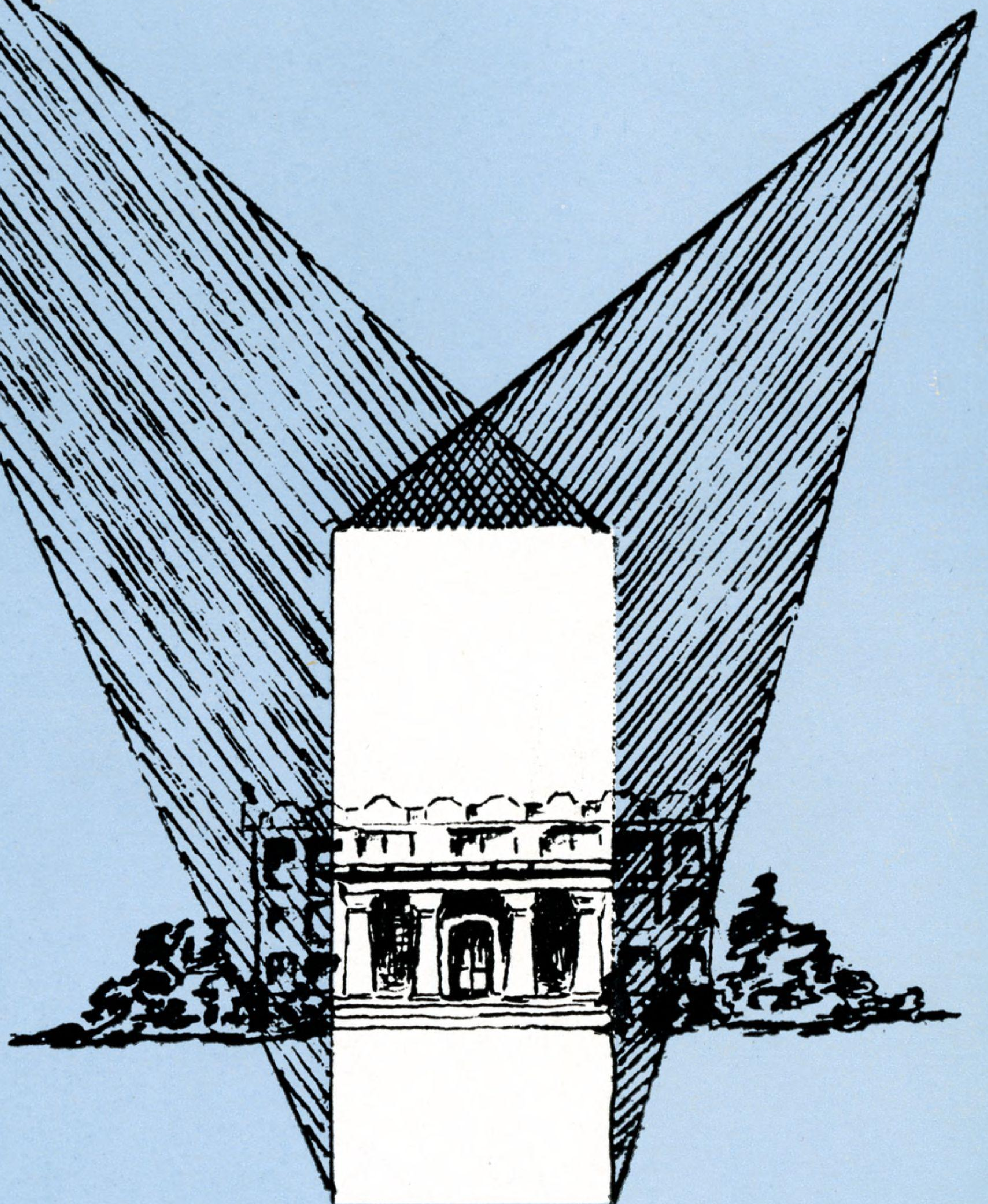
focus on
BARNARD



SPRING, 1954

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THE SEVENTH TYPE OF AMBIGUITY

The action of the play takes place in the Poets' Limbo, one of the seven provinces of Hades. It was originally a large and well-kept garden but has gone to seed under poetical administration. Tangled weeds and grasses stand waist-high, while Homer, whose right to govern none dares question, sits blindly oblivious of the disorder. A brook divides the garden: on one side a great many high three legged stools are ranged, and on the other, a number of thrones, each cut from a single jewel, stand in a row. Homer's throne, carved from a single diamond, is in the center, while about him are thrones of ruby, sapphire, emerald and so forth in a line of decreasing value. The time is 1850, which in addition to being a round number and conveniently memorable (there should be nothing in this dialogue which is not utterly memorable), is the year that Wordsworth finally died. He appeared in Poets' Limbo expecting a glorious reception, but found instead that his appearance in a wilderness which would have horrified Dorothy was scarcely noticed, and that while some people sat on thrones, he was shown to an object that looked suspiciously like a dunce's stool. Imagine then his feelings when he saw seated on the last throne, only made of lapis-lazuli it is true but nonetheless a throne, George Gordon, Lord Byron. With agility remarkable in a shade of his age, and for which long walks in the Lake Country must have been responsible, Wordsworth leaped across the brook.

WORDSWORTH: Justice, justice, I demand justice. What sort of an underworld is this if a young upstart sits on a throne while an elderly gentleman like myself is confined to a hard stool?

BYRON: Don't get excited. This throne is harder than the stool. I've just been promoted here myself, so I'm in a position to judge.

WORDSWORTH: Simply because you died sooner than I did. Why did I write the Ecclesiastical Sonnets if in the other world thrones are given to licentious, lascivious, incestuous —

BYRON: Morality here is of no consequence my dear Wordsworth. Only poetic quality counts. Art for art's sake, as somebody is going to say shortly.

WORDSWORTH: So this is what all your cant of liberty and the end of kings comes to. It's fitting that you should wind up holding on for dear life to a throne you don't deserve.

BYRON: There, there, my dear chap. If I'd been born on a throne I should of course never have been a Republican. You must admit that I died for liberty in the most uncomfortable and inglorious manner. Since I died too soon to become a conservative I feel I'm entitled to have a change of heart up here. Besides these thrones are deucedly difficult to come by. All these other chaps you see have tenure. I'm the only one on what is known here as a floating throne, and I'd be a fool to give up such a prize. I had quite a job winning it from poor Shelley.

WORDSWORTH: How did you go about taking it away from him? If you won't tell me I'll ask Shelley and I don't doubt but that he will.

BYRON: I'll tell you with pleasure, but if you contemplate following my example, I must warn you, you're wasting your time. I challenged Shelley's right to occupy the throne; we chose a critic to judge between us, and he decided in my favor. You wouldn't stand a chance against me.

WORDSWORTH: I remember reading about that in school. The Toads or the Reptiles or maybe it was the Frogs — anyway it was Aristophanes. Let's have him judge this case.

BYRON: (*sarcastically*) Why be content with Aristophanes? Why not go to Homer himself?

WORDSWORTH: Why not indeed. That's even better.

BYRON: Anyone can tell you're not ten minutes off Charon's ferry. Do you seriously think the most honored of kings, the Great Greek himself, would deign to consider such a trifling dispute as ours. Besides, he couldn't even if he wanted to. You've had the benefit of a classical education, don't forget, but Homer didn't even know Latin.

WORDSWORTH: I didn't think, I'm sorry. Whom do you suggest? But no, you know all the ins and out up here and you'd choose someone who'd favor you.

BYRON: My dear man, you're deplorably suspicious. If you don't trust me why not take an unborn critic as our judge? There are plenty of them floating around in the pre-natal critic department, and we can select a name at random from the Homeric Dunciad which contains a complete directory. However, the process will take some time, so we shall have to violate the unities. That offends me much more than it does you of course, so I hope you appreicate my sacrifice in calling for

SCENE TWO

A very young gentleman in twentieth century costume with the Queens College Scarf thrown negligently around his shoulders is sitting on the lapis lazuli throne looking as if he were slightly surprised to be there, but would rather die than admit it. Byron and Wordsworth stand before him, knee deep in weeds.

