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EDITORIAL

Edgar Shawen (English, University of Tennessee--Chattanooga) writes, "I have noted in Dionysos a movement away from literary study and toward more clinical approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of alcoholism. My interests are literary and not necessarily limited to studies of alcoholism in classic form." Mr. Shawen has a valid point. In these ideologically litigious times, awash in tendentious "theory" (with its gnostic temptations), there is a seemingly ever-present risk of blurring our vocation: the illumination of literary texts and ideas. In a fine essay on linguistic theory and literary studies, George Watson asked, "Chomsky: What has it to do with literature?" (Times Literary Supplement. 14 Feb 1975), and then proceeded to demonstrate that "it" indeed is relevant to literary analysis--but only if "it" is made relevant by the critic. For example, a flurry of journalistic attacks on the "therapeutic society" have recently appeared. "Baby-boomers and club kids are turning twelve step programs into a 90s scene," charges Melinda Blau ("Recovery Fever," New York. 9 Sept 1991: 30); "Under the influence of alcohol-treatment evangelists, courts, employers, and parents are forcing people into 12-step programs for the slightest of reasons," declare Archie Brodsky and Stanton Peele ("AA Abuse," Reason. Nov 1991: 34). These sentiments are epitomized in the titles of two articles by, respectively, David Rieff and Joseph Epstein: "Victims, All? Recovery, Codependency, and the Art of Blaming Somebody Else" (Harper's, Oct 1991); and "The Joys of Victimhood" (The New York Times Magazine. 2 July 1989). Well, what does all this have to do with literature? Perhaps not much; except to provide me the occasion to observe that the late poet Judson Jerome said it far better as well as far more succinctly and movingly in his poem "Alcoholic" (printed below): "Years after he was gone I think I saw / how we insulted him, drove him along: / His spirit we called nerves, said nerves were raw, / denied his holy sanction to be wrong. / The sonofabitch (God bless him) drank and died / because we understood away his pride." That is the therapeutic society in a nutshell: "we understood away his pride."

Edgar Shawen adds, in his valuable comment: "I find that intoxication, in literature, may have broad symbolic implication, and I hope that Dionysos might be in future receptive to my efforts." Indeed; receptive we are and will be--and, I hope, more precisely focused. In the past, our contributors and editors have judged that, owing to the novelty of our critical approach, a body of clinical and theoretical detail was necessary for the context of our critical analyses. It appears that now much of that background knowledge on the part of the readers of Dionysos may be assumed.

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"ESPECIALLY PICTURES OF FAMILIES": ALCOHOLISM, CODEPENDENCY, AND CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Catherine MacGregor

It is well known that Crime and Punishment[1] is an extraordinary fusion of what Dostoevsky originally conceived of as two different novels: the Raskolnikov murder/repentance story and a rather Dickensian exposé of Russian alcoholism in the portrait of the Marmeladov family. No serious attention, however, has yet been paid to the textual implications of Dostoevsky's own experience of codependency; that is, to the impact on Crime and Punishment of Dostoevsky's reactions to his father's alcoholism.[2] Understanding the issues which have emerged during the last decade in the Adult Children of Alcoholics movement provides a fresh approach to addiction-related texts in general and helps to illuminate a remarkable consistency in this complex and crowded novel in particular. That "rescuing" others from the consequences of their own behavior is pathetic and futile at best and contemptible and dangerous at worst is not only a recent insight of clinicians and self-help groups; it is also a recurring theme which unifies both segments of Crime and Punishment. More than a century before the interpersonal dynamics of addiction and the concomitant failure of "rescuing" were described by addiction professionals, Dostoevsky explored those issues in his fiction with an insight--perhaps not entirely conscious--derived from his experience of his father's alcoholism.

