vine, and they echo the notion of spiritual body that underlies the poem. The Dionysian experience awakens a consciousness of the body. (Dismemberment, or the process of division, is necessary for one to be aware of body parts as distinct from each other.)

The tap-root of the vine reaches "Under Andes to the Cape" in the heart of the earth; it also extends from "Styx and Erebus" to the "silver hills of heaven", and in so doing, it turns "woe of Night" to "rich delight". One of the qualities of the god was named "Nyktelios" or The Nocturnal and this quality caused him to be identified with Hades. Dionysus and Hades are not identical on the literal level, but have an invisible meaning for the soul in terms of its death. (In one version of his birth, Dionysus is born of Persephone, Goddess of the Dead, and of Zeus.) Emerson marries the contrasts of heaven and hell in the symbol of the vine which has the ability to turn or transform demonic darkness into its opposite. This craft of the vine, called turning, is an instance of metamorphosis, and it anticipates numerous references to renewal in the extensive analogy to the Last Supper that is maintained throughout the poem.

The symbol of transformation in the Dionysian religion was originally connected with the phenomenon of fermentation (intoxicating spirits were also connected with fertility rites in the ancient world). It was felt that through the transformation of this natural earthly product the wine acquires an intoxicating spirit character and becomes a sacrament, mediating wisdom, and revelation.

There is a complex of Christian associations by the end of the first verse. Some of the vocabulary ("suffer") echoes the Bible. The symbol of the cup of wine connects with the Eucharist rite which includes a cup of symbolic wine. In John 15:1, "I am the vine", Christ is identified with the vine. The vintage is frequently used as a symbol of the apocalypse in Revelation: Jesus drinks new wine in his kingdom.⁸

The vine extends both up and down. This suggests that the direction of change or metamorphosis may be downward to death, but admits also of an ascent to the knowledge of self that characterizes initiation. Emerson refers on one occasion to the fact that one day man will be "amphibious", "with one door down into Tartarus, and one door upward into light, belonging to both".⁹ This extension of man's range into even the world of death is a stunning, direct statement of one unstated goal of all the poets being considered in this paper.

The use of "we" rather than the imperative in verse three suggests a human community, but the bread and the wine make for an ineffectual communion. Emerson opposes the ashes and diluted wine we accept as experience in our daily round (while we are in thrall to the

faculty he calls understanding) to the apocalyptic Dionysian communion that the poet celebrates. (When I read "we buy ashes for bread; / We buy diluted wine", I hear Pound's "we have the press for wafer / and franchise for circumcision."¹⁰ Wallace Stevens also remembered these lines of Emerson in his "What wine does one drink? / What bread does one eat?"¹¹)

The poet asks to be given wine that is "of the true". Emerson stated that ". . . poetry is not Devil's wine but God's wine".¹² The true or undiluted wine effects an emancipation from the aspect of consciousness Emerson called the understanding and Stevens called reality. This emancipation is required to produce ecstatic poetry. The use of the imperative for the fourth time emphasizes that the poet is singing here about a god, and he may even identify with the god.

The vine has "ample" leaves, a faint suggestion of the vision of plenitude that is part of the achieved initiation. (This is experienced by the initiate as a determination to live more fully.) The vine here reaches into heaven and its roots originate in the lower world; it is the tree of life in paradise and is related to Yggdrasil, the world tree. (Also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis is a vine.) It is significant that one aspect of Dionysus was "the life at work in the tree": the pine tree was sacred to him.¹³ Emerson, like Pound, was much attracted to tree symbolism; the tree is one of his favorite images of man. In "Woodnotes II" he presents the pine tree as the centre of a creation myth. The vine as the tree of life is what Frye calls the vertical perspective of the apocalyptic

world of identification, where there is a unity of vegetable and animal nature with paradise.

The dew, like the morn of line 6, suggests the freshness of renewal and new beginnings that Dionysus makes possible. The drawing action of the vine suggests an upward striving to the light. (This light is the natural light of archetypal consciousness, a 'body' knowledge rather than a mind consciousness.)

There is a ritual tone to "wine of wine, / Blood of the world", and an echo of "This is my blood which is shed for you". In primitive religions (and in the Christian sacrament) a divine king, recognized either as a god or the chosen son of a tribal god, is killed at the height of his vigor, and his flesh is eaten and his blood drunk so that his divinity passes into the tribe and unites them in one body. His blood is identified with the wine used in the yearly enactment of the ritual.

The vine flourishes according to an inner law of its own; it has a power which is comparable to our own life breath or vital spirit. The vine is the vegetal expression of youth and of the endless regeneration of the universe. It is the tree of life, and the tree of life is identified with the concept of being at the centre of the world; "form of forms" suggests this notion again. Such a world cannot be perceived by the ego. It requires the cosmic or central man, what I have been calling the Self, who combines the conscious with the unconscious. This central man is an image of the secret of the universe.

Emerson announces the rite of passage in lines 21 and 22:

"That I intoxicated / And by the draught assimilated, / May float at pleasure through all natures." Frye defines the apocalypse as ". . . the way the world looks after the ego has disappeared."¹⁴ It is not a case of the external world dissolving into the poet (who is representative of the original great man) but of the ego's orientation toward the external world disappearing to make way for cosmic man; the ego merges into the complete self. These lines hint again at an identification of the poet with a god: Emerson compares his own assimilation (in the poem) to that of Dionysus during the rituals sacred to him.

The knower who contains the cosmos is Bacchus, the poet. There is nothing outside of him; he moves through all natures and turns "woe of Night" to "rich delight". This knower is also the real consciousness in each one of us.

As Frye explains it, there is "an infinite mutual fusion or penetration of all things, each with its individuality yet with something universal in it."¹⁵ The poet's self becomes enlightened by realizing its identity with a total self, and he achieves an indivisible unity of god, man and physical world. This process in nature by which something changes while maintaining its identity is metamorphosis, a concept that turns up again and again in Emerson and in all the other poets considered here. Metamorphosis is the expression of the unconscious man within us when he is changing.

Emerson listened closely to himself and wrote his poetry and prose out of his own experience of himself. This is evident in the similarity between the journal description of one of his dreams and lines 21 and 22: ("That I intoxicated, / And by the draught assimilated,")

I dreamed that I floated at will in the great Ether, and I saw this world floating also not far off, but diminished to the size of an apple. Then an angel took it in his hand and brought it to me and said, 'This thou must eat,' And I ate the whole thing.¹⁶

Gay Wilson Allen points out that in Emerson's epistemology knowledge lies always in his unconscious mind waiting to be recovered or recognized by his conscious mind.¹⁷ Literature consists of such recovered knowledge, and Emerson recognizes that readers are especially pleased with a description that reminds us of ourselves:

It apprises us of how large a portion of ourselves lies within the limits of the unconscious . . . whoever separates for us a truth from our unconscious reason, and makes it an object of consciousness, draws that is to say a fact out of our life and makes it an opinion, must of course be to us a great man. We hail with gladness the new acquisition of ourselves. That man I must follow, for he has a part of me; and I follow him that I may acquire myself.¹⁸

Experience for Emerson comes via his psyche, and his individuality serves as a vehicle by which a larger context of meaning is brought into the world. (In other words, his doctrine of correspondence between spirit and nature, the inner and outer world, turns nature into a text to be read, a text that is not given to us but that emanates from us.) He exemplifies the Self or eternal man who reflects the universe in his depth and then translates its images into words of the world.

Emerson refers to the creation of eternal men or gods as the primary aim of the artist: he is to "invite men drenched in time to recover themselves and come out of time, and taste their native immortal air."¹⁹ The central man is the eternal man; this is the deepest, most pervasive metaphor in his work. He identifies himself with this man in "History":

I believe in Eternity. I can find Greece, Asia, Italy, Spain and the Islands,--the genius and Creative Principle of each and all eras, in my own mind.²⁰

The motto to "Bacchus" in Emerson's own copy of the Poems was "The man who is his own master knocks in vain at the doors of poetry." This valuation of the surrender of the conscious will, or the abandonment that opens the way for Dionysus, is a requirement of initiations and is elaborated upon in "The Poet". Thinking was for Emerson, as it was for Dickinson, a forgetting of ourselves or of the egotistical aspect of ourselves that is ego-consciousness. The training of the soul that he advised for the poet was a continual process of abandonment. He expresses this attitude of reception in "The Poet":

This insight, which expresses itself by what is called Imagination, is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees; by sharing the path or circuit of things through forms, and so making them translucent to others . . . the condition of true naming, on the poet's part, in his resigning himself to the divine aura which breaks through forms, and accompanying that.²¹

An early version of "Poetry and Imagination" is cited by R. A. Yoder:

for a wise surrender to the current of nature, a noble passion which will not let us halt, but hurries us into the stream of things, makes us truly know. Passion is logical,

and I note that the vine, symbol of Bacchus, which intoxicates the world, is the most geometrical of all plants.²²

In line 23 of "Bacchus" the poet states that he "May float at pleasure through all natures." This is an epiphany in miniature just as the entire poem is an extended epiphany centering around the image of the vine. In the essay "The Oversoul" Emerson states that knowledge from the mind of God or the Oversoul seeps into human consciousness by epiphanies: "Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual."²³

Emerson's most famous epiphany is the "transparent eye ball" passage in Nature, the passage that Bloom finds central to American poetry.²⁴ ("Central" as a description of Emerson's work comes up time and time again.) To become a transparent eyeball is no longer to be an ego but a completed self, a god " . . . a crystal soul / Sphered and concentric with the whole."²⁵

There is a pervasive imagery of circles in Emerson, and this is another metaphor for the self: "The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves . . . to lose our sempiternal memory . . . in short, to draw a new circle".²⁶ Emerson's mind and his metaphors, like the structures of literature itself, grow out of patterns the human mind sees in nature, and the most important of these are the rhythms of recurrence: the day, the month, the four seasons of the year. Emerson expresses the comings and goings of the god thus: "There is never a beginning, there is never an end to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself" ("The American Scholar").²⁷

In "Wine that is shed" like "torrents", "torrents" is an apt word to suggest the Dionysian, and in particular that aspect of instinct that is completely without bounds. A raging "torrent" is not restricted to itself but is potentially violent, dangerous and destructive, robbing us of consciousness and individuality and immersing us in the collective unconscious. (This aspect of the impulse, very lightly touched on here by Emerson, has been deplored by Yvor Winters for what he claims to be its destructive effects on American poets.) Emerson refers to the positive aspect of "torrents" in "The Natural History of the Intellect", where he mentions "the spark at which all the illumination of the human arts and sciences was kindled. And in each man's experience, from this spark torrents of light have once and again streamed and revealed the dusky landscape of his life."²⁸

The wine is shed upwards in an image of eruptive vitality like "torrents of the sun". This is the ejaculative or procreative power that moves the world, the closest Emerson gets in "Bacchus" to the literal, orgiastic aspect of the Dionysian. In a modest and unostentatious way Emerson's poems move to a sexual rhythm. Gelpi reminds us that Emerson was fastidious about dwelling on the recognition that the spirit of nature moves in sexual rhythms.²⁹ But to the extent he did approximate such rhythms he prepared the way for the Whitman of Song of Myself and many other poems that explicitly celebrate the sexual life force.