BYRON: Mr. Empson, your name was selected from the Homeric Dunciad, and our fate now rests in your hands.

WORDSWORTH: First of all the criteria must be established. These, of course, are readily available in my preface to the Lyrical Ballads, and through them it can readily be seen —

BYRON: That prose and poetry are the same thing.

EMPSON: If I am to judge this case I must be permitted to use my own principles, and by the time I am born your preface will be sadly out of date, Mr. Wordsworth. No, I shall judge your work on the basis of my own theory concerning the seven types of ambiguity. I suggest that each of you choose a passage from his own work which we will then examine together to see how many types of ambiguity it contains. That poet who can display in his work the most ambiguous ambiguities will be awarded the throne.

BYRON: This is a new low. Do you actually mean to say that you judge poems on the basis of which are hardest to understand?

EMPSON: Not precisely. I have a feeling that when I am born I will have the same difficulty — no one will understand me. Since I am your judge, however, there is no point in quarreling with my methods. Now go ahead, each of you select one of your favorite passages and recite the one you have chosen. Lord Byron, begin.

BYRON: (*sonorously*)

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,
Is its own origin of ill and end,
And its own place and time; its innate sense,
When stripped of this mortality, derives
No color from the fleeting things without,
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,

Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.

WORDSWORTH: (*simply — how could he help it?*)

" 'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag, — and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.
I did not speak — I saw her face;
Her face! — it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'Oh misery! oh misery!' "

EMPSON: Now we're ready to start applying principles. I shall explain the nature of the first type of ambiguity, and then each of you must show how this ambiguity is present in the passage you recited. Whichever of you can find all seven in his work will win of course, so listen carefully. The first ambiguity is said to occur when a word or structure is effective in several ways at once. Thus the phrase "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" is a comparison which holds for many reasons — because monastery choirs are places to sing, because they involve sitting in a row, because they are made of wood, because the English monasteries were destroyed, etc. You understand the principle I hope. Now ready, set, go. Lord Byron, begin.

BYRON: I find innumerable examples. Just take my line

"Born from the knowledge of its own desert."

Now desert is effective if only thought of as meaning "deserving" but the word carries the echo of the great Sahara, the sweetness the last course of a meal provides, the —

EMPSON: Your work possesses the first type of ambiguity. Mr. Wordsworth, can you supply a better example?

Wordsworth: I can give you an example of a structure effective in more ways than one. Take the lines

> And, as I am a man,
> Instead of jutting crag, I found
> A Woman seated on the ground.

This is clearly ambiguous. "Instead of jutting crag" may go backwards or forwards. It may mean that I found a woman instead of the jutting crag I expected to find, or it may refer backward, and mean "And as I am a man rather than a jutting crag".

Empson: The first round is a draw. The second type of ambiguity occurs when two or more alternative meanings are resolved into one. For example in the passage

> Cupid is winged and doth range;
> Her country so my love doth change.
> But change she earth, or change she sky,
> Yet I will love her till I die.

"change" can either mean that she moves from one country to another, or it may mean that she changes the sky for me in that a change in her behavior will make me miserable. But it's clear what the spirit of the poem is, and there's no conflict. Lord Byron, it's all yours.

Byron: Regard the line "I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey". Prey can mean victim or booty, but it can also mean "please," and it might be treated as a verb signifying "to pray" which would be highly appropriate since he is trying to avoid being made the prey of fiends. And yet there is no doubt about the general meaning. Hey, you know that's rather good. I never realized I wrote such meaningful poetry. This is fun. Go ahead, Wordsworth, let's see you top that.

Wordsworth: I see no difference in the example you chose and the first type of ambiguity.

Empson: Not that, not that! There was a difference. I mean there will be when I write the book. There was — there is — there will be! You must not deny the distinction at such an early stage. (*Starts to cry*) I beg you don't do that to me. If you knew the agonized nights I've spent worrying about whether there was a difference — (*sobs uncontrollably*).

WORDSWORTH: Please, please, you mustn't cry, my son. I take it back. I allow the second ambiguity. Here, take my handkerchief. That's better. (*Coaxingly*) If you stop crying, I'll give you my second ambiguity.

EMPSON: (*sniffling*) I'm all right now. Go ahead, I'm listening.

WORDSWORTH:

. . . and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain.

Now "head-foremost" can mean that I ran with my head in advance of the rest of my body, or it may mean that I ran with what is the head for most people — that could be feet or hands or stomach in this particular case. And yet the over-all meaning of the line is clear.

EMPSON: (*completely mollified*) That's very good, both of you. The third type of ambiguity occurs when two ideas both of which are relevant in the context, are given by one word. Thus in the line about Delilah where she is described as "That specious monster, my accomplished snare", "accomplished" may mean skilled in the gracious arts and it can mean "finished." Both senses are appropriate here since Delilah was talented and made an end of Samson too.

BYRON: I have a splendid example of that.

. its innate sense,
When stripped of this mortality . . .
. . . is absorbed in sufferance or in joy

Now "sufferance" can mean "permission by not hindering;" it can mean "suffering;" or it can mean "a customs tax on imported goods made at the wharf." All these senses are relevant here, and if you have any doubts about the last mentioned, notice the use of the words "stripped" and "sense". What is a tax for if not to strip you of cents — dollars when there's inflation.

WORDSWORTH: You think you're clever, don't you. Well notice the use of "Woman" in the line "A Woman seated on the ground." Woman may be considered in the usual sense — and there's sufficient disagreement right there to constitute a first class ambiguity — or Woman may mean "Woe to man" which is also meaningful here, because the man is very unhappy to see the Woman when he wanted to find a jutting crag.

EMPSON: The fourth ambiguity occurs when two or more meanings don't agree but combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author. For example, the phrase "Weep me not dead" may mean "Do not make me weep myself to death", or "Do not kill me with the sight of your tears," or "Do not cry for me as if I were dead" etc. Byron, your turn.

BYRON: A pleasure. My states of mind are nothing if not complicated. Take the lines

> . . its innate sense
> When stripped of this mortality, derives
> No color from the fleeting things without,
> But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
> Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

Now what is born from the knowledge of its own desert? Is it the innate sense or is it the joy? If it is the innate sense how can something which is innate be born from knowledge when it is there before knowledge is? Doubly confusing, how can it be born from the knowledge of what it deserves when it is innate to begin with? If what is meant is that joy is born from the knowledge of desert, the situation is equally complicated. It will differ, moreover, with each possible meaning (already discussed) of the word "desert".

EMPSON: (*wiping his brow*) That's enough. Your state of mind is admittedly most complicated.

WORDSWORTH: I have one too. Take the line "Oh misery, oh misery." I thought when I wrote it that I simply meant the woman was unhappy, but I see now I was also referring to the act of hoarding. The fact that she was sitting on the ground is practically proof that she was guarding buried treasure.

BYRON: "Misery, misery." Of all the miserable tricks. You can't find the fourth ambiguity in your simple minded verse so you pull a stunt like that. Of all the dirty poetics —

EMPSON: (*on verge of tears again*) Are we going to start this again? Mr. Wordsworth was good enough to let your second one go by — as a member of the British aristocracy you ought to have equal consideration for me.

BYRON: Oh, if you're going to start crying, very well. Fire away the fifth ambiguity, but there's no quarter given from now on. It's becoming too serious.

EMPSON: The fifth ambiguity occurs when the poet discovers his idea in the act of writing. For example, listen to these lines:

Our natures do pursue
Like rats that ravyn their proper bane
A thirsty evil, and when we drinke we die.