For our purposes, there are five relevant areas of discussion. The first is an abbreviated overview of what are now understood to be the predictable consequences of parental alcoholism on the family unit. The second and third are biographical, and provide a useful point of departure for a consideration of the text: Dostoevsky's dreadful relationship with his alcoholic father; and the evidence of his own "Family Hero" role in later life, particularly significant in the circumstances surrounding the publication of Crime and Punishment. The fourth and fifth concern the text: Dostoevsky's original intention for the novel, a narrative with a sociological interest in Russian alcoholism, and most important, of course, the final version of the book, with its subtle but powerful struggle with codependency. Sensitivity to addiction issues will help to clarify two puzzles in the text. First is the problem of the relationship between suffering and redemption. The idea that embracing suffering is the key to one's personal renewal and freedom is so important to Crime and Punishment. Dostoevsky's other novels, letters, and in the commentaries of his myriad biographers and critics, that yet another treatment of this theme might seem as superfluous as a refutation would be impossible. What I suggest, however, is that the suffering/redemption theme in Crime and Punishment needs a more nuanced treatment than is

usually given in conventional readings, which maintain their consistency only at the price of misconstruing or ignoring outright the many instances in the text of suffering which are clearly non-redemptive. If we speculate that one of Dostoevsky's purposes (among others) in creating the world of this novel was to dramatize the moral and pragmatic implications of two different ways codependents can respond to misery, then some of the apparent contradictions can be resolved instead of evaded. The second textual puzzle, regarding Raskolnikov's renewal, is related to this: closure is deferred beyond the final chapter into an epilogue, and then again beyond the epilogue to another, unwritten story. The urge to escape narrative closure, I believe, is related to Dostoevsky's intuitive sense that recovering codependents must move beyond the psychological closure of the addiction-related roles generated by their experience of alcoholism.

I Current Thinking about Codependency

In North America, counselling professionals and self-help recovery groups in the last decade have turned their attention increasingly to "System Enabling"; that is, to the dynamics which perpetuate rather than initiate addiction.[3] This shift in focus is partly due to the serious controversies among researchers about the origins of alcoholism.[4] There are two reasons for interest in codependency roles; that is, in the predictable behaviors and attitudes assumed inadvertently by the alcoholic's family members and sometimes by friends and colleagues (who may or may not have their own drinking problems). An early and still valid reason for making alcoholics and codependents aware of these roles was to enhance the alcoholic's recovery, but a more recent and equally compelling justification is to promote the recovery of the codependents themselves, whose emotional problems are now understood to be just as serious, predictable, and treatable as the alcoholic's disorder. "Denial" is an important characteristic of both substance addiction and of codependency. After years of maladaptive reactions to the drinker, by the time the family of an alcoholic seeks professional counselling or support from a self-help group, the addict's troubles and their own problems have become very serious. Since codependents almost always seek help because they see counselling as an escalation in their attempt to control the alcoholic's problem drinking, three basic assumptions about addiction which emerge very quickly in an initial discussion will often disturb them and challenge their self-image.

First, they are told that they cannot control the alcoholic's drinking; they can change only their own behavior and hope that the alcoholic may respond. Second, they are invited to re-evaluate their own behavior, particularly the likelihood that in a well-meaning attempt to protect the alcoholic and the family from the natural consequences of the drinking, they have tended

to "rescue" or inappropriately assume responsibility for the alcoholic, enabling the drinker to persist in the illusion that the problem drinking is acceptable. A distinction is made between "helping," actions which often involve loving but firm confrontations with the drinker, and "rescuing," which is ultimately and ironically self-defeating. Third, the family is made aware of the typical roles family members slowly and unconsciously assume in their attempts to distract the hostile or pitying gaze of outsiders and to maintain, at all costs, the equilibrium of the family unit. These roles not only enable the alcoholic to progress in the spiral of his or her self-destructive drinking but also become rigid, constricting personae for the spouse and the offspring who become "Adult Children of Alcoholics" or ACOAs. These inauthentic, rigid roles are eventually carried over into other relationships and situations outside the family where they generate other personal disasters. In smaller families, roles can overlap, and in all families, they can be exchanged from time to time. Without help, however, they can rarely be outgrown.