The wine is shed upwards and is likened to the sun; it is thus associated with light. This unfolding, outward-streaming motion expresses expansion of being: We gain wider horizons and breadth of soul. There are various images of movement upwards in Emerson's work: the vertical perspective is his major axis. The intoxication of the senses suggested by "torrents" is a reminder of the importance in the poem of sheer sensation that is expressed in the bodily sphere. It is in our body that we experience and express the Dionysian impulse.

The imagery of thrust and upward direction is at one with the rhyme scheme. The energy and tone of the short lines, the variable stress in the lines and the exhortation, all effect a sense of untrammelled energy. Gay Wilson Allen suggests that Emerson was influenced by the Persian poetry he read. This poetry celebrates the intoxication of the senses, the "bacchanalia of nature". Allen uses a felicitous phrase to describe the energy of nature in Emerson's works--"A Dionysian dance of the atoms".³⁰

With the shedding of the wine the chant mounts to a climax of communion that is strongly humanistic: "Water and bread, / Food which needs no transmuting". Emerson opposes a natural law of transmutation--"Wine which is already man,"--to the doctrinal concept of transubstantiation. Water and bread are natural objects, and Emerson is here the destined human deliverer he refers to when speaking of natural objects: "it would seem as if each waited, like the enchanted princess in fairy tales, for a destined human deliverer. Each must be disenchanting and walk forth to the day in human shape."³¹

Emerson suggests in line 34 that the god and the man whom he inspires are one. (The individuation process, when seen from the unconscious side, is seen as a process of incarnation of the god head.)

Emerson referred to the poet's obligation to discover spirit in the affairs of the day as a kind of mental transubstantiation, the "conversion of daily bread into the holiest symbols" as a result of which "every man would be a poet if his intellectual digestion were perfect".³² Emerson describes this process of conversion:

The new deed is yet a part of life,--remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour, it detaches itself from the life like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly, it is raised, transfigured; the incorruptible has put on incorruption.³³

Emerson suggests here that transmutation is of the inner man through a confrontation with himself. The drama in Emerson's work and in Romantic poetry in general is enacted when the imagination shines inward to encounter the poet's other self, the shadow Emerson calls "Chaos" that must be brought to light if he is to regain his original wholeness. The whole process of shifting the centre of the individual's personality from the ego to its true home in the integrated self is the process Jung called individuation or transmutation, the collaboration of conscious and unconscious data. Religion for Emerson was a way of life that expresses a search for identification: this is an internalization of the initiation quest.

The participials "Rainbow Flowering" and "wisdom-fruiting" echo the process of growth and conversion. In the phrase "Food which teach and reason can" nourishment is connected with the function of the poet

to instigate the process in the reader that leads to knowledge. Emerson refers to the process of making knowledge in "Poetry and Imagination": "It was sensation; when memory came, it was experience; when mind acted on it as knowledge it was thought."³⁴ Jonathan Bishop comments on this aspect of Emerson: "Emerson's work consists essentially of doctrines and demonstrations intended to show the ways we can best experience our experiences."³⁵

Wine is associated with music in their mutual capacity for expressing the union with the divinity, or ecstasy: "Wine which Music is" (l. 36). (This music comes from the depths. It transforms the world in which life has become a habit and a certainty and death seems only a threatening evil.) Emerson drinks the world, as he ate the apple of the world in the dream quoted earlier: "That I, drinking this / Shall hear far Chaos talk with me."

"Far Chaos" (l. 39) or death talks with the poet. Emerson doesn't elaborate on this discussion, but initiation into the underworld involves association with death.

The line "Kings unborn shall walk with me" (l. 40) reveals the presence of the child archetype in Dionysian consciousness: to open that which has been locked away is to reveal the invisible and the future. Emerson stresses here that aspect of the archetype that reveals the unfolding future. Dionysus is a prophet, and the bacchic revel is filled with the spirit of prophecy. Emerson was preternaturally conscious of thresholds taking shape in his time, and

his writing does read as an anticipation of some contemporary thinkers. (Some of his most striking prophecies relate to the current programme of depth psychology.)

Emerson frees what is hidden in the rock; he recalls the life that is forgotten and buried in each of us. The "Winds of remembering" and "the remembering wine" unloose another flood of association. Apocalypse, in its etymological sense, refers to an uncovering or taking off a lid. It is the removal of a wall of forgetfulness or of what is sometimes referred to to-day as a repression. (Frye makes a stunning comment in this connection: "The spiritual body is the most deeply repressed element of experience.")³⁶ (Emerson evokes the spiritual body in manifold ways throughout this poem.)

Remembering is also related to the work of the humanization or the integration of the self, and this work is an act of self-recollection or a gathering of what is scattered and raising it to its original form of the one. The one is imaged in the central man or Stevens' major man, who is, according to Stevens, "the nearest thing there is to God".³⁷

The word "loss" in "retrieve the loss of me and mine" recalls another root meaning of apocalypse or apocatastis, a restitution of all that is lost, including "man's ancient being". "Loss" as the experience that leads to initiation is emphasized in all the poems being considered here. (Pound was not able to reach the centre of his being until he had lost everything when he was imprisoned in Pisa.)

"The remembering wine" recalls "This do in remembrance of me", the ritual of the Eucharist. Emerson connects remembrance with the Incarnation, which was the historical event against time. Frye describes the transformation of time in language that respects this mystery of mysteries:

. . . the death of Christ on the cross . . . is one with the death of everything else in the past. The swallowed Christ, eaten, divided, and drunk, in the phrase of Eliot's "Gerontion," is one with the potential individual buried in the tomb of the ego during the Sabbath of time and history, where it is the only thing that rests. When this individual awakens and we pass to resurrection and Easter, the community with which he is identical is no longer a whole of which he is a part, but another aspect of himself . . . another person of his substance.³⁸

Lines 49 and 50, "And seeming solid walls of use / Open and flow", suggest the liberation of the spirit from the restraint of present form, and the achievement of the third stage of initiation. The walls are those of custom and tradition, manners, institutions, various forms of authority. Emerson fought against the past as an inhibition and he was against influence in the writing of poetry (thus it is ironic that it has been difficult for subsequent American poets to escape his influence). This aspect of Dionysus, called Lysios, the loosener, breaks bonds and laws, and dissolves and sets free. A related aspect of the Dionysian festivals was the swamping of family life and the tradition of sexual license. As Emerson says in "Fragments of the Poets and the Poetic Gift", "The tie of home and blood was rent."³⁹ Gay Wilson Allen quotes Emerson on tradition:

We are in transition from the worship of the fathers which enshrined the law in a private and personal history to a worship which recognizes the eternity of the law, its presence to you and me, its equal energy in what is called brute nature and what is called sacred history.⁴⁰

He continuously lectured his audiences on their need to escape from restrictive forms and restore their souls to themselves. (An aspect of epiphany or the privileged moment is a declaration of the mind's autonomy, a casting out of remorse and a freedom from an outworn conception of the self.)

Emerson explained our reliance on tradition and our tendency to exclude the instinctive apprehension of natural man as the result of the fall into consciousness. The fall caused a pride in intellect and thence the creation of tradition. In Emerson's visionary account of the fall in "Prospects" he indicates that the fall created dualistic man and dualistic nature; the reason why the world lacks unity is because man is disunited with himself.

The ongoing identity between wine, poetry, and the apocalypse (all promising renewal) is maintained in the words "antidote", "requite the lote" (l. 54) "cure", "repair", "revive", "refresh", and "recut". "Shine" and "dazzling" refer to the diffused desire that one feels throughout the poem, the natural light of body consciousness. (One meaning of desire is "shining".) Reason, or the imagination, is drenched in "Nature's lotus", the wine. Images of drinking abound: "drench", "pour", "quench", as if he cannot get enough to drink. The "old despair" and "infection" recall the dark side of existence referred to earlier in "chaos" and "woe".

The "faded tints", "aged prints" and "ancient being" recall our ancestors and remind us that a function of initiation is to return us to origins: "For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings and attempt to write them down"41

The reference to the first day again suggests the child archetype and presents poetry as a type of the original creation; poetic creation is for Emerson a re-creation or recovery of an archetype or the "form of forms". (His theory is Platonic here.) The dancing of the Pleiades recalls the spirit of movement Emerson has been emphasizing.

The last words in the poem, the creation of "eternal man" subsume many of the associations evoked throughout the poem. The eternal man is the archetype of the timeless self. This archetype is expressed in images of rock and crystal; they appear elsewhere in Emerson, and in Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens too. The image of the wise old man, like Merlin, and the image of the child also express the eternal man. The eternal man is also the god image, in this case the image of Dionysus. The world of the eternal man is undivided: spirit and matter are one.

Wallace Stevens was acutely aware of the separation of these principles of spirit and matter: he calls them imagination and reality. When he was not at home in the world he had the feeling

of being divided that results from Dionysus' absence. But he knew too, that just as the god always goes, he always returns.

Chapter 4

Footnotes

¹The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. E. W. Emerson, Vol. IX, p. 276.

²Robert E. Spiller and Alfred R. Ferguson, eds., The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume IX: Nature, Addresses & Lectures (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 30. This edition is hereafter referred to in the text as CWRWE.

³Harold Bloom, "The Central Man: Emerson, Whitman, Wallace Stevens", Massachusetts Review, 7, Winter, 1966, p. 24.

⁴Joseph L. Henderson, Thresholds of Initiation (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University, 1967), p. 163.

⁵Walter F. Otto, Dionysus: Myth and Cult (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 201.

⁶Ralph Waldo Emerson, Letters and Social Aims (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1984: 1st AMS Centenary edition 1968), p. 18. This edition is hereafter referred to as the AMS edition.

⁷Ibid., p. 70.

⁸Northrop Frye, The Great Code: The Bible and Literature (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), p. 153.

⁹The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. W. G. Gilman et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: 1960-1978), Vol. XI, p. 450.

¹⁰Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Life and Contrasts)", in Selected Poems (London: Faber & Faber, 1948), p. 174.

¹¹Wallace Stevens, "The American Sublime", in Holly Stevens, ed., The Palm at the End of the Mind: Selected Poems and a Play (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 114.

¹²Emerson, "The Poet", in CWRWE III, p. 17.

¹³Erich Neuman, The Great Mother: An analysis of the Archetype, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 252.

¹⁴Frye, p. 138.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁶Quoted by Alfred Kazin in "The Father of Us All", review of Gay Wilson Allen's Waldo Emerson: A Biography in The New York Review of Books, January, 1982, p. 5.

¹⁷Gay Wilson Allen, "Emerson and the Unconscious", American Transcendentalist Quarterly, XIX (Summer, 1973), p. 28.

¹⁸Emerson, "The Philosophy of History" in The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard, 1966), Vol. II, pp. 56-57.