The first idea was that lust was the poison, but "proper" meaning "suitable" suggested the idea of "natural" and this suggested the idea of water as a drink natural to man, and that in turn produced the image of the Fall of Man where drinking caused death. "Proper bane" is now both water and poison and is thus ambiguous.

BYRON: Since I never know what I'm going to say next, I think that's a perfectly delightful ambiguity. Congratulations, Empson. (They shake hands while Wordsworth glowers.) Now pay attention. This is going to be good.

No color . . .
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;

Notice how I start with the image of color which is absorbed in suffering or joy or the customs tax depending on your interpretation, which in turn is born or immortal or innate — but perhaps we'd better let all that go for now. Anyway, I'm talking about color until we come to the word "desert". This obviously suggested to me the idea of "dessert" and therefore the image changes as I go on to say "Thou didst not tempt me" signifying that I'm not hungry, or at any rate do not care for sweets.

WORDSWORTH: I have one just as good.

. . . and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

I began with the image of a jutting crag, but when I had to find a rhyme for "ran" and that suggested "man" which of course suggested "Woman," and that's how I came to find a Woman seated on the ground. If the first line had ended in "pansy" I might easily have found a chimpanzee.

EMPSON: (*disappointed*) And I thought that one would be sure to catch one of you. But the sixth form of ambiguity is really difficult to find. It took me years of oysters and port before going to bed to create it and it is found only in the most sophisticated poems. It occurs when a statement means nothing. For example the line "She had no waist to speak of" might mean that she had an unattractive middle region, or it might mean that she had a small waist. It might mean either and so means neither.

BYRON: Ah, now we're in my forte. I specialize in saying nothing in the noblest manner.

> The mind which is immortal . . .
> Is its own origin of ill and end,
> And its own place and time.

I am here saying that the mind is its own origin and end. I might mean end of evil or I might just mean end. In any case, it's plain nonsense. How can an immortal mind be its own end? How can it be its own place and time when immortality openly denies the notion of both place and time?

WORDSWORTH: You need not go on. I agree absolutely that those lines don't mean a thing. I must admit that in my lifetime I was misguided enough to try to make sense, but I see now that I was a better poet than I realized. Take this line:

> It was a wind full ten times over.

Does this mean it was ten times larger than a wind? In that case it wouldn't be a wind at all — it would be a tornado. Or does it mean that the wind had been over ten times? If so, over what? It doesn't mean anything; I told you there was a wind in the line before, and this only confuses the issue. It's a glorious example of the sixth ambiguity.

EMPSON: I can see I will have a hard time judging between you. But the seventh type will be sure to trap one of you. It's the most ambiguous ambiguity imaginable. It occurs when the two values of the ambiguity are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind. To give a brief example of this most complex ambiguity:

> But now I die
> Only let others say, when I am dead,
> Never was grief like mine.

Christ may mean that he hopes his grief will never be exceeded

by the humanity he pities — after Christ's death may there never be grief like Christ's — or it may mean "Let my torturers after I am dead suffer so that they will say there never was a grief like theirs." (triumphantly) The author is obviously of divided mind, and there you have my prize ambiguity. Are you ready to try for the $64? What am I saying!

BYRON: (*impressed*) Now that is really rather good. I'm hard pressed. Wait now, I have it!

The mind which is immortal . . .
Is its own origin of ill and end.

WORDSWORTH: That's not fair. You just used that for the sixth ambiguity.

BYRON: Can I help it if I write so profoundly that one line can contain all types? If I say the mind is immortal and then say that it is like its own origin and end, its own time and place, I am obviously of divided mind.

WORDSWORTH: I protest it isn't fair. You're not of divided mind — you're simply confused. I refuse to allow that ridiculous line to be used for the two most important ambiguities. I protest, I —

Two speak together:

BYRON: And what makes you think your ambiguities are any better? That nonsense about Woman and Woe to man. If that was anything — which it wasn't — it would be the first ambiguity.

WORDSWORTH: What about the desert and the dessert? You'd have to invent an eighth type to cover that.

EMPSON: (*screaming over them*) Order. Order! Quiet, or I'll have you both sent down the river. (*They subside*) Mr. Wordsworth is right. One line cannot mean nothing and two things at once. It's one or the other. Mr. Wordsworth, can you find a line in your work which will fulfill the seventh requirement?

WORDSWORTH:

I did not speak — I saw her face;
Her face! — it was enough for me;

What is my attitude toward her face? I may mean that her loveliness was so great that I required nothing more than a single glimpse to be overcome, or it may mean that she was so hideous one glimpse was all I could bear. I am clearly in a positively schismatic frame of mind.

EMPSON: Splendid. Splendid. There is no schism in my own mind, I am happy to say. Mr. Wordsworth is the more ambiguous poet, and deserves the throne. (*steps down*) Mr. Wordsworth, take your throne.

VOICES FROM OTHER THRONES: Nikay, nikay!

Byron is left in the weeds and Wordsworth slowly climbs the steps to the throne, when a voice is heard calling

VOICE: Justice, justice, I demand justice. I am Walter Savage Landor, and I insist upon knowing why I have not been given a throne. I demand a trial.

Wordsworth sinks down hopelessly on the third step as the curtain falls.

—*RAEL JEAN ISAACS*

WON BY MANY A ONE

it was a soft day,

fresh with the pungent smell of damp, springy earth. The rain drifted down in gentle gusts, moistening the fine powdered limestone road into a stretch of white which quietly wound its way up into the mountains. The little man walked along the road jauntily kicking the white dust with his shoes. He was a peculiar fellow but his peculitrity wasn't something you could lay a finger on. Yet it was there, an intangible lilt about him. There was an agelessness in the curve of his uptilted mouth, in the crook of his large nose, and in the spark that darted from his huge black eyes. And there was a twinkle in the center of his decidedly Celtic chin.

He was dressed in a homespun bawneen, gathered loosely about his middle and tucked into faded corduroy pants. Perched on the top of his head was a cap, a remarkable cap. It was red, the bright red of a winter holly berry, and the tip of it slanted rakishly over one ear.

He skipped along the road chuckling and humming to himself, now and then stooping to remove a pebble from his shoes, or tilting back his head to catch some raindrops with his tongue. The trees rustled when he passed by, and the grass blades moved gently as he walked over them not even touching their tops. But if his actions seemed a trifle peculiar, no one noticed; for no one was walking the road on the day that Timothy O'Toole entered the village of Ballacurragh, near the town of Lough Ree.

There was a bend in the road and around it a boreen edged with twining blackthorn bushes and a small cottage waiting quietly at the end. Timothy stopped to take in with his eyes the sight of it, whitewashed clean, with roses curling over the doorway and along the side wall to where the thatch of the roof sloped down. Under the window a lovely slip of a girl stretched up to cut some of the roses. Timothy sighed at the freshness of her with the round arms smooth as Galway cream, and the black hair swept off her face with a ribbon. Then he set his cap at a slightly more rakish angle and smiling to himself walked boldly to where she stood.

"God save you, Miss," and he bowed elegantly.

"God save you kindly, sir," she replied and smiling at him as she gathered together a few roses in her apron she said, "It's a soft day, it is."

"A fine soft day," answered Timothy, "and it's lovely roses you're havin' over your doorway, but not so lovely as the rose that's standin' under it."

The girl laughed and replied with a wink, "Would you like to be wearin' one in your button hole?" She reached into her apron and pulling out a rose, bent over to place it in the little man's coat, when a shrill voice called from inside the cottage,

"PegEEN! Is that blatherin' dreamer, Martin McTeague darin' to come near this house again afther me tellin' him never to darken our door or I'd put the curse on 'im?"

The girl jumped and in fright dropped the corners of her apron so that the roses spilled out on the ground, as an old woman of great size appeared at the door.