Typically, the spouse assumes the role of Prime (or Chief) Enabler, who buys time for the alcoholic by trying to convince employers, friends, and worst of all, their children, that nothing is wrong. This ploy "teaches" the children that honest discussion of issues is forbidden and that they should distrust the evidence of their own senses. The Family Hero role is usually assumed by the eldest and most successful child, not often recognized by outsiders as having any problems; Family Heroes become addicted to successes or to quixotic failures and wear themselves out taking on responsibilities which belong to others. Family Heroes often marry alcoholics and become Chief Enablers. The second child takes on the role of Scapegoat, the rebel in conflict with authorities, often a substance abuser in his or her own right. The third child plays the role of Mascot, the witty clown who defuses tension with his or her antics. The last child's role is that of the Lost Child, dreamy, withdrawn, often artistic, prone to eating disorders, overlooked by everyone. The astonishing speed with which codependents can usually identify their own roles in a preliminary counselling session is an indicator of the degree of closure the experience of alcoholism has imposed on their lives. The challenge then for the recovering codependent individual is to detach himself or herself from the inappropriate centrality of the alcoholic and the addiction, reclaiming his or her own life as central, and to replace the inauthentic self-image to which he or she has become addicted with a self capable of growth.

II Dostoevsky's Relationship with His Father

Why is codependency relevant to <u>Crime and Punishment</u>? During my first reading, which was of the Gibian edition and happened to coincide with my first exposure to alcoholism

studies, I was struck by the clarity with which the dynamics of an alcoholic family are rendered in the predicament of the Marmeladov family. In particular, Dostoevsky's portrait of Marmeladov's daughter Sonia, the innocent prostitute who sells herself to care for her destitute step-mother and step-siblings, provides us with an Adult Child Family Hero par excellence. As this family is so obviously alcoholic, however, I was not surprised by this: what disturbed me was the nagging impression that several other characters who had no apparent connection with problem drinking, particularly Raskolnikov himself, acted as if they also were ACOAs. I dismissed this notion, initially deciding that my interest in addictions was interfering with my reading of the text. Picking up the Garnett translation, however, I was startled into a reconsideration of my original reaction. The second sentence of its lurid introduction sent me back to Dostoevsky's biographies, which confirmed the history of alcohol problems in his life, and kindled a lingering pre-occupation with codependency issues in fiction: "[H]e was born in Moscow in 1821, the son of a former army surgeon whose drunken brutality led his own serfs to murder him by pouring vodka down his throat until he strangled." Although this melodramatic tidbit turned out to be problematic, for reasons I will discuss shortly, it was a useful beginning.

Roger Forseth has argued that biographers of alcoholic writers become at least temporarily codependent themselves, ignoring, excusing, or misunderstanding the implications of so much in the alcoholic's life which can only be understood in terms of addiction,[5] and I suggest that a similar case must be made for biographers of writers who were adult children of alcoholics. The failure to recognize the centrality of codependency in an adult child's life will obscure patterns easily recognized by an addiction-sensitive reader.

The standard biographies of Dostoevsky[6] (for example, Troyat, Mochulsky, Grossman, Magarshack, and Kjetsaa) indicate that he had an alcoholic father and that alcoholism was a family problem: Fyodor's uncle and two brothers died of their "dipsomania."[7] No biographer, however, has sought to link this experience with textual issues beyond the observation that there are a lot of compulsive drunkards in his fiction. I therefore offer this view of the novel: although we cannot determine the extent to which Dostoevsky was able to come to terms with his own experience of addiction-related problems in his personal life (the biographies all discuss his own gambling compulsion but are too sketchy to permit much beyond speculation), the design of Crime and Punishment makes clear that at some level he recognized the futility of the "Hero" role and its constitutive element of "rescuing," repudiating both.

What do we know about Dr. Dostoevsky from the standard biographies? Fyodor refused even to discuss his father for most

of his life; he emerges from most accounts as an ill-tempered, demanding, miserly drunk given to utterly unjustified accusations about his wife's fidelity, physical brutality to his serfs, irrational, impossible expectations of those around him, and after his wife's death, sexual indiscretions with servant girls in their early teens, one of whom bore him a child.[8] He also carried on loud conversations with what he believed to be his wife's ghost, answering his own questions in a voice mimicking hers.[9] All the biographers agree that Dr. Dostoevsky was drinking very heavily in the last few years of his life. There are conflicting accounts of his death, but the most widespread belief is the one mentioned earlier, that he was murdered by his own serfs. The conspirators' motive, according to some, was revenge for the sexual abuse of their daughters.[10] The family, revolted by his behavior in life and embarrassed by the circumstances of his death, bribed officials to cover up the murder and record it as a death by "natural causes."[11] Another suggested murder motive was revenge for his "drunken rages and habit of ordering floggings in his fiefdom."[12] Biographers who are skeptical of this melodramatic account (for instance, Frank and Kjetsaa) argue plausibly that impoverished peasants could not have managed to bribe so many doctors and investigators. The skeptics suggest that Dr. Dostoevsky's death was of "natural causes," occurring during an "apoplectic fit" (a stroke or heart attack) brought on by the heat, his drunkenness, and by his anger that his peasants were spreading manure on the fields incorrectly. Magarshack suggests that the apoplexy may have been delirium tremens.[13] The murder story was concocted, it is argued, by a rival landowner who had his own reasons for wishing to cause scandal.