¹⁹Porter, p. 1.

²⁰CWRWE I, p. 6.

²¹Ibid., III, p. 15.

²²R. A. Yoder, Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), p. 100.

²³CWRWE II, p. 159.

²⁴Harold Bloom, Figures of Capable Imagination (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 68.

²⁵Emerson, "The Poet", in Poems (AMS Centenary Edition, 1984), p. 332.

²⁶CWRWE II, p. 190.

²⁷Ibid., I, p. 54.

²⁸Ralph Waldo Emerson, CWRWE, Natural History of the Intellect, Vol. 2, p. 65.

²⁹Albert Gelpi, The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 91.

³⁰Gay Wilson Allen, Waldo Emerson: A Biography (New York: Viking Press, 1981), p. 634.

³¹Emerson, "Poetry and the Imagination", Letters and Social Aims (Cambridge, Boston and New York: Riverside Press, 1904), p.

³²CWRWE III, p. 35.

³³Ibid., I, p. 60.

³⁴Emerson, Literary and Social Aims, p. 24.

³⁵Jonathon Bishop, Emerson on the Soul (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 8.

³⁶Frye, p. 138.

³⁷Peter Brazeau, Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered (An Oral Biography) (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 20.

³⁸Frye, p. 101.

³⁹Ralph Waldo Emerson, Poems, p. 322.

⁴⁰Allen, "Emerson and the Unconscious", p. 26.

⁴¹CWRWE III, pp. 5-6.

Chapter 5

Wallace Stevens

"Local Objects"

Dionysus: A Divinity Who Comes and Goes

LOCAL OBJECTS *

He knew that he was a spirit without a foyer
And that, in his knowledge, local objects become
More precious than the most precious objects of home: 3

The local objects of a world without a foyer,
Without a remembered past, a present past,
Or a present future, hoped for in present hope, 6

Objects not present as a matter of course
On the dark side of the heavens or the bright,
In that sphere with so few objects of its own. 9

Little existed for him but the few things
For which a fresh name always occurred, as if
He wanted to make them, keep them from perishing, 12

The few things, the objects of insight, the integrations
Of feeling, the things that came of their own accord,
Because he desired without knowing quite what, 15

That were the moments of the classic, the beautiful.
These were the serene he had always been approaching
As toward an absolute foyer beyond romance. 18

* Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous, ed. by Samuel French Morse
(New York: Alfred Knopf, 1957), p. 111-112.

Like Emily Dickinson, Wallace Stevens posits the beginning of the poetic process in loss:

From this the poem springs: that we
live in a place

That is not our own, and, much more,
not ourselves . . .¹

In this mood, when the vitality is low and man feels unrelated to his soul and to the world, he needs the regeneration or renewal of the Dionysian life force. It is by relating to his anima, his interior female soul image, that man begins this process of renewal. In his late poem, "Local Objects", Wallace Stevens effects such renewal by suggesting the process whereby a mere local object becomes, for a time, a sacred object.

When we select by desire a man, a woman, or an image, as a single, valued object we create a fiction or an idealized image in which our desire finds satisfaction. When this moment occurs in poetry it is expressed in the language Frye calls apocalyptic. The desired one becomes a central, ideal axis on which creation turns, transforming reality:

Monotonous earth I saw become
Illimitable spheres of you. C.P., p. 53.

This "you" is Stevens' anima or interior paramour, his "damsel heightened by eternal bloom". She is the "principle of mind" to which Helen Vendler refers and that Stevens substitutes for the "I" of direct representation.² Joan Richardson comments in her biography of Stevens on the congeniality of this device to him.³ Vendler points to numerous poems, including "The Idea of Order at Key West", in which the anima is

the one undergoing the process, and the one finding the labyrinthine way to the unknown centre of being. In his poems Stevens contemplates her creativity in retrospect. Harold Bloom also sees a feminine presence as the emblem for what he calls Stevens' poetic stance. He characterizes this attitude as the prospective voyage of an American Nude Beauty, thinking of course, of "The Paltry Nude Starts on a Spring Voyage".⁴ This anima is the female spirit guide of initiation.

Eros, in the form of the need and desire for what is lacking, is expressed in a particularly strong manner in Stevens' work. Eros is the driving force that draws us upward to our most deeply desired objects. In Stevens' words, it is "the fulfillment of fulfillments, in opulent, last terms". C.P., p. 441.

Eros resembles Dionysus in that as a god he is a bi-polar urge for life on the one hand, and for death, Thanatos, on the other. This urge echoes the cyclic rhythm of nature. In the ascending movement of life, eros is the power of creation: it is this power I'll analyse in "Local Objects". Stevens also expresses the descending movement of the falling side, where eros is a power and wisdom finding fulfillment in death, in poems that revolve around the image of the mother. Since metamorphosis is the central symbol for both these motions, I'll later examine further the implications of change in Stevens' poetry.

The title of the poem "Local Objects" suggests the importance to Stevens of his local world. In his play "Carlos Among the Candles" his central point is how we are created by what is around us. In "The Comedian as the Letter C" we read "his soil is man's

intelligence" (C.P., p. 36). Helen Vendler points out that the local objects of Connecticut served for Stevens as matrices in and through which the insights and integrations (of lines 13 and 14) came as he named and described the objects around him.⁵ I suspect that the local objects he refers to also include his own earlier poems which echo in his later ones as a result of re-reading himself.

In the first verse Stevens indicates that these are not domestic objects; that he had no home in the sense of hearth and warmth that his use of the French "foyer" suggests. Brazeau, Vendler, and Robinson variously describe the unhappiness of Stevens' marriage and his eventual resignation to a future without hope of improvement in his home, which had initially been based on romance. Foyer, as Helen Vendler indicates, is used here with bleak irony.

Lines two and three ". . . in his knowledge, local objects become / more precious" present us with the collection of objects that in lines 12 and 14 ("he wanted to make them, [he wanted] to keep them . . . / Because he desired") becomes the motion of wanting, the movement of life upward to a desired object. Movement is an honoured term for Stevens. He refers, in The Auroras of Autumn, to "A moving part of a motion, a discovery". (Motion is the essence of psyche.)

These objects are precious to him, "More precious than the most precious objects of home", an apt description of a Grail object. The object arouses his eros. Eros is rooted in the concrete and material aspects of the world and consequently has a human earthy quality.

Stevens frequently underlines the earthiness or chthonic nature of his supreme fictions. The forms in "The Owl In The Sarcophagus", for example, are "a likeness of the earth" (C.P., p. 433). It was his ambition to write the great poem of the earth.

Stevens, like most poets, posits the locus of reality in the interior world of perception, feeling, and intellect. This inner world is a volatile one. I've been referring to the Dionysian quality that comes and goes, those moments of interior life that we cannot and should not try to sustain. Dionysus is easily wounded and slain, but is always reborn. (I use the adjective "Dionysian" in the language of ancient times: it was said that a god or goddess had entered the situation when an object became numinous for man.) Stevens was particularly interested in moments when things were coming to be, or were turning away from what they had been, and his poems enact this living changingness of desire. Another way of expressing this is to say that metamorphosis was the primal fact in his character.

Metamorphosis is a principle of motion that Emerson also saw. He says

that "Everything teaches transition, transference, metamorphosis: Therein is human power, in transference, not in creation, and therein is human destiny, not in longevity, but in removal. We dive and reappear in new places".⁶ Lawrence Lipking points out in The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers that the great poets are particularly alive to the moment of passage.⁷

Reality is for Stevens a crossing point, a transition, or an initiation. Bloom locates meaning at these crossings that he calls

disjunctions. Disjunctions or crisis points are found in the crisis poems of the major romantic poets. These points are variously described as a moment of transition or breakthrough, a moment of summing up, or a moment of passage; it is also a moment when the poet arrives at his innermost shrine.

Eros, a function of anima, includes relatedness to our inner world; it awakens us to our capacity to connect to a person or an object. It is "in his knowledge" (line 2) that the local object becomes the precious, desired one. When the mind reaches out to know, "the space of desire opens and a necessary fiction transpires".⁸ A spark of eros moves across this space and activates delight and relation. Stevens describes his poetry as the expression of the relation of a man to his world.⁹ (His true subject is less images than the mind's relation to them; less product, than process.)

The wooing of the unknown is a continuous process. Once the object is found, it becomes inadequate: it suffices only in the act of finding it. This image grows out of local objects, a common experience, but finding it requires a mental act: the desiring mind reaches out toward its object by means of an act of imagination. "Local Objects", like many other poems of Stevens, is

The poem of the mind in the act of finding
What will suffice.

C.P., p. 239

Bornstein points out that Penelope's web becomes for Stevens the image of human desire: "Woven afresh each day, it is unravelled again every

evening; each exhilaration of possession is followed by the despair of disbelief".¹⁰ The quest is endless.

The "spirit without a foyer" of line 1 becomes "a world without a foyer" in line 4. Stevens' own world is "without a remembered past, a present past / Or a present future" (lines 5 and 6). He had cut himself off from his personal past, in the form of his home town and his relatives and thus could not draw much sustenance from that area; perhaps he has this in mind here. But I think his main emphasis is on the importance of his world in the present moment, "hoped for in a present hope", rather than its past or potential, future associations.

The desired objects are "not present as a matter of course" (line 7): this phrase emphasizes the activity of his imagination in finding them. In the composed poem Stevens brings something into the present which is potential or possible (and in that sense, does belong to the future, despite "Without . . . a remembered future" (line 5-6). This is the wish-fulfilling element of literature that is, as Frye points out, the containing form of romance, and a form of the recovery of myth.

Line 8, "On the dark side of the heavens or the bright", recalls the early poem "Blanche McCarthy" and her dark or undiscovered self which contains both moon and stars. Stevens admonishes her, as he does his other interior paramours, to behold her true form in the terrible mirror presented by reality. Like Emerson in "Compensation" Stevens attends to both positive and negative aspects of his inner world. Rather than question or judge if a particular element was good

or bad, Emerson tells us that it is "important for one to ride them as they come, like waves, using reason as the helm, feeling the fullness each moment, each tremor of transition between the up and down, each shudder of action like the crest of a breaking wave. . . ."11

In line 9, "In that sphere with so few objects of its own", the sphere is the world that Stevens creates for himself. It also suggests the planetary perspectives characteristic of his mature style. In a late poem he expresses his sense of self as a planet: "His self and the sun were one". He worked towards achieving wholeness: he wanted to call his complete poems The Whole of Harmonium. In "Negation" he writes

Hi! The creator is blind,
Struggling toward his harmonious whole,

C.P., p. 97

One of his last poems, a statement of his achievement, is called "The Planet On The Table".

He writes that "Little existed for him but the few things / For which a fresh name always occurred". "Fresh", in mythical terms, is the sense of virginity perpetually renewed, or life in a world where every experience is unique. (The unique occurrence comes from Dionysus "the giver of riches".) This is the creative, refreshing moment when the poet tries to name his paramour.