"And afther me tellin'. . . ." She stopped as she saw the stranger. "Soft day, isn't it?" she murmured sweetly, and smiled, showing her toothless, blackened gums.

"A fine soft day," gulped Timothy, taken aback for a moment by the breadth of her filling the doorway and her with no teeth and one eye looking sideways.

"I was just after admirin' your lovely roses," he went on. "But allow me to introduce myself. I'm Timothy O'Toole. I'm a hurley scout from, uh —, quite a ways up." He pointed vaguely in the direction of the road, and then bowed elegantly.

"Pleased to meet you," the old woman simpered. "The name is Judith Stapleton, and this here's my niece, Margaret Finnerty. . . . Curtsey you foolish girl!" she snapped, poking Margaret with her elbow. Margaret obeyed and then walked into the cottage with her head high and the temper in her eyes.

"Spiteful gilly", mumbled Judy, "carryin' on with that worthless blackguard, him and his fine phrases and his big hurley stick."

"Hurley stick?" Timothy pricked up his ears. "What's that âbout a hurley stick?"

Judy eyed him cautiously. "And what may I ask are you after, with your nosin' in other people's business?"

"Oh beggin' your pardon, Mrs. Stapleton," Timothy replied smoothly. "Sparts, and hurley in particular, is me profession. I go around seein' what I can see among the hurley players. It's a hard job though," he sighed. "I've been travelin' since early mornin' and faith, but it wears a body out." He rubbed his knee wearily.

A calculating look came into Judy's eye. "Tell me, Mr. O'Toole, when you find a good hurley player, what do you do with him?"

"Do with him?" croaked Timothy, "Why I take him back with me to play for the team and if he's good, why we might even be making the grand tour all over creation."

"You mean you'd be takin' him away from here and probably not come back again?" questioned Judy.

"That's right."

"Ohhhh. ." Judy's tone became solicitous. "You were saying you were tired, Mr. O'Toole."

"Yes, yes." Timothy began rubbing his knee again. "It does make a body weary, traipsin' over the country into strange places. I was wonderin' Mrs.

Stapleton, if you might be havin' a wee place where I could stay a few days. Nothin' much mind you. Just a little spot where I can rest me weary legs."

"I'd not be turnin' you away, Mr. O'Toole, and you walkin' half the day. But we're very humble folk and there'd be no room in the cottage for you. There was a time when me departed husband, God rest his soul, was alive. . . ." She wiped a tear from her cheek and glanced at Timothy out of the corner of her eye.

Timothy cleared his throat abruptly. "Oh, that hawthorne bush over there in the field would be fine." He smiled a charming smile.

Judy hesitated a moment, a fearful look crossing her face as she glanced first at the hawthorne bush and then at Timothy standing before her.

"Have you no fear of the spirits livin' in a parkeen bush that stands alone?" she asked in a hollow whisper.

With a careless shrug of his shoulders, Timothy replied, "There'll not be any that'll bother me."

"Whisht, I can't be after begrudgin' you a lonely parkeen bush if you have no fear," she grumbled half to herself. "You're welcome to it." And as Timothy walked toward the field, she called after him, ". . And don't be comin' into me kitchen expectin' the service of a lord, or I'll . . ." she added defiantly, "I'll put the bad eye on you!"

When Timothy didn't answer, Judy turned and walked into the house, a puzzled look on her face as she repeated over and over to herself, "The parkeen bush, the lonely parkeen bush. So he's stayin' under the parkeen bush . . . and he has no fear."

Twilight had come when Timothy, stretching his short legs and yawning a prodigious yawn, awoke from a peaceful slumber under the hawthorne bush. He leaned back, resting his head on his arms, and sang contentedly to himself. "Never never mind what an old man says, for his days are nearly over; Never never mind what a young man says for he's won by many a one . . . ooo-dee-doo-dee-doo-dee. . . ."

He stopped short upon hearing voices, and peering through the branches of the hawthorne bush he saw Margaret talking earnestly to a tall young man over by the gate.

"But Martin, you know I can't be goin' now. I can't just go now, and it's almost May Eve," she told him anxiously.

"And why can't you, now? You were goin' to come before. What made you change your mind? . . . Don't you love me, Pegeen Baun?" he whispered gently, stroking her hair.

She looked at him with the softness shining in her eyes. "I love you, Martin McTeague," she told him, and clung to his strong arms.

Martin held her close and went on excitedly, "Listen to me, Pegeen. That woman can't hurt you. How can you believe all that foolish talk of her

bein' a witch, and havin' the power to perform her pisherougues on Mayday? She's only a bad-tempered old craun who's got you in her clutches because she knows you've the fear of her, and by matchin' you up with Michael Carty she thinks she'll live in comfort and money for the rest of her days. And even if she is a witch, I'll never let her hurt you. We love each other, Pegeen, and all the witches in the world can never harm us."

"I want to believe you, Martin," cried Margaret with the tears wet on her cheeks, "but I'm afraid. I can't help it but I am. You're not knowin' her like I do."

"Listen to me, Pegeen. We can go away now. Stayin' here is doin' you no good, fearin' that woman and havin' to listen to the blatherin' of fat old Michael Carty. You can stay at my sister's house 'till I get Father Donovan, and then you can live with me on our own little farm and I'll buy you two fine horses and a trap to ride to town in. Ah Pegeen, we'll be so happy the Saints'll envy us! Come now, say you'll go!" Tilting her chin, he smiled coaxingly into her eyes.

She looked at him for a long moment and gently pulled herself away. "No, Martin," she said, "I cannot go with you and her puttin' a curse on us."

He stared at her piercingly and dropped his hands. "So you'll not come," he said slowly. "You'll stay here with that witch and the oily tongue of Michael Carty blatherin' in yer ear, him with all his money and his fancy things. Well take him and be damned!" He pushed her aside roughly and strode away while she screamed after him, "I wouldn't marry you Martin McTeague if you were the last man livin'! I hate you, I hate you, with your fine words and your black heart! I hate you," she sobbed, and started slowly toward the house.

Timothy stepped out from behind the shelter of the hawthorne bush and walked along beside her. "Now, Pegeen," he murmured, "sure 'n a little lover's quarrel is nothin' to be cryin' so hard over," and he handed her his pocket handkerchief. "You'd better be dryin' your face or your dear, kind aunt will be set to thinkin'."

"I'm not crying," was the muffled reply. "I wouldn't be cryin' over the likes of him!" and they walked silently the rest of the way through the field. As they came to the door of the cottage Judy called out, "Margaret? Where have you been! Mr. Carty's been waitin' here for almost an hour!"

Margaret sighed wearily and with Timothy behind her walked into the parlor where Judy, rocking by the fire, entertained Mr. Michael Carty, a balding, red faced gentleman in a flowered waistcoat whose buttons looked arched to pop every time he breathed. He looked sadly uncomfortable as he fiddled with his watch chain and nervously tapped his foot against the rung of the chair. When he saw Margaret, he jumped up beaming, in his haste overturning her sewing basket and then watching helplessly as several balls of thread rolled

slowly into the fire. He was still sputtering an apology when Judy introduced him to Timothy, who was doing his best to conceal a giggle.

"The pleasure is all mine, Mr. Carty. I've heard so many nice things about you." Timothy bowed his elegant bow, then turning to Judy he said, "Beggin' your pardon, Mrs. Stapleton, but since I missed me dinner, I was wondrin' . . ."
"Oh, I'll get you a wee bite, Mr. O'Toole," interrupted Margaret. She jumped up, only to be pulled down in her chair by her aunt who, glaring at Timothy, said, "Come in the kitchen, Mr. O'Toole, and I'll make you a drop o' tea. Margaret may stay here and enjoy Mr. Carty's fine company." She smiled at Mr. Carty and not too gently pulled Timothy into the kitchen.