As interesting as this dispute is, it is a red herring, as far as I am concerned, since what the biographers are ignoring is that one way or another, it was Dr. Dostoevsky's drinking which precipitated his death. The reason this oversight is so important is that children of alcoholics always blame themselves for their parents' drinking problems; that is simply the way they think. If drink caused Dr. Dostoevsky's death, then his children would feel responsible for his death as well as for the misfortunes of his life. Fyodor, because he had sent his father a confrontational letter about his stinginess around the time of his death, did feel guilty for his father's demise for the rest of his life.[14] Some biographers suggest that he felt guilty about not loving his father and about feeling relieved at his death. These contradictory reactions are as understandable as they are irrational, and it is not necessary to subscribe to Freudian dogma to account for his ambivalence.[15] In addition to the unhappiness it caused during his lifetime, Dr. Dostoevsky's mismanagement of the estate created debts and hardships afterwards, one example being the necessity of a rather unpleasant marriage between Fyodor's sister Varvara and a much older businessman. Anyone feeling responsible for Dr.

Dostoevsky's drinking problem and its consequences would thus have a huge burden on his conscience.

What I want to concentrate on is the struggle in Crime and Punishment to repudiate distorted notions of responsibility for other people's problems, but in passing, I should mention briefly how Dr. Dostoevsky is represented in the text. Dostoevsky may have dealt with his ambivalence about his alcoholic father by differentiating aspects of that complex relationship across four different characters whom he inspired: Dr. Zossimov, Marmeladov, Alyona, and Svidrigailov. Dr. Zossimov, the impecunious physician who is that rare thing in this novel, an abstainer, may be on one level, a "wishful-thinking" version of Dr. Dostoevsky. So, perhaps, is Marmeladov. Raskolnikov ministers to the dying drunk "as earnestly as if it had been his father" (154).[16] In this scene, one could argue, Dostoevsky gets to have his cake and eat it too: the drunken father who has been a source of misery to his family is killed off, but with a filial figure standing by to exude compassion. If one chooses to see the hapless Marmeladov as a fictional version of Dr. Dostoevsky, though, one must deal with the obvious difference between the bumbling and rather affectionate Marmeladov and the harsh, miserly father. It may be that Svidrigailov and Alyona are projections of those elements of his character, Svidrigailov's sexual deviance and Alyona's life-denying miserliness being ways in which Dostoevsky could exorcise memories he was unwilling to discuss. This possibility is particularly interesting in the case of Alyona, whom Raskolnikov hates with an extraordinary force. As if he has been Alyona's victim, rather than she his, he makes an odd remark: "I shall never, never forgive the old woman!" (239). In any case, if at least on one level Dostoevsky is Raskolnikov, he gets to explore his contradictory feelings several ways: first, through Alyona, he murders his miserly father figure and moves slowly towards repentance; second, through Marmeladov, he compassionately attends the dying father; third, through Svidrigailov's suicide, he learns that the sexually deviant father in a sense administers his own punishment. Interestingly, Marmeladov's death is a possible suicide as well; coroners in some parts of the world identify deaths attributed to alcoholism as suicides.

III Portrait of the Writer as a Family Hero

His unnecessary appropriation of guilt for his father's death is not the only way the younger Dostoevsky exemplifies the Family Hero. All the biographies offer a wealth of anecdotes about Fyodor's life-long involvement with alcoholics other than his father and with other troubled people, many of whose problems stemmed from their own relationships with alcoholics, which Fyodor took on as his own. I can cite only a few here. His first marriage, a very unhappy one, was to the consumptive