Stevens' insistence on tracking the present moment is connected to his need to get down to the First Idea, a goal that enters his poetry in "The Snow Man". He attempted to get back to authentic starting points so as to know the freshness of the world from the

child's point of view. According to Plotinus, all things desire to return to the archetypal originals of which they are copies and from which they proceed. Along with Stevens, some critics use the term de-create to describe this process. Frye has identified decreation as a process central to art: "What seems to be one of the few admirable forms of human creation, the creation of the arts, turns out to be a de-creation . . . the humanly creative is whatever profoundly disturbs our sense of the creation, the original divine act of making the world".¹² In this quest for a reality principle Stevens, and Dickinson too, were willing to run the risk brought about by the destruction of illusions, in ourselves and in others. The term de-create is another way of naming the process of dismemberment that is part of the Dionysian cosmos.

Both Vendler and Bornstein point out that these continuous constructions and deconstructions demanded such energy that Stevens eventually came to emphasize the necessary violence of the imagination. The decreation requires a violence before imaginative fullness can result. To a great degree, Stevens, like Emerson before him, aligns himself with the very processes in which creativity and destruction are so closely allied.

Wallace Stevens uses the qualifying phrase "as if" in line 11. This indicates a tentative metaphorical direction that is found frequently in his work. He often uses the conditional tense to also achieve a mingling of fact and fiction. These qualifiers are often crucial to the meaning in a poem. In "Final Soliloquy of the Interior

Paramour", for instance, he writes that "We say that God and the imagination are one . . ." (my emphasis).

The verbs "make" and "keep" recall the third part of Frost's "Directive" where these activities are also emphasized. The effort to "make" and "to keep" is contrasted to and associated with the pathos and vulnerability of the children's playhouse in "Directive". Here, the fragility of the results of the effort is expressed in Stevens' assertion that these few objects are all he has to make himself a home. He writes, at the end of "The Owl and the Sarcophagus", that the forms he has presented will keep us in our death. "Keep" as a function, was deeply felt by both Stevens and Frost. ("Keeping" and "preserving" are functions of the anima or the feminine psyche.) "Perishing" suggests the vulnerability and fragility of these "few things, the objects of insight". The verb "wanted" keeps before us the motion of desire that the poem presents.

The precious objects are "integrations of feeling" (lines 13-14). A poem begins in feeling: feeling is the organizing principle of poetry. Feeling is the function that evaluates objects and determines whether they are desirable or undesirable, and their degree of importance. To track feeling precisely is a mode of knowing, the "knowledge" of line 2. Ezra Pound expressed this when he declared that the poet should strive for direct treatment of the thing, whether subjective or objective. Stevens saw his work as "the fiction that results from feeling" (C.P., p. 406). Vendler declares that despite his

reticence to reveal himself Stevens' poems are meditations on the emotions of love, idolatry, loss, self-loathing and self-forgiveness.¹³

"The things that come of their own accord" are the feeling-based Dionysian impulses that come and go without our bidding. They come from the unconscious and are not under conscious ego control. They came, "Because he desired without knowing quite what". This desire is present in his work, early and late. Helen Vendler refers to "the recurrent and unbiddable cycle of desire" manifest in his poems: "What mattered was the writing of them, to track for himself the metamorphosis of plenary desire into wasted despair and its rearousal into affluent desire again".¹⁴ "The Dove in Spring", written in later years, indicates he felt no loss of desire as he aged. But in middle age, as Vendler points out, "he shifts the locus of attention from the transcendent to the actual, from the object of desire to desire inventing its object; and, most centrally, to the change over time of the desired object."¹⁵

The seasonal round reflects his desire, the vegetable life dying in autumn and reviving in spring when the sun returns. The plenitude of summer is felt in July, the month of "Credences of Summer", and the time when his paramour becomes his green queen. Despite "Credences of Summer", however, Stevens saw himself as a poet of winter, of the months from October through March. Vendler goes so far as to characterize him as a poet of human misery, and refers to his wintry feelings of apathy, reduction, nakedness and doubt.¹⁶

Stevens writes that he did not know what he desired. It appears that the goal of the journey of initiation is unpredictable, and this lack of predictability gives the journey its charm. It seems that initiation or transition in itself is the meaning of the quest, not the possession of a quest object.

The line "The moments of the Classic, the beautiful" echoes "times of inherent excellence" (C.P., p. 386), and "a time / In which majesty is a mirror of the self" (C.P., p. 405). When a local object is invested with the quality of sacredness space and time are reversed and expanded into form and creation respectively. There is a hint here that, despite the "as if", we are in the universe of total metaphor, an apocalyptic world in which all objects and all experiences are united within a total mind. Poetry becomes "Description Without Place" (C.P., p. 339) standing "at the centre of an ideal time" (N.A., p. 145). It is "a constant sacrament of praise" (C.P., p. 92). The poem celebrates the moment of consciousness it exemplifies, since it extends it and keeps it open. We feel here the intense satisfaction Stevens must have felt when he found names for his local objects.

The "spirit without a foyer" of line 1, by a series of events during the course of the poem, "gains an absolute, if intermittent, foyer in desire and the words chosen out of desire".¹⁷

The "absolute foyer beyond romance" is Stevens' way of referring to the divine home our destiny wants for us. We all engage in this process of reaching out for some sense of well-being since each of us tries to make for ourself an imagined world to live in. The

identity . . . In that which is and is established . . ." O.P., p. 98.

In "Poem With Rhythms" he writes

This image, this love. I compose myself
Of these. In these, I come forth outwardly . . .

C.P., p. 246

I've been talking about the inception of the poem in eros, and eros is in its essence only meaningful if it is completely and uniquely individual. Stevens expresses this in "A Mythology Reflects its Region":

It is he, anew in a freshened youth
And it is he in the substance of his
 region,
Wood of his forests and stone out of
 his fields
Or from under his mountains.

O.P., p. 118

Bates refers to Wallace Stevens as a poet who is constantly enlarging the self and he refers to the heroism of his poetic life in venturing into the unknown.²¹ There is a line in one of Stevens later poems that sums up this line of thought. This line explicitly connects eros and his search for self: "Reveal me, lover, to myself more bright".

The Dionysian experience is characterized by a sense of urgency. This restless quality is a major characteristic of Stevens. His statement that "It can never be satisfied, the mind, never" echoes Emerson's statement that "The mind goes antagonizing on", in "Experience".²² I think this restlessness is behind what Frye describes as "the curious blank terza rima" that Stevens uses so often.²³ These three-line verses often express urgency, while four

lines would express completion. This form is characterized by variations in metre and imperfect rhymes. The best symbol for these restless changings is the aurora of The Auroras of Autumn. The auroras with their flashing serpents accommodate Stevens' subjects of rapidity and flickerings.

Frye refers to the "improbable, desiring, erotic and violent world of romance".²⁴ I already mentioned the violence that is evident in Stevens' poetry when I referred to his tendency to decreation. He refers to the "violence from within that protects us from a violence without".²⁵ He feared violence from the outer world and in defense he presents a corresponding violence from within. "Esthétique du Mal" shows desire to be savage and fierce. Frye isolates the menacing images of firecat, screaming peacocks, buzzard, butcher, bloody lion, and bodiless serpent from Stevens' harsher poems.²⁶ The firecat, lion and serpent were Dionysus' companions. (Stevens resembles Pound in his use of these images in his poetry.) In "Man and Bottle" Stevens emphasizes an internal destructive power that corresponds to an external one: "There is lightning and the thickest thunder" (C.P., p. 357). The worst thing that can happen to a poet has happened in "Chaos in Motion and Not in Motion". He has stopped having feelings, and is "all mind and violence and nothing felt" (C.P., p. 357). Our desire imagines the existence of an ideal object, and without the beloved object the mind is at a loss. The person in "Chaos"

Has lost the whole in which he was contained,
 Knows desire without an object of desire,
 All mind and violence and nothing felt.

C.P., p. 358.

Vendler points out that the absence of feeling here is a mask for feelings too powerful to make themselves felt.²⁷ Eros is unfocused and therefore lashing out in all directions, like a wind "that lashes everything at once". C.P., p. 358. When the energy is not focused on an object there is no channel along which thought can move. (Despite the fact that Stevens' poems begin in the motion of desire, they can be very cool. Vendler sees this coldness resulting from the fact that his poetry is a recollection of the savagery and fierceness of desire. His poems are "second-order reflections on the stormings of first-order sensation".²⁸)

Violence is also expressed in his poetry via the image of the terrible, devouring mother, or, in the language of the Grail, the hideous damsel. "Madame La Fleurie" is a form of final vision of the interior paramour:

Now he brings all that he saw into the
 earth, to the waiting
 parent.

His crisp knowledge is devoured by her,
 beneath a dew.

His grief is that his mother should feed
 on him, himself and
 what he saw

In that distant chamber, a bearded queen,
 wicked in her dead
 light.

C.P., p. 507

Stevens shows himself, here, and in several other poems written as he got older, open to that aspect of the spirit of Dionysian that sees death as a part of life, or as another aspect of reality. What we call life and death are two different moments in the career of the Earth Mother as a whole. Life is merely being detached from the earth's womb, death is a returning 'home'. Harold Bloom points out that accepting change or transition means accepting one's death as the final form of change.

The local object becomes a Grail-like object in Stevens' poem. Grail-like objects are symbols for the ancient wisdom of the Earth Mother and her sibylline connections with the unknown powers. During the final stage of initiation in the Grail quest there is an inner reacceptance of the Earth Mother, a realization that what was first shall be last in the eternal cycle of death and renewal. Robert Frost also transforms a local object into a sacred one, in "Directive".

Chapter 5

Footnotes

¹Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 383. Excepting the references to Opus Posthumous, references to Stevens' poetry are accompanied by the page number in this edition.

²Helen Vendler, "The Hunting of Wallace Stevens", The New York Review of Books, November 1986, p. 42.

³Joan Richardson, Wallace Stevens, A Biography: The Early Years 1879-1923 (New York: Beach Tree Books, Wm. Morrow, 1986), p. 431.

⁴Harold Bloom, Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 26.

⁵Helen Vendler, Wallace Stevens: Words Chosen Out of Desire (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 4.

⁶Quoted by Richard Poirier, in The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 146.

⁷Lawrence Lipking, The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. x.

⁸Ann Carson, Eros, The Bittersweet: An Essay (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 171.

⁹Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 172.

¹⁰George Bornstein, Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot and Stevens (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 209.

¹¹Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays, p.

¹²Northrop Frye, Creation and Recreation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 11.

¹³Vendler, p. 39.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁸Bloom, p. 98.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 364-5.

²⁰Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture: A Study in the Structure of Romance (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 179.

²¹Milton J. Bates, Wallace Stevens: A Mythology of Self (California: University of California Press, 1957), p. 43.

²²Emerson, Essays, p. 483.

²³Northrop Frye, Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Identity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 254.

²⁴Frye, Secular Scripture, p. 61.

²⁵Wallace Stevens, The Necessary Angel (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 36.

²⁶Frye, Fables, p. 245.