Here it was almost dark, lit only by a small turf fire on the hearth. Timothy sat down on the hob beside the fire and waited while Judy dished some potatoes out of the pot and hung the kettle on to boil. "Can you not spare a candle, Mrs. Stapleton?" he asked. "It's me eye I'll be feedin' in this light."

Judy stiffened. "The extravagance of him, candles, when there's a good turf fire goin'! Don't be forgettin' what I told you when you came. This is a humble cottage; don't be expectin' the service of a lord."

"Why Mrs. Stapleton!" Timothy sounded surprised. "Your hospitality is bounteous. This may be a humble home, but it certainly is a generous one."

As Judy lit the candle, Timothy continued archly, "It may not long be humble from the looks of things in the parlor."

Judy drew her chair closer, and confided to Timothy with a trace of pride in her voice, "Folks around here call me a witch and I'm not denying that I don't have some connection with the little people." Her laugh made a dry, cackled sound as she carefully watched Timothy's face. She seemed a little disappointed when he went right on eating. However, pouring herself a cup of tea, she continued, "But I do know a good match when I see one. And Michael Carty is a rich man. He went to America twenty years ago to make his fartune on the stocks and now he's come back to settle down in his old home. He's a keen one he is, and he's got his eye on my Margaret, but she can't see it with her heart full of that worthless Martin McTeague."

Timothy choked. "Beggin' your pardon, Mrs. Stapleton, a bit o' potatoe."

Undisturbed, Judy rambled on, "Yes, he's a keen one he is, and with plenty o' money. Think what a fine house he'd build for the three of us."

Timothy choked again.

"Swallow is down with a bit of tea, Mr. O'Toole," she said calmly, handing him a steaming cup. "Yes, a fine house. He's a keen man, he is," she mumbled as she cleared off the table. "A keen man."

Timothy's eyes were drawn by the sight of her, as she shuffled around the dim kitchen, crooning and cackling to herself with her shadow looming dark and large against the wall. It almost made him shiver the way she seemed to forget he was there. "Mrs. Stapleton," he said, to break the spell, "Shall we go into

the parlor? I always like to better meself by talkin' with keen men. Very stimulatin' to the mind, don't you think?"

Judy smiled, showing her blackened gums. "Yes, Mr. O'Toole, let's go into the parlor," and companionably, she took his arm.

Margaret had moved her spinning wheel from the corner to a place by the fire, and with a vindictive stamp of her foot, started to work the treadle.

"But of course," said Mr. Carty, "when I was in America I didn't engage in speculating."

"Beggin' your pardon?" said Margaret sweetly, still spinning.

Mr. Carty spoke louder, "I say I didn't engage in speculating."

"I'm afraid you'll have to speak a little louder, Mr. Carty," replied Margaret even more sweetly and still spinning.

"Speculatin'," shouted Mr. Carty. "I say I never engaged in speculating!"

"Oh, isn't this nice," cooed Judy from the doorway. "Margaret is really a fine spinner, and don't it make her look like a little mother."

Mr. Carty nodded weakly, wiping his reddened brow with an immaculate handkerchief. He stood up, a strained expression on his face as they entered. "Faith, and I've had a lovely evening, Mrs. Stapleton, but I must be getting on me way." Turning to Margaret, he said, "Thank you for your charming company, Miss Finnerty. It's been a real pleasure."

"Och, you're not going already, Mr. Carty. Won't you even stay for a bit o' tea and cake?" inquired Judy.

"Thank you kindly, Mrs. Stapleton, but I must be on me way. Good-bye Margaret," and with a weariness in his step, he left.

"Thanks be to God!" said Margaret with a relieved sigh. "One more word of speculation and I'd be out o' me mind!"

"That's enough o' that, Margaret," scolded Judy. "Your manners are disgraceful in the presence of such a fine man as Michael Carty. You had just better be gettin' up to bed."

"Fine man," scoffed Margaret. "Fine money!" she snapped and climbed up into the loft.

Judy scowled and hobbled over to the fire where she eased herself into her rocker. "I'll show her. I'll surprise them all come Mayday," she muttered.

"What was that, Mrs. Stapleton?" Timothy asked eagerly.

Judy ignored his question. "Sit down, Mr. O'Toole, and we'll have a little chat while you warm yourself by the fire. It'll be cold under the hawthorne bush tonight." She looked at him knowingly as if they both shared a great secret. Timothy answered her look, his face alight with innocence. "Whisht, Mrs. Stapleton, it's many a night I sleep under the hawthorne bush and it's warm I keep. When you've a kind heart, you never sleep cold."

Judy shifted uncomfortably in her chair. "No matter," she said, then grudgingly added, "but I'll give you a candle to light the way." She rested more comfortably back in her chair.

"You say you're a hurley scout, Mr. O'Toole?"

"That I am," answered Timothy, curling up on the hob by the fire.

"Well now, I believe I told you of this Martin McTeague, a worthless dreamer but nevertheless a fine hurley player. My Margaret's been fillin' her heart with him instead of thinkin' of Michael Carty. Now if you were to scout him and take him away with you, mind you he's a good hurley player and he'd prove worth your while, then my Margaret might appreciate what a keen man Mr. Carty is, and it would be a way for you to repay our hospitality."

"But supposin' he wouldn't want to be goin', Mrs. Stapleton?"

Judy eyed him shrewdly. "Now Mr. O'Toole, you know YOU could make him go."

Timothy looked modest. "You're flatterin' me, Mrs. Stapleton, but since I know what a hardship I must be causin' your hospitality, I'll see what I can do."

He stretched his arms over his head and yawned. "Well, Mrs. Stapleton, I enjoyed your company very much, but bein' as I'm a little sleepy and tomorrow is a busy day, I think I'll be off to me hawthorne bush for a little rest."

Pulling herself out of her rocker, Judy walked him to the door and watched, a curious light in her eyes, as candle cupped in hand he made his way toward the lonely parkeen bush.

The early morning sun shone down on Timothy as he walked along the road toward Lough Ree. As he drew near to the town he saw the cottage with the stone pillars by the gate, and the wooden sign bearing the name MARTIN McTEAGUE. He was within few yards of the house when he saw Martin coming out the gate, and calling him, he hurried to catch up. Martin waited a moment until he had reached his side, and then the two walked on together.

"Faith, an' I'm not as young as I used to be," panted Timothy.

Martin laughed. "Aren't you the Timothy O'Toole who's staying at old Judy's house?"

"That I am," replied Timothy, "And how were you knowin'? I've only been there a day."

"Oh anyone comes near old Judy's house and the whole town knows of it. Do you think you're safe there?" he inquired a trifle bitterly.

Timothy looked at him out of the corner of his eye. "Oh now, nothin's happened to me yet, but whatever makes you ask that?"

Martin shrugged his shoulders. "The folks around here whisper that Judy's a witch. They say that in the hour before dawn on Mayday she has the power of the little people and she goes around performin' her pisherougues. It seems last year, she stole the butter from all the people's crocks; they churned all

day and no one got any butter, but Judy's crocks were full. I don't put much faith in such tales meself, but there's them that does."

Timothy nodded solemnly: "You never know when folks are possessed by the divil."

"Ha, neither the divil nor God means anything to old Judy," sneered Martin. "She never goes to Mass of a Sunday, and even Father Donovan stays out of her way since the day she put a curse on him."

"Faith, 'n she sounds like a fearsome woman," shivered Timothy, and he thought of her shadow against the kitchen wall. "But what about her niece that's livin' with her? She seems a likely girl and such a pretty one too."

Martin sighed dreamily, "Ah, she's as beautiful as ever Queen Maeve was, what with her black hair blowin' in the wind and her blue eyes like the Connemara lakes. For all the good it does me," he added savagely.

"What do you mean, lad?" gently inquired Timothy.

"Ah, she says she loves me, but will she leave that craun of an aunt? No! She's afraid we'd be cursed, with it comin' on Mayday. So she'll stay there and let old Judy marry her off to fat Michael Carty with all his riches. And she'd have a fine house with wooden floors and a maid to wait on her and a fine carriage to drive around in, with prob'ly never a child to laugh in the garden!" He scowled fiercely. "Well if that's what she wants, that's the way it'll be, for I'll never come crawlin' back to her!"

"Now me lad, women are strange creatures; they always refuse what they really want and only after they've gone through the tartures of the damned will they ever accept it. Now I have a strange feelin' that Margaret has had enough tarture even for her stubborn constitution."

They had reached the main road of Lough Ree and Timothy stopped. Turning to Martin he continued earnestly, "Listen lad, you love Margaret and Margaret loves you; the only trouble is the way to win her. Well, I know the way!"

Martin looked perplexed, but Timothy went on excitedly, "All you have to do is happen along the road around the hour before dawn, and I'll do the rest. Just have faith in me."

"But I don't understand." Martin frowned, but there was a glimmer of hope in his eyes and the ache in his arms to be holding Margaret. "What can you do? Why should I be goin' makin' a fool of myself with only the word of a stranger to guide me?"

"I haven't time to be tellin' you more," Timothy replied. "Right now, I have an engagement with a very important banshee, one by the name of Stapleton who just might be stoppin' in to visit his relatives very soon!" And with that he was gone, leaving Martin confused and angry but with the blood pounding a little faster in his veins.

It was evening by the time Timothy returned to Judy's cottage, and he arrived just as Judy and Margaret were sitting down to supper.

"Good evenin' to you, ladies," said Timothy jubilantly as he came through the doorway, and straightway he tripped over the broom Margaret had carelessly left there. "Och, na bochla anois," he exclaimed as Margaret rushed to help him up.

"Ah Timothy, are you hurt?" she asked as she helped him to his feet. "I forgot about leavin' the broom there."

Timothy grinned and rubbed his shins, "Ah, 'twas nothin' a-tall."

"What's got into you Margaret, thrippin' the puir man," scolded Judy as she set the tea pot on the table.

"Sure'n 'twas my fault," said Timothy, "not lookin' where I was goin'. Your stew smells very tasty, Mrs. Stapleton. It makes me mouth water after such a busy day." He sat down at the table and began to eat with gusto the plateful Margaret had set before him.

"I met Martin McTeague today," he began. Margaret started, and he continued innocently, "You remember I told ye when I first came here that I was a hurley scout. Well, Martin has agreed to come with me and play for the team." He winked at Judy.

"Ah no," cried Margaret, "he couldn't do that!"

"And why couldn't he?" demanded Judy. "He's no good around here. Maybe he could put his hurley stick to some use there," and she cackled triumphantly.

"But he has a farm and a house; it's not true that he's goin' back with you, Mr. O'Toole. Say you're only foolin' us," she pleaded.

"Why, Margaret," said Timothy gently, "I did not know he meant so much to you, or I never would have asked him; but he seemed quite willin' to go," he added slyly.

"He does mean nothin' to her, Mr. O'Toole," snapped Judy, "Margaret! Eat your dinner."

They ate in silence for a moment. Then Timothy began, "They were sayin' in town today, that bein' tomorrow is Mayday, there's goin' to be a big celebration."

Judy laughed gleefully, "There won't be much cause for them to celebrate, come tomorrow."

Margaret looked up fearfully at her aunt.

"I've heard strange things can happen on Mayday," said Timothy, "but the only thing no one mentioned was the banshee. 'O, the banshee now is wailin' where the Dripsy River flows,' " he intoned morosely.

Judy looked at him nervously. "Stop your blatherin' about the banshee. We've not heard one in this part of the country for almost twenty years."

"That's what set me to thinkin' " replied Timothy, "Don't you think we're about due for one? Not meanin' any offense, Mrs. Stapleton, but you're gettin' on in years." He solemnly chewed a mouthful of stew.

"Stop that," screeched Judy, "You're only tryin' to spile me fun."

"Why Mrs. Stapleton, I don't understand you, but I'm sure I'd never try to spile anyone's fun."

"Well, that's enough then," and she mumbled tearfully as she ate her stew.

They finished the meal in silence, and after the table was cleared and the dishes were put away, they sat in front of the fire, each thinking his own thoughts. Timothy with an air of suppressed excitement in the tapping of his toes on the hearthstone, looked from Judy, rocking and twitching in her chair, to Margaret, staring pensively into the fire. He seemed satisfied with what he saw and sat back more comfortably, almost as though he were waiting for a welcome guest. They were sitting like this when suddenly they heard it. A thin, eerie wailing, like someone keening over a newly closed grave. The shrill noise whistled in the chimney and moaned against the door.

"Mother O' God!" screamed Margaret, "It's the banshee. O God in Heaven, protect us!"

Judy sat there, her eyes glassy, a little streak of spittle trickling down the corner of her mouth. Timothy watched her as she muttered fragments from the charms she knew against evil spirits. "Has your time come, Judith Stapleton?" he whispered.

They watched there through the night, with the firelight casting grotesque shadows on their silent, lonely vigil. Margaret knelt by her chair, white-faced and softly fingering her rosary until she fell into a fitful sleep. Judy rocked steadily back and forth in her chair, her mouth working as she babbled to herself, and her plump fingers plucking nervously at her skirt. Only Timothy slept peacefully, curled up on the hob by the fire and with a wisp of a smile at the corners of his mouth.

The first streaks of dawn were struggling to break through the early morning mist, when the big sheenaun wind came. It howled down the chimney and around the room, shooting sparks from the fire into the air. The door crashed open and Margaret jumped up screaming, "God in Heaven protect us!" She ran out and Timothy after her and the wind swirled around them. It was a mighty wind; it filled the air with flying straw; it scattered leaves and branches before it and dipped tree tops to the ground.

Eyes glowing with a terrible fear, Judy rushed to the door and clung there, while the wind billowed her skirt about her, making her seem like some giant tree trunk severed by the wind and dropped there in the doorway. Then it knocked her great bulk against the side of the house, loosening the pins from her hair which streamed wildly about her as she screeched. "It's come; it's come!" But her cries were lost in the wind.

"Pegeen, Pegeen, are you safe?" Martin who had happened along, as Timothy suggested, rushed in the gate over to the tree under which Margaret cowered. "Pegeen, Pegeen baun," he murmured, holding her close against him in the

wind. "I've come to bring you home, Pegeen," he whispered, and she clung to him, her dark hair blowing against his cheek, as the wind whirled and swirled about them.

Timothy hopped about, hugely enjoying the excitement, and laughed delightedly when Michael Carty, trousers half pulled over his flannel nightgown with the wind blowing his night cap rakishly over his ear, came tumbling into the yard.

"Saints preserve us! Is the world comin' to an end!" Mr. Carty shouted, as the wind heaved him with a mighty bounce to the ground. "Mr. O'Toole, sit down before you're blown away!"

Then as suddenly as it came, the wind stopped and the earth was still. The morning sun peeped rosily from behind the elbow of the mountain beyond. Timothy looked toward it and grinned,

"Soft day, isn't it?"

"Mother O' God, Mr. O'Toole," puffed Mr. Carty, "my heart can't take this kind of excitement. I left America to get a rest. If this keeps up I'll not be long for this world."

Timothy chuckled as though struck with a wonderful idea. "Mr. Carty," he said in a conspiratorial tone, "how would you like to make a sound capital investment that'll never stop payin' dividends?"

"Never?" croaked Mr. Carty.

"That's right, Mr. Carty. I know of a pot o' gold that's safe as a bird's nest in a church steeple!"

So Michael Carty with his nightgown almost resembling a bauneen in the way that it was loosely tucked into his pants, and his nightcap slanted at a rakish angle, walked arm in arm with Timothy O'Toole towards the shining early sun.