²⁷Vendler, p. 12.

²⁸Vendler, "The Hunting of Wallace Stevens", p. 42.

Chapter 6

Robert Frost

"Directive"

Initiation into the Dionysian Cosmos

DIRECTIVE *

Back out of all this now too much for us,
Back in a time made simple by the loss
Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off
Like graveyard marble sculpture in the Weather, 5
There is a house that is no more a house
Upon a farm that is no more a farm
And in a town that is no more a town.
The road there, if you'll let a guide direct you
Who only has at heart your getting lost,
May seem as if it should have been a quarry-- 10
Great monolithic knees the former town
Long since gave up pretense of keeping covered.
And there's a story in a book about it:
Besides the wear of iron wagon wheels
The ledges show lines ruled southeast-northwest, 15
The chisel work of an enormous Glacier
That braced his feet against the Artic Pole.
You must not mind a certain coolness from him
Still said to haunt this side of Panther Mountain.
Nor need you mind the serial ordeal 20
Of being watched from forty cellar holes
As if by eye pairs out of forty firkins.
As for the woods' excitement over you
That sends light rustle rushes to their leaves,
Charge that to upstart inexperience. 25
Where were they all not twenty years ago?
They think too much of having shaded out
A few old pecker-fretted apple trees.
Make yourself up a cheering song of how
Someone's road home from work this once was, 30
Who may be just ahead of you on foot
Or creaking with a buggy load of grain.
The height of the adventure is the height
Of country where two village cultures faded
Into each other. Both of them lost. 35

And if you're lost enough to find yourself
 By now, pull in your ladder road behind you
 And put a sign up CLOSED to all but me.
 Then make yourself at home. The only field
 Now left's no bigger than a harness gall. 40
 First there's the children's house of make-believe,
 Some shattered dishes underneath a pine,
 The playthings in the playhouse of the children.
 Weep for what little things could make them glad.
 Then for the house that is no more a house, 45
 But only a belilaced cellar hole,
 Now slowly closing like a dent in dough.
 This was no playhouse but a house in earnest.
 Your destination and your destiny's
 A brook that was the water of the house, 50
 Cold as a spring as yet so near its source,
 Too lofty and original to rage.
 (We know the valley streams that when aroused
 Will leave their tatters hung on barb and thorn.)
 I have kept hidden in the instep arch 55
 Of an old cedar at the waterside
 A broken drinking goblet like the Grail
 Under a spell so the wrong ones can't find it,
 So can't get saved, as Saint Mark says they mustn't.
 (I stole the goblet from the children's playhouse.) 60
 Here are your waters and your watering place.
 Drink and be whole again beyond confusion.

* Robert Frost, The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected
 Poems, Complete and Unabridged, ed. Edward Connery Lathem (New York:
 Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), pp. 377-379.

In "Directive" Robert Frost provides a masterful, gradual transition to a place that 'does not exist'. The internalized quest in "Directive" takes the form of a two-part initiation. The first half of the poem invites the reader to submit to a guide; the second half leads us to the achievement of the goal, which is unique and hard to find. The elements of the Dionysian--loss and descent--are present, as well as the apocalyptic element of the goal with its oracular tone and its context of innocence. I agree with Jarrell's comment: ". . . one stops for a long time at 'Directive,' . . . one of the strangest and most characteristic, most dismaying and most gratifying, poems any poet has ever written . . ." ¹ Both Randall Jarrell and Richard Poirier single out the beginning of the poem for praise; the first seven lines are characterized as "wildly brilliant" by Poirier. ² The regular rhythm, the repetitions: "back . . . out of", "Back in", "house no more a house", "farm no more a farm", "town no more a town" (lines 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)--these establish an incantatory tone that establishes an atmosphere of inner experience. ³ We are led into a twilight range, the range of experience between sleep or dreaming on the one hand and the conscious activity of wakefulness on the other. One thinks of the line from "Birches"--"And so I dream of going back . . ." (lines 122, 42). A similar state is evoked in "After Apple-Picking" through the ambiguity of the word sleep and through the image of the sheet of ice the speaker looks through.

The reference to graveyard sculpture also creates our impression of being on the threshold of a romantic world; often there

is a statue, painting or a tapestry at the beginning of a tale. This reference also establishes death and coldness as underlying tones, and so do the first of numerous allusions to rock-like substances such as quarry, glacier, iron, Arctic--images of solidity, partaking of an unchanging quality. We are meant to put our dayworld notions to sleep, and death is the most profoundly radical way of expressing this shift in consciousness. This tone that suggests the underworld, and the sensation of being at a border or threshold are further indications that it is Dionysus' cosmos we are approaching.

The movement back continues by means of the geological references: the "great monolithic knees" of the quarry; the feet of "the enormous glacier" (lines 11, 17). These images extend the image of the marble sculpture. The personifications also suggest the grey shades of the ancient world of myth and god.

Frost's reading of the landscape as if it were a monument or grave marks "Directive" as a type of the wayside inscription, a kind of epigram that was a lyrical mode in the eighteenth century.⁴ Hartman explains that this type of epigram, stemming from the practise of wayside interments, was also used to guide the stranger to suitable watering or resting places. In "Directive" the geological references continue the graveyard analogy. Hartman points out also that this genre is characterized by a sense of hidden life in nature and offers a context of anonymous nature and the common man that produces an "elegiac tenor of feeling".⁵ The undertones of this genre contribute to the feeling of loss and lament in "Directive".

The tone of revery established by the rhythm and parallelisms creates a slower and more ceremonious pace than we are accustomed to at the beginning of other Frost poems. There are no harsh breaks at line ends and few pauses within the lines; there are the methods Frost uses in adapting blank verse to the rhythms of New England speech. The monosyllabic rustic simplicity of the lines is more in the lineage of Wordsworth than in that of E. A. Robinson. The words of the opening are not then words heard by the ear but are words spoken inwardly, taking us down and into ourselves. And as we descend, we meet with loss.

"Loss of detail" (lines 2, 3) is the first of many losses evoked in "Directive", and the effect of time and the elements in producing loss in lines 2, 3 and 4, is to suggest an undertone of personal loss. Loss is echoed in the phrases "dissolved", "burned", "broken off". The sadness suggested by these phrases contributes to an elegiac tone. (The dimension that is sensed as a loss is actually the presence of the void. We are experiencing a different dimension, and the price of admission to it is the loss of the material viewpoint.)

The accumulation of negatives in lines 5, 6, and 7--"a house that is no more a house", "a farm that is no more a farm", "a town that is no more a town"--begins an extensive comment on this theme of loss that was established in the second line, and signals a visionary impulse that will also continue. There is a suggestion here in the reference to house, farm and town, that the descent has something to do

with one's descent in a genealogical sense, where the crucial event is the discovery of the real relation between ourself and our parents.

"All this now too much for us" and "detail" (lines 1, 3) designate also the confusion of everyday life, the discord of spinning thoughts and restless energies that Frost would have us extricate ourselves from so that we may begin the interior passage. There is here a reminder of Wordsworth's "The world is too much with us". The directive to move "back" behind this confusion is made more explicit by the terms "dissolved", "burned", and "broken off" (line 3); we are to move beyond our present fragmented state of mind or to "lose ourself" to our usual bearings. Our guide invokes the quality of the Dionysian that was called Lysios, the loosener.

Frost often investigates the conditions of existence that are available to human beings when they act to free themselves from "routine", and seize opportunities afforded by acts of "extrication", "waste", "extravagance", or by personal preference or passions.⁶ Poirier has isolated those terms in Frost that alert us to this tendency in his work, terms such as "interstices", "ajar", "extrications", "unharvested".⁷ In "Directive" the movement of the lines and the order to move "back" express the resistance that is present at the beginning. As in "West-Running Brook", he takes us toward ". . . this backward motion toward the source / Against the stream . . ." (There is a conflict between the domesticating and civilizing instincts of society and the Dionysian consciousness of

"nature" or the spontaneous comings and goings of the libido and their reflection in images.)

Poirier compares the accumulation of negatives in lines 5, 6, and 7 to poetic procedures in "The Census Taker", "Into my Own", "A Star in a Stoneboat".⁸ In each of these poems, Frost outlines a journey to be made into a place 'that does not exist' (or exists in the inner world). Poirier terms this procedure "negative designation" and indicates that it is a clue to the visionary, affirmed by an act of denial.⁹ Frost thus creates a situation where he can at once deny the reality of remote possibilities, suggesting that he is not a visionary poet, but in so doing he lets himself enjoy playing with the references that he has planted in our minds.¹⁰ This is one aspect of Frost's imaginative daring Poirier would call "stagey".¹¹ There is a "stagey" quality to the poem, but it forms part of the Dionysian perspective and as such is inherent in the poem. The appearance of the god has a theatrical quality.

Yet his impulse to restraint qualifies the archetype of the journey that informs "Directive": the negatives save him from visionary inspiration, and at the same time they serve to suggest a dissolving world where nothing familiar remains, a world that facilitates an adventure into our own depths. Elsewhere in the poem there are other qualifications of the serious tone and a rather comic detachment from the central associations of the romance form. There is a slight irony in "if you'll let a guide direct you" (line 8), a qualification in "still said to haunt" (line 19). He arranges that we

eavesdrop on him as poet and listen in on his decision to be serious. Witness the "upstart inexperience" of the new growth of woods.

Frost presents himself as our guide on the journey, and he requests our trust in a fashion that is rather light-hearted considering the overtones of the function in the context of romance. In undisplaced myth, a guide is a person of wisdom leading the dead to the underworld. Here the guide becomes more suggestive of mediator between us and the religious experience which gives life new meaning; the authoritative tone of the title, "Directive", invites this association.

The opening line addresses confused human beings inclusively--"to much for us". The "us" becomes "you", the reader, by line 8. The "you" is more representative of the opening of his poems where he invites the reader to accompany him on a sortie into the field. As this particular journey proceeds, the guide becomes more ambivalent in his status as guide; we have a growing sense of a dreamer observing himself in a dream, or a sense of being addressed directly by the places he evokes. He becomes the interpreter of the genius loci, the spirit of place, and thus we have an impression of traversing significant ground. To the extent that his consciousness is directly involved with the landscape, Frost evokes his, and our, beginnings and endings. Geoffrey Hartman refers to this ability when he writes that "the poet reads nature or his own feelings as if there were an ominous admonitory relationship between this spot and himself."¹² The

relationship leads to an impression that we are hearing the voice of an oracle in the final two lines of the poem.

This guide has at heart our "getting lost", a further hint that the poem is an initiation of sorts. The process of initiation begins with a rite of surrender or submission, the moment T. S. Eliot in "The Wasteland" describes as "the awful daring of a moment's surrender".¹³ The initiation quest is not achieved with a heroic show of strength but by a submission to powers deeper than oneself. Getting lost was never an agreeable prospect for Frost, Poirier maintains, despite hints to the contrary in "Directive". It is because of this fear of letting go that Frost has so few poems in this visionary mode.¹⁴ Poirier refers to the almost terrifying poems of wandering off, losing the self, or being nowhere. This quality of fear perceptible in "Out of the Cradle", very evident in "Our journey had advanced", is absent in "Directive".