And Judy, the glitter abating from her eyes, stood silently in the doorway in full view of the lonely parkeen bush which all through the wind had remained still and unbending.

—*MARILYN ANNE WARD*

THE DAWN RIDE

I mind how, silence bound, the dawn cock
Over the plain a great distance warned his tune.
With steamed flanks and velvet, chafing at the day
The big horse moved beneath me.
And death had been that night; it was only the shade
Of the colt come to nicker by the fence of its pasture
At the big horse flying beneath me, softly, smoothly
Over the plain.
We two, melted in silence,
And the grey rock and the night sky fading away.
We two, together, astride in the grey mist,
Neither mind nor soul in the half light
But flesh of flesh, body poured together
On flowing hooves over the curved land
Stirring beneath us.
With love lost together and bond and communion
To the power, together. Neither horse nor I
Were of these things but the rushing wind
And the rocking land and the fire pouring
Over the crest at the end of the plain.

—Shirley Henschel

The Editor's Page

ONE OF THE MOST charming features of the Middle Ages was the crusades upon which the gorgeous rulers of Europe periodically embarked. The costumes were delightful, the settings romantic, and the crusades themselves unsuccessful, which always contributes to making a cause endearing — to future generations at any rate. Now the Barnard campus has several marked disadvantages as the location of a new crusade. The Professors are not gorgeous (with a few exceptions who must be nameless — after all, tastes differ), the costumes must seem uninspired to those who contrast dungarees with the purple robes and elaborately decorated armor of former ages, and the setting — well, the money has undoubtedly been sensibly spent in improving plumbing and all that, but the outside of Milbank cannot compare with the temples of Jerusalem.

The new crusade departs from tradition, moreover, in its choice of its enemy. Under the old system the foe, although heathen, was yet human, but the Barnard enemy, in keeping with our mechanized age, is inanimate — its name, the Freshman Research Paper. No fierce Saracen with flaming eye, bloody scimitar, and burning Bible has wrecked more lives more thoroughly than the seemingly innocent one-thousand-word paper. As one whose life has already been destroyed, I feel qualified to discuss the subject dispassionately. Preaching by example is certainly in accordance with medieval custom — witness Chaucer — and to maintain the medieval spirit I am ready to make an exemplum of my own sad case.

I came to Barnard happy in the knowledge that I was an English major. Since I could both read and write, I was obviously well qualified to excel in my chosen field. I do not complain that my English teacher spent the first month proving to me that I did not know how to read. He proved it to the satisfaction of us both, and there was nothing underhanded in this. What I resent is that when my other qualification came under consideration, he did not stop with teaching me that I did not know how to write. Through his use of the pernicious Freshman Research Paper, he actually destroyed my ability to do so. At this point the English department will claim that the fault was not in my teacher or in the Research Paper but in myself. They will say that I did not work. Splendid. I was hoping they'd say that.

From the day that the Freshman Research Paper was assigned, I spent eighteen hours a day working upon it. Eight of these were spent in the brain's most superficial efforts, but ten of them were spent in wasting the time of my subconscious — in short, not only my waking hours, but also the precious moments of a young girl's slumber were given to the arid waste of footnotes, index cards, and warmed-over opinions of which the Research Paper is composed. I memorized Hook and Galer — when you footnote, when you quote, when it's *op cit,* when its *Ibid* — but I'd better stop before the intensity of my suffering carries me into poetry. Poetry is improper to prose. Melville did not know this. This was Melville's mistake. But I am taking flight into Sophomore English.

My next task was to decide upon a subject. This I did under the brilliant guidance of my teacher. The subject he suggested was certainly one I should never have had the imagination to conceive of by myself. It was entitled with shining clarity "Opinion of English Travellers in America between the Years 1830 and 1840." Unable to contain myself until I discovered what Englishmen (and women) travelling in America thought of America between the years 1830 and 1840 (I didn't care what Frenchmen or Italians though or even Englishmen who came in 1829 or 1841; I was sorry for them, of course, if they were of the wrong nationality or chose the wrong year, but I was not curious about them) I dashed to the Columbia University Library. After copying call slips for hours, forging a bursar's receipt, and waiting for additional hours in the ecstatic condition the very thought of my subject always produced in me, I was informed by the librarian that all the books I had asked for were lost or too rare for circulation — she did not suggest that any of them had been borrowed.

Undaunted I flew to the New York Public Library, but I found that the Library's democratic policy of excluding all students regardless of age, religion, color, or sex applied to Freshmen writing Research Papers no matter how desperate their need or consuming their intellectual curiosity. Still unvanquished I dragged down my grandmother who nobly resisted the temptation to be flattered into admitting she was a student. As her secretary I was allowed to enter the sacred portals of the reading room. I was in.

Fully conscious of the importance of notes I martialed before me the index cards bought with the fruits of a week's arduous toil (babysitting) and began to copy the books. In research, one can never be

sure which facts will turn out to be the important ones, and so, to make sure I missed nothing, I copied the books verbatim. After I had gone through several volumes (and several weeks) in this fashion, I became lazy, and occasionally abbreviated or even paraphrased what I read. After transferring the contents of twenty books to my index cards I stopped. Of course I could have done more baby-sitting, bought more index cards, and copied more books, but it turned out that after all there were only a limited number of Englishmen (and women) who had travelled in America between 1830 and 1840 and written books about their trip. The discovery that there was an end to travelling Englishmen (and women) upset me terribly until I realized that for my next Research Paper I would not have to abandon this fascinating field completely. For my second paper I might compile the opinions of all the Englishmen (and women) who, between the years 1830 and 1840, had not visited the United States. No one, I felt sure, had yet attempted this, and my teacher, when I enthusiastically told him of my plan, encouraged me by saying that I should probably be able to publish such a truly original study.

Reluctantly tearing myself from these dreams of future glory, I moved from primary sources to secondary material, and found to my joy that English travellers in America between 1830 and 1840 was a relatively untapped area — it had not inspired quite so many scholars as, for example, Shakespeare or Milton. I was glad, let me hasten to add, lest the English department attribute this to laziness on my part, only because I did not wish to have my work done for me, but sought to make an original contribution to American thought. The nature of the English, the nature of the American, the nature of man — all these my subject implied. Unfortunately as I discovered when I began to write the paper, English travellers were primarily interested in the nature of the spittoon.

If it seems strange that I should not have discovered what English travellers wrote about until I began my first draft, the reason was that I was so wrapped up in copying their opinions I didn't have time to read them. As any of those who take exact notes of lectures can testify, the hand has no relation to the mind, and the more one writes, the less one hears. I was not upset, however, because all the material was on my index cards for the containment of which I took the box in which my mother had stored her fur coat. I had still two weeks before my paper was due, and remembering that Hook and Gayer thought sufficient time should be allowed for the writing of the paper, I com-

bined my index cards in devious and imaginative ways, and wrote copious drafts.

My first draft was twenty-five pages. On my typewriter this was the equivalent of roughly ten thousand words, but at least my problem was simplified. All that was now required was to cut my paper down to one twenty-fifth of its original size. I am proud to say that I did this without losing a single opinion of any Englishman (or woman) on any subject on which he gave an opinion which was contained in the first draft. Of course my sentences became slightly more complicated, since I was now forced to compress approximately twenty-five opinions into the space which had previously held only one, but no one reading my paper to this day can deny that all the opinions are there. Any hardy member of the English department who doubts my word can check against my index cards which yet displace my unfortunate mother's fur coat.

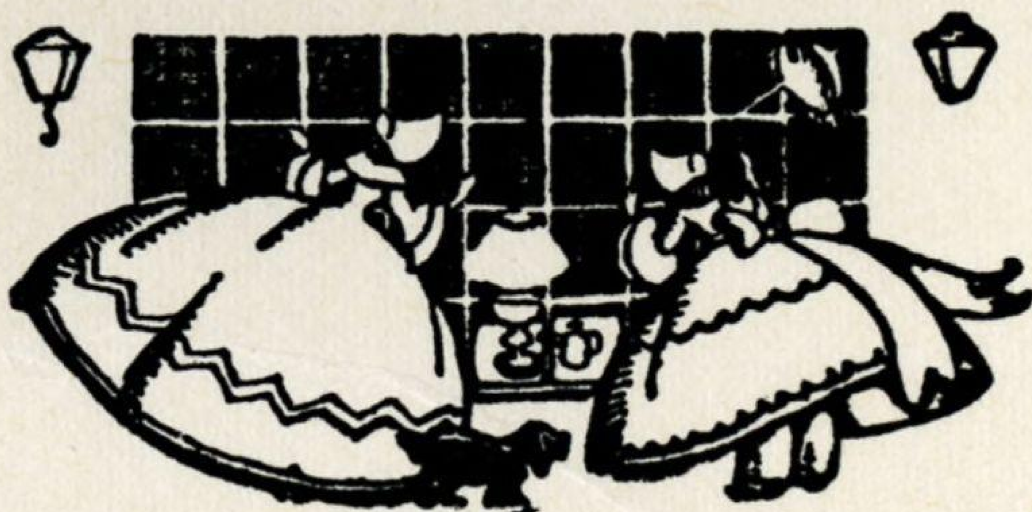
The compression did not take place from the first to the second draft. It was a slow process wrought with infinite pains. With each draft I managed to cut an additional page, and by the time I had reached my twentieth draft, my paper was sufficiently compact. That is, I discovered upon a careful count that it was more than a thousand words (my teacher had impressed upon me the necessity of not exceeding or falling short of a thousand words by a margin of more than five syllables) but I decided that further compression would actually force me to lose an opinion. My dilemma was severe until it flashed upon me that if my paper was five pages long my teacher would naturally assume that it contained a thousand words. If I narrowed the margin on all four sides of the paper, I might squeeze in the extra words. After typing the paper as often as I had revised it, I managed to reduce it to five pages. I could not honestly maintain that there were any margins at all, but by this time the paper was due, and even if I had been willing to abandon an opinion on, for example, how far the average American senator could spit keeping any sort of relation between his tobacco juice and the spitoon, I had woven the opinions together so intricately that I did not know how I could possibly separate any single one without destroying the entire fabric of my paper. Accordingly, on the appointed day, I handed in a paper containing in five pages all the opinions of all the Englishmen (and women) who had travelled in America between 1830 and 1840 on all subjects on which they expressed opinions. My most important achievement has yet to be mentioned. I did this without intruding a single opinion of my own on any of the material I had read.

I handed in my paper and waited for the teacher to admit that he had nothing further to teach me; that I had written the research paper to end all research papers. The day he came to class carrying the papers I knew my hour of triumph had arrived. I knew this until he handed back the papers. And then. . . And then . . . but the memory is yet too painful. He gave me . . . he marked me . . . but tears still rise to choke utterance. My teacher accomplished what the most he broke my heart. To this day the shivers splinter me as I write of it, he broke my heart. To this day the slivers splinter me as I write of it, and I must close. I do not, however, want to leave you with the impression that the research paper tought me nothing. It took me to the breadth and depth and height of human suffering. Whatever its effect upon my style, it broadened my soul. I therefore suggest that from now on Freshman English be called Man and His World; the atomic threat will seem as nothing to one who has lived through the course.

My exemplum is at an end. I charge all my readers not to waste their sympathetic emotion in tears, but to channel their righteous anger into the organized wrath of a crusade. Barnard may have disadvantages as the site for a crusade, the Research paper may lack the glamour of the Saracen but the new crusade will preserve the most important characteristic of the old. It too will be unsuccessful. The cause is doomed, but for that very reason, glory lies ahead. Sing out the war cry "Down with Tradition." Up with the standard! God for Freshmen, Freedom and Originality.

—*R. J. I.*

THE WEE SHOP



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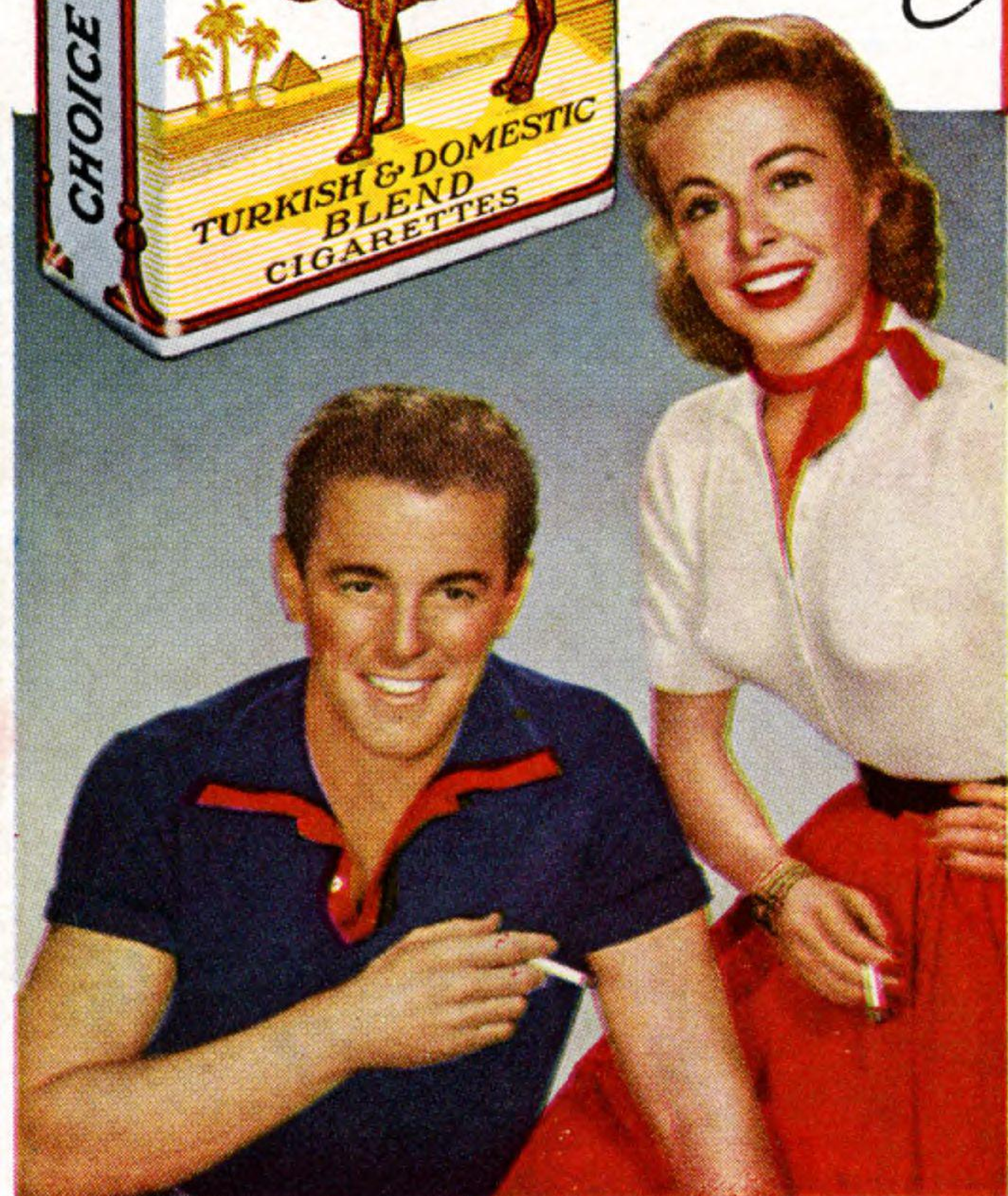

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