The eyes that watch the traveller "from forty cellar holes" only lightly suggest the dangers of the numinous, or the dragons and monsters of undisplaced myth.

Frost here personifies various features of the landscape--the "Great monolithic knees" of the town, the braced feet of the glacier, the eyes, the woods' excitement. The personification of the landscape is appropriate in a world of psyche.

The "serial ordeal" (line 20) of being watched further indicates the romance form of the poem; that is, there is a series of adventures or ordeals that the initiate must undertake to achieve the

treasure. The repeated number forty evokes an underlying desire for wholeness that is made explicit at the end in the line "Drink and be whole again beyond confusion". The center of our being, or, in Jungian terms, the self, usually expresses itself in some kind of four-fold structure.¹⁵ The eyes of the animals also suggest a collective rather than a personal aspect of mind, our instinctive rather than our conscious nature.

Frost informs the journey with references to his New England world, just as Wallace Stevens informs his with Connecticut. Terms such as "buggy load", "firkin", and "Harness gall" (lines 22, 32, 40), remind us that this is a particular locale we traverse with our guide. According to James Cox, it is typical of Frost that he has not chosen virgin wilderness as a setting for his poem, but "second growth timber come back to claim abandoned human landscape".¹⁶ He cites the many occasions in Frost of past encounters with the wild that have been lost. Images of the black cottage, the overgrown path, and here the "belilaced cellar hole, / Now slowly closing like a dent in dough", show this particular state. In repossessing these, Frost is in effect turning back on himself to reclaim fragments of his personal past, "fragments which mean little at the time but which come to be the only ones by which he re-organizes and possesses his experience".¹⁷

The image of the cellar hole is so strongly felt in Frost that I suspect he built some poems around it. The image combines hints of a visit to a personal past and a visit to the past of humanity as well. In the poem, "The Generations of Men", he refers to "an old cellar hole

in a byroad / The origin of all the family there", a spot made to seem primeval by being compared to "the crater's verge / That turned them on the world" (p. 76). The same poem cites the Indian myth of Chicamoztoc, "The-Seven-Caves-That-We-Came-Out-Of". Frost's attraction to the image of the grown-over clearing and cellar hole is central in his imagination, and it provides a felicitous setting for a mind journey, since the images suggest that the personal unconscious has taken over what had been conscious at one time. The cellar hole itself is an image of the level of the psyche at which known meets known, since it combines a minimum human construction with the presence of the earth. Frost seems to have been acutely aware of the power of the unconscious to reclaim contents from our thin veneer of consciousness.

There are aspects of the journey before the cellar hole is reached that show both the romantic form and Frost's individual management of it. We pass pecker-fretted apple trees that are obscured somewhat in the over-grown wood; the whole image lightly suggests the forests of descent imagery. The injunction to make up a cheering song "of how / Someone's road home from work this once was" (line 30), effectively elicits pathos in a distinctive way, and continues the ongoing sense of loss in the poem. It also rather gently reminds us who is making up this particular song. The pathos of this particular section culminates with the reference to ". . . the height of country where two village cultures faded into each other" (lines 33, 34), an image that expresses a deep sense of loss, in a quiet and simple, but emphatic line. This half of the poem ends with the word "lost" (line

35): this is also the end of the submission half of the initiation-adventure.

The goal of the journey, the second half of the poem, is introduced in lines 36-40; discovery, rather than loss, is the theme. The guide refers to a ladder that we have been climbing. It is like the graphically vertical ladder of "After Apple-Picking", and it is also a lateral one facilitating a journey backward in time. It may be that Frost wants us to be conscious, via the ladder image, of heaven as a destination; the ladder then is an image of "the way", from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem.

(The mystical tradition of initiation having seven stages is sometimes represented in the image of a ladder with seven rungs. This image suggests an evolutionary view of initiation and as such would set this particular initiation journey apart from the ones outlined in the other chapters, since the other journeys studied here are cyclical.)

The goal of this aspect of the journey, however, is the cellar hole, which, in spatial terms, is down and in rather than up and out. Poirier takes Frost to task here for an inexact use of the ladder image, and suggests that Frost has become abstracted from the sense "of persistent and demanding daily reality" that is exhibited in "After Apple-Picking", "Never Again Would Bird's Song Be The Same", "All Revelation", and "A Star In A Stoneboat", poems where Poirier feels Frost more successfully invents occasions when conflicting kinds of reality are resolved.¹⁸

The reference to children in lines 40-44 account for many of the tones of "longing, tenderness, and passive sadness".¹⁹ On a literal level we see children, and ourselves as children, playing house. As an image of the self, the child indicates something not contained in time, something simultaneously young and old. The child is also a symbol of our own beginnings which are always meaningful and filled with the excitement of eros. The child is, as symbol, a call to us to be true to ourself and to maintain connection with our own original image. It personifies that moist spark within us that is the original dynamic seed of our spirit. As with the image of the child in Whitman's "Out of the Cradle", we are offered a vertical connection to the spirit. Without this we lose our purpose and stay adapted to the conventional goals of success and power that Frost would have us extricate ourselves from here. The evocation of children's attempts to imitate a home also suggest most forcefully the fragility and vulnerability of human effort, a suggestion made earlier in the image of the clearing.

The concept of play includes "make-believe", an imaginative procedure that is emphasized here through repetition--"make up a cheering song", "the children's house of make-believe" (lines 29, 41). The various uses of the terms "play" and "make" suggest the human goal of creation, adding to nature, or of creating what one finds.

The injunction to make ourself at home is rather too cosy here, in this context, and serves again to obscure the fear we have when we make a journey such as this.

The second accumulation of negatives in the poem occurs in lines 45 and 48: "Then for the house that is no more a house," "This was no playhouse but a house in earnest." These lines alert us to the visionary element, long promised in the poem. The final fourteen lines are united in an oracular tone of high seriousness: there are hints of a kind of divinity and none of Frost's "congenital circumscription".²⁰ There are overtones of fatality in the line, "Your destination and your destiny's" (line 49), reminding us it is a guide in an initiation who is speaking. The same tones are present in the description of the brook that was the water of the house, the brook "so near its source" (line 51), the most strongly felt image of the soul expressed to this point in the poem. Frost has many mysterious meanings here but keeps a certain hold on the local object since his description of the masculine stream records that "when aroused / (the valley streams) Will leave their tatters hung on barb and thorn" (line 54). Sublimity and grandeur characterize the brook, which Frost labels "lofty and original" (line 52). The oasis imagery of water and tree suggests a higher mode of life, a more integrated one.

The poet speaks in the first person in "I have kept hidden . . ." (line 55), the first time he does so in the poem. We are reminded of his function as guide and as maker of this and other poems. He points out the secret, stolen nature of that to which he would bring us. We have been prepared for this particular quality in the references to the romance quest form, in which the goal is unique and hard to find, and is often a magic talisman that can cure us or make us

whole. The object of desire in this poem is symbolized by the goblet. The goblet was the object of the quest for the Holy Grail, or the City of God. The Grail-like cauldrons and other magical food producing objects are symbols for the wisdom of the Earth Mother and her connection with the unknown. The goblet could be the cup of Dionysus which, if tasted rightly, gives not drunkenness but the priceless and secret knowledge of the existence of spirit in nature. Frost chooses to use the word goblet, rather than the word chalice, and he makes it a child's toy, playing down some of the wilder overtones and underlining the concept of play and its centrality to being human. The goblet is broken; we never retain all we have lost. The theme of loss pervades even the attainment of the goal.

The goblet is hidden in an old cedar. The reference to the old tree deepens the connotations of psychic growth in the poem by evoking primeval depths and beginnings of life. The growth suggested is that of the psyche, rather than the development that is brought about by conscious effort or will power; growth happens as involuntarily and naturally as tree growth. The curve of the instep arch is exactly right as a resting place for the goblet: the curve suggests the curved snake on Mesopotamian seals who guard the tomb of the god Dionysus and protects the transformations of the god. Sometimes on these seals the snake holds a cup in the presence of the goddess and her son and the world tree. The snake-like image here symbolizes the deepest levels of the collective unconscious where the transformation occurs.

The poet keeps the goblet "Under a spell so the wrong ones can't find it, / So can't get saved, as Saint Mark says they mustn't" (lines 58 & 59). Theodore Morrison applies one of the meanings of these phrases to Frost's oeuvre, citing his desire "to keep the curious out of the secret places of his mind".²² There is also a reference to the quest romance here; only those who complete the initiation can find the goblet. The use of the verb "keep" has overtones in the rest of Frost's work, and once again it is Poirier who points out the implications, "the lovely and loving human effort to secure something from oblivion".²³ (This is a good description of the function of the anima.)

Frost closes with an epigram; many of his poems end in this way. In the oracular tone of one who has achieved the journey of descent, he intones "here are your waters and your watering place. / Drink and be whole again beyond confusion" (lines 61, 62). There is a change of person from first to second as he resumes the role of guide. On one level, he has led the wayside traveller to a suitable resting place. On another level, Frost participates in some serious play. The images of water and tree in this section refer to a world we have lost but will eventually regain. Adam and Eve, when expelled from Eden, lost the tree and water of life, but at the end of the Bible it is the tree and water of life that are restored to redeemed mankind. Like Adam and Eve we've lost the river of life and the tree of life, and we are wandering in the labyrinth until we are restored to our original state. Revelation 22:7 is an invitation to those who would be redeemed

to drink the water of life. In drinking of the Goddess' waters the ego's claim to personal power is reduced. The ego acknowledges itself, but as a recipient and channel of a destiny flowing from a deep mysterious ground of being which is the source of both terror and revulsion as well as the beautiful play of life. In most Grail stories a question must be asked if waters are to flow and the waste land is to be redeemed. But when the question is asked no answer is forthcoming. Whom or what does the Grail serve, what is behind the mystery of wound and pain? Only individually can answers be discovered, not only by asking, but by living and suffering the question. Apparently life demands to be lived as a continual searching. And it is not so much our action but our motivation; our way of experiencing and the consciousness gained are what matter as we suffer and work through our conflict between our desires and our deepest conscience.

Frost, of course, only suggests this. And I've already noted that he slights the terrors of this quest, although the references to the potential destructive aspect of the stream in line 54 is strong enough. But the child image, the vision of our first nature, works well in this poem. This image reminds us of "our sense of destiny and mission, our sense of having a message and being meant as eternal cup-bearer to the divine, that our sap and overflow, our enthusiastic wetness of soul, is in service to the gods, bringing eternal refreshment to the archetypal background of the universe."²³

There is throughout this section a metaphorical overtone of act as ritual, an act characterized by a sorrow that is also a kind of joy.

The hints of initiation and the references to the Grail, constitute an inward acknowledgement that death leads to a new life. Through this tone, Frost evokes an elemental situation in a deeply ordinary context. We feel that a superstition of the tribe has been genuinely recovered and purified.²⁴ With Brower, I see here a "Wordsworthian sense of healing power", of "passing into our first world", and a feeling of renewal and release in the act of doing so.²⁵

Chapter 6

Footnotes

¹Randall Jarrell, Poetry and The Age (New York: Noonday Press, 1953), pp. 34 & 50.

²Richard Poirier, Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 83.

³Edward Connery Latham, ed., The Poetry of Robert Frost (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 337. All further references to "Directive" are to this edition and will be included parenthetically in the text.

⁴Geoffrey H. Hartman, Beyond Formalism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 224.

⁵Ibid., p. 225.

⁶Ibid., p. 83.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Poirier, p. 266.

⁹Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 86.

¹¹Ibid., p. 99.

¹²Hartman, p. 223.

¹³T. S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1971), p. 49.

¹⁴Poirier, p. 147.

¹⁵Carl C. Jung, ed., Man and His Symbols (New York: Dell, 1971), p. 268.

¹⁶James M. Cox, "Robert Frost and the Edge of the Clearing", Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXV (Winter, 1959), p. 80.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Poirier, p. 275.

¹⁹Jarrell, p. 53.

²⁰Poirier, p. 158.

²¹Theodore Morrison, "The Agitated Heart", Atlantic Monthly, July, 1967, p. 73.

²²Poirier, p. 173.

²³James Hillman, "Senex et Puer", Eranos-Jahrbuch, XXXVI (1967), p. 329.

²⁴Hartman, p. 226.

²⁵Reuben Brower, The Poetry of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 238.

Conclusion

Wallace Stevens urged us to "step boldly into man's interior world".¹ The search is a psychological adventure and in literature is expressed in the romance form. I have tried to follow Stevens' lead by approaching these poems from the depth dimension. This is the dimension that can penetrate to what is hidden, to the true nature of things. The urge to go below appearances to the invisible connections of the world that Dionysus represents leads us into the interior world. This autochthonous urge of the psyche is the Freudian death drive or what Plato calls, in Cratylus, the desire for Hades.² Hades is a hidden presence in the world.

Lipking's reference to Rilke could be applied to the poets studied here: "The shape of destiny that haunts him throughout all his poems has a face that resembles a death's head."³ This personified death dwells with "The lover, the believer, and the poet": these are the clairvoyant men whose "words are chosen out of their desire" (Stevens, C.P., p. 441).

Death has been before us at every turn in the initiation quest. Whitman becomes a poet when he grasps the word "death" from the sea. Emerson predicts that one day man would enter the door to Tartarus. There is an undertone of death and coldness in "Directive", and death is often present in Dickinson's works. The process that is the initiation quest moves toward Hades. As we descend we are changed;

metamorphosis, the normal transformation of the structure of the myth, and the expression of the change in our unconscious, characterizes these poems. In Hades itself there is no process or decay, no progress, and no time.

A poet develops by gradually realizing his death, the only "absolute foyer beyond romance". He is born, not to celebrate himself in the form of his ego, but to ease the things of this earth in their passing, or to translate a coarse and vanishing reality into the sublime. This aspect of initiation is difficult to discuss, since our culture is rather ignorant of death and does not honour the underworld. But as we descend with these poets, we travel to what is dead and buried in each of us. Paradoxically we gain breadth of soul and wider horizons through vertical descent, through the inwardness of the image. It's puzzling peculiarity draws us down and in. It deepens us beyond our usual notion of ego.

The villain in the underworld is the heroic ego, not Hades. The heroic stance occurs when ego acts aggressively rather than submissively toward its objects. We have been observing these poets in the process of giving themselves to the inner Dionysian urge to dismember a rigid behaviour or thought pattern; the desired object that has been clung to and lived from, now has to be seen through.

A violent shock of deformation is required to tear the object of desire free from what it means to us. The imagination works by forming and deforming at the same time. The key to the initiatory mysteries hidden in the soul is in the hand of Hades who takes things

out of nature and into psyche, through deformation.⁴ It is curious in these poems that the fullness of life and the violence of death are present at the same time. Life is intoxicated by death at those moments when it glows with its greatest vitality; when it loves, procreates and gives birth. Man participates in the Dionysiac condition in all the moments of his creative existence. We have seen the image of the child used often in these poems to symbolize the origin and renewal of consciousness that the creative effects.

The sexual impulse parallels the impulse to self-definition in the poetic theory that is at the base of these poems. (Pound addresses this directly, Emerson less directly.) In a sexual creation myth poets focus on an Earth Mother figure. When desire, memory, and need are driven down in their psyches, they return to the origins Goethe called the Realm of the Mothers. It seems that the function of the muse, or anima who as female is close to origins, is to mediate between consciousness and unconsciousness. She makes a poet remember what he has forgotten and takes him back to the origins of what a poem was for him. Thus he moves back to the decisive initial encounter and response that began him, the place of his mind's origin and the foundation of all things for him. The anima has the thread and knows the step by step dance that can lead through the labyrinth.

For Whitman and for Stevens the muse was mother; mother is the origin and the purpose of their poetry. There is a startling epiphany of the image of the mother in Stevens' "The Auroras of Autumn":

Farewell to an idea . . . The mother's face
The purpose of the poem, fills the room

C.P., p. 413

The mother behind "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is both young and old, Persephone and Demeter too, and in this poem the son is spouse and sleeping suckling at once. Whitman extends the image of the womb or cradle throughout the world in the last two stanzas of "Clef Poem". (The mother, and/or the Father, may provide a rite of passage to rebirth. When we take a closer look at the great mother complex, we see that chthonic is an epithet that is not only female. It applies also to Dionysus and to Zeus, Hades' brother.)

The Dionysiac condition includes living with a central axis to all that is at the threshold. The poets studied here attempt to remain in psychic connection with the sub-human and violent that is at the centre. In their archetypal poems, they stand on a border where one step can lead to dismemberment and darkness.

In previous drafts of this thesis, I concentrated on images that expressed patterns of order, images such as crystals, circles and stones. But as I came to understand the Dionysian cosmos and the god's function of deepening the soul into the underworld, I had to admit the implications of violence, dismemberment and death in these poems.

I would like to connect Hades to the sense of loss that pervades the poetry studied in this paper. A life that is lived in close connection to the psyche has an ongoing feeling of loss. An uncertainty and an impairment of potential, or a sense of infirmity (the Grail wound) goes with soul. James Hillman, to whom I am indebted

for explaining The Dream and The Underworld, says that the movement from three-dimensional physical perception to two-dimensional psychic reflection (a movement that begins a poem) is first felt as a loss: "We want blood. Loss does characterize underworld experiences, from mourning to the dream, with its peculiar feeling of incompleteness, as if there is still more to come that we didn't get, always a concealment in it, a lost bit".⁵ I understand now why literary criticism has been called "a study of the problematics of loss".⁶ (Loss is in part a result of a lack of body consciousness. Hence the wine and the dance of Dionysus/Bacchus functions to re-awaken us to a knowledge of body.)

Loss, however, is not the whole of it, since the dimension sensed as loss is actually the presence of the void or the abyss, and this is a different dimension because it is without materiality. We give up one dimension, but we gain Hades, "and the chambering echoes that are his halls".⁷ Here we gain contact with all that is lost in life and with the souls of the lost. Hades is also Pluto and what is a void by day is also a richness and nourishment of vast receptivity. (Pictures of Pluto show his cornucopia spilling over with fruitful possibilities of understanding.⁸ Dionysus also was called the "giver of riches".⁹)

To lead something back to its origin and principle, back to its archetypal ground or back-ground, is to lead it into soul and out of life. Yet this motion gives a sense of the vital primordiality. (Heraclitus states that Hades and Dionysus are the same. On one side of this mysterious identity, the Dionysus within Hades says there is a

vitality in underworld phenomena. These images are fertile in the psychic rather than the natural sense.) Beginning at the beginning gives a "mad surge of life" because of the deepening of soul that takes place.¹⁰ This increase in dimension or feeling of expansion is described by Emily Dickinson: "These sudden intimacies with Immortality are expanse--not Peace--as Lightning instills a foreign Landscape."¹¹ (Experience of the archetypal psyche enlarges and deepens ego consciousness.) Emerson also refers in "Fate" to this movement: "And if truth comes to our mind, we suddenly expand to its dimensions, as if we grew to worlds."¹² Wallace Stevens refers to this influx of being as "the booming and booming of the new-come bee" (C.P., p. 391). I have referred to this successful return to origins as an epiphany. Traditional religious imagery describes this deepening of spirit as a light returning to the source. Geoffrey Hartman refers to an internal deepening of spirit which forces the poet to make contact with a second self in the form of a genius loci or a persona which is a transcendent form.¹³ In this state of mind there is a presence which Dickinson called "awe" surrounding human consciousness. This is not a lasting state of mind and is less a state than a movement by which the mind passes from one situation to its opposite. It is a vision of being in the moment of its disappearance, or an opening downward within each moment and a reverberation in the images of the dark in the unconscious.

These possibilities for soul that the poet discerns in the abyss gleam with gold. There are echoes of the alchemist's search for

the philosophers' stone, that catalyst that would transform base metals into gold, in these poets. Pound said that his goal was to disclose "the gold thread in the pattern" (Canto CXVI, line 66). Frost knows "nothing gold can stay" and Emily Dickinson dreams of a self in the form of a shining golden fibre. Wallace Stevens refers to "The gold dome of things, the perfected spirit" (O.P., p. 168). Each of these poets in seeking their own renewal serves the archetype of meaning, the Self, in expressing in their various ways the divine image of the god. It turns out that the re-vivification of the psyche and the renascence of myth may be one and the same process.

Conclusion

Footnotes

¹Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous, ed. Samuel French Morse (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 170.

²Plato, Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias, Lesser Hippias trans. by H.N.F. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1953).

³Lawrence Lipking, The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 189.

⁴James Hillman, The Dream and the Underworld (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1979), p. 129.

⁵Ibid., p. 52-53.

⁶Harold Bloom, Figures of Capable Imagination (New York: Seabury Press, Continuum, 1976), p. 18.

⁷Hillman, p. 53.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Walter F. Otto, Dionysus: Myth & Cult (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), p. 80.

¹⁰Hillman, p. 132.

¹¹Emily Dickinson, The Letters of Emily Dickinson, ed. by Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1965), p. 661.

¹²Emerson, "Fate" in Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays and Lectures (New York: The Library of America, 1983), p. 955.

¹³Geoffrey Hartman, Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970 (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1971), p. 333.

Selected Bibliography

- Abrams, M. H., ed. English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- , ed. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition & Revolution. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1971.
- Anderson, Charles R. Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1960.
- Allen, Gay Wilson, ed. American Poetry. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- , ed. "Emerson and the Unconscious", American Transcendentalist Quarterly, XIX (Summer, 1973).
- , ed. Waldo Emerson: A Biography. New York: Viking Press, 1981.
- Asselineau, R. "Les Américains Sont-ils Vraiment Américains", Critique Paris, XVI (June, 1962).
- Baird, James, The Dome and the Rock: Structures in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968.
- Bacigalupo, Massimo. The Formèd Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- Barry, Elaine. Robert Frost on Writing. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1973.
- Bates, Milton J. Wallace Stevens: A Mythology of Self. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.
- Baudelaire, Charles. Critique Littéraire et Musicale. Paris: Bibliothèque de Cluny, Librairie Armand Colin, 1966.
- Baumann, Walter. "E. P. and Magic: Old World Tuckoma, New World Press", Paideuma: A Journal Devoted to E. P. Scholarship, 1982.
- Bishop, Jonathan. Emerson on the Soul. Cambridge University Press, 1964.

- Black, Stephen. Whitman's Journeys into Chaos: A Psychoanalytic Study of the Poetic Process. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Bloom, Harold. Agon: Toward a Theory of Revisionism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- . The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- . The Breaking of the Vessels. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982.
- . "The Central Man", Massachusetts Review, 7 (Winter, 1966).
- . "Death and the Native Strain in American Literature", Death in American Literature, Arien Mack, ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1973.
- . Figures of Capable Imagination. New York: A Continuum Book, the Seabury Press, 1979.
- . A Map of Misreading. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- . The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in the Romantic Tradition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- , ed. Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays on Consciousness. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978.
- , ed. The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.
- , ed. Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- Bornstein, George, ed. Ezra Pound Among the Poets. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- . Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Brazeau, Peter. Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered. New York: Random House, 1977.
- Brower, Reuben. The Poetry of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

- Cameron, Sharon. Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1979.
- Carson, Ann. Eros: The Bittersweet. An Essay. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Cody, John. After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Cook, Eleanor, et al. Centre and Labyrinth: Essays in Honour of Northrop Frye. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- Davenport, Guy. The Geography of the Imagination: Forty Essays. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981.
- de Man, Paul. Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Denham, Robert, ed. Northrop Frye on Culture and Literature: A Collection of Review Essays. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Dennis, Helen. "The Eleusinian Mysteries as an Organizing Principle in the Pisan Cantos", Paideuma: A Journal Devoted to E. P. Scholarship, Fall, 1982.
- Diehl, Joanne Feit. Dickinson and the Romantic Imagination. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Doggett, Frank. Stevens' Poetry of Thought. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1966.
- , et al. Wallace Stevens: A Celebration. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Edinger, Edward F. Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973.
- Eliade, Mircea. Patterns in Comparative Religion. Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Co., 1985.
- . No Souvenirs: Journal 1957-1969. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Eliot, T. S. The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971.
- . Ezra Pound: Selected Poems. London: Faber & Faber, 1928.

- Eliot, T. S. Literary Essays of Ezra Pound. New York: New Directions, 1968.
- Ellmann, Richard. James Joyce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- . "The Ghost of Westerly Terrace", The New York Review, November 24, 1983.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Collected Works. 3 vols. Harvard: Belknap Press, 1971, 1979, 1983.
- . Letters and Social Aims. Boston and New York: Riverside Press, 1904.
- . Poems. Boston and New York: A.M.S. Centenary Edition, 1984.
- . Emerson: Essays & Lectures. Vol. I. New York: The Library of America, Viking Press, 1983.
- Feidelson, Charles Jr. Symbolism and American Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1953.
- Fiedler, Leslie. "Introduction", Whitman: Selections from Leaves of Grass. Richard Wilbur, ed. New York: Dell Publishing, 1960.
- Flory, Wendy Stallard. Ezra Pound and the Cantos: A Record of a Struggle. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980.
- Frank, Joseph. The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963.
- Frost, Robert. The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems, Complete and unabridged. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, an Owl Book, 1975.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- . Creation and Recreation. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- . Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, A Harbinger Book, 1963.
- . The Great Code: the Bible and Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1982.

- Frye, Northrop. The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- . Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth and Society. Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1976.
- . Studies in English Romanticism. New York: Random House, 1968.
- . The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society. London: Methuen & Co., 1974.
- . The Well-Tempered Critic. Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1963.
- Gelpi, Albert. The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.
- . "The Paradox of Organic Form", Emerson: Prophecy, Metamorphosis, and Influence: Selected Papers from the English Institute. David Levin, ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.
- Gilman, W. G., et al, ed. The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Cambridge, Mass., 1960-1978.
- Graves, Robert. The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth. London: Faber & Faber, 1961.
- Gross, Harvey. Sound and Form in Modern Poetry: A Study of Prosody from Thomas Hardy to Robert Lowell. Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, University of Michigan Press, 1964.
- Hadas, Moses, ed. The Complete Plays of Aristophanes. Toronto, New York & London: Bantam, 1962.
- Hall, Donald. Claims for Poetry. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982.
- Hartman, Geoffrey. Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1971.
- Henderson, Joseph L. Thresholds of Initiation. Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1967.
- Hesse, Eva. New Approaches to Ezra Pound: A Co-ordinated Investigation of Pound's Poetry and Ideas. London: Faber & Faber, 1969.
- Hillman, James. The Dream and the Underworld. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

- Hillman, James. The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1978.
- . Re-visioning Psychology. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- Homans, Margaret. Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Hosek, Chaviva, et al. Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jarrell, Randall. Poetry and the Age. New York: Noonday Press, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1953.
- Johnson, Robert A. HE: Understanding Masculine Psychology, based on the legend of Parsfal and his search for the Grail using Jungian psychological concepts. Harper & Row, 1986.
- Johnson, Thomas H. The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson. Boston: Little & Co., 1960.
- , ed. The Letters of Emily Dickinson. 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1965.
- , ed. Emily Dickinson: An Interpretative Biography. New York: Atheneum, 1972.
- Jung, Carl G. Collected Works. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. Bollingen Series XX. Princeton: The Bollingen Foundation and Princeton University Press. Volumes I-XX.
- . Man and His Symbols. New York: A Laurel Edition, Dell Publishing Co., 1971.
- . Symbols of Transformation. New York: Harper, 1956.
- . Psyche and Symbol: A Selection from the Writings of C. G. Jung. New York: Anchor Original, Doubleday, 1958.
- Kaplin, Juston. Walt Whitman: A Life. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980.
- Kenner, Hugh. The Pound Era. California: University of California Press, 1971.
- Kermode, Frank. Wallace Stevens. New York: Grove Press, 1960.
- Kher, Inder Nath. The Landscape of Absence: Emily Dickinson's Poetry. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974.

- Lenhardt, Charmenz S. Musical Influence on American Poetry. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1962.
- Levin, David, ed. Emerson: Prophecy, Metamorphosis and Influence: Selected Papers from the English Institute. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Lewis, R. W. B. The American Adam. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.
- , ed. The Presence of Walt Whitman: Selected Papers from the English Institute. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.
- Lipking, Lawrence. The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Luke, Helen M. Woman, Earth and Spirit: The Feminine Symbol and Myth. New York: Crossroad, 1986.
- Martin, Wallace. "The Sources of the Imagist Aesthetic", PMLA. March, 1970.
- McNeil, Helen. Emily Dickinson. New York: Virago-Pantheon Pioneers, Random House, 1986.
- Middlebrook, Diane. Walt Whitman and Wallace Stevens. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Morrison, Theodore. "The Agitated Heart", Atlantic Monthly, July 1967, pp. 72-79.
- Neuman, Eric. The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Otto, Walter F. Dionysus: Myth and Cult. Translated by Robert B. Palmer. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981.
- Packer, B. L. Emerson's Fall: A New Interpretation of the Major Essays. New York: Continuum Press, 1982.
- Paige, D. D., ed. The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941. New York: New Directions, 1971.
- Pearce, Roy Harvey et al. The Act of the Mind: Essays on the Poetry of Wallace Stevens. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1965.
- Perry, John, ed. Backgrounds to Modern American Literature. San Francisco, California: Chandler Publishing Co., 1968.
- Plato, Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias, Lesser Hippias, trans. by H.N.F. Fowler. New York: Harvard University, 1953.

- Poirier, Richard. The Performing Self: Compositions and Decompositions in the Language of Contemporary Life. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- . Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Porte, Joel, ed. Ralph Waldo Emerson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Porter, David. The Art of Emily Dickinson's Early Poetry. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- . Emerson and Literary Change. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- . Dickinson: The Modern Idiom. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Pound, Ezra. The Spirit of Romance. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1952.
- . Guide to Kulchur. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1952.
- . The Cantos of Ezra Pound. New York: New Directions, 1970.
- . Ezra Pound: Selected Cantos. New York: New Directions, 1970.
- Quinn, Sister Bernetta. Ezra Pound: an Introduction to the Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.
- Raymond, Marcel. From Baudelaire to Surrealism. New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1950.
- Rich, Adrienne. Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979.
- Richardson, Joan. Wallace Stevens A Biography: The Early Years 1879-1923. New York: Beech Tree Books, Wm Morrow, 1986.
- San Juan, Jr., E., ed. Critics on Ezra Pound. Florida: University of Miami Press, 1972.
- Sewell, Elizabeth. The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural History. New York: Harper Torch Books, 1960.
- Spiller, Robert E., ed., et al. The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Vol. I. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971.

- Spiller, Robert E., ed., et al. The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Vol. II. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1964.
- Spitzer, Leo. "Explication de Texte Applied to Walt Whitman's 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking'", E.L.H., 1949.
- Stevens, Holly, ed. Letters of Wallace Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- Stevens, Wallace. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.
- . The Necessary Angel. London: Faber & Faber, 1981.
- . Opus Posthumous. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.
- . The Palm at the End of the Mind. New York: Vintage Books, 1972.
- Stock, Noel. The Life of Ezra Pound: An Expanded Edition. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982.
- Thomas, Ron. The Latin Masks of Ezra Pound. Ann Arbor, Michigan: U.M.I. Research Press, Studies in Modern Literature, 1983.
- Thurin, Erik Ingvar. Emerson as Priest of Pan: A Study in the Metaphysics of Sex. Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press, 1981.
- Tanner, Tony. The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Thompson, Lawrence, et al. Robert Frost: a Biography. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981.
- Updike, John. "Walt Whitman: Ego and Art", The New York Review, February, 1978.
- Vellacott, Phillip. Translator. Euripides: The Bacchae and Other Plays. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.
- Vendler, Helen. On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- . Wallace Stevens: Words Chosen Out of Desire. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1986.
- Waggoner, Hyatt. American Poets from the Puritans to the Present. (Revised edition.) Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984.

- Waggoner, Hyatt. Emerson as Poet. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Ward, Theodora. The Capsule of the Mind: Chapters in the Life of Emily Dickinson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Weisbuch, Robert. Emily Dickinson's Poetry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Wheelwright, Philip. "Poetry: Myth and Reality", The Language of Poetry. Allen Tate, ed. New York: Russell & Russell, 1960.
- Whitman, Walt. The Complete Writings of Walt Whitman. New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1902.
- . Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose. New York: Rinehart Editions, 1949.
- Whitmont, Edward C. Return of the Goddess. New York: Crossroad, 1986.
- Yoder, R. A. Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1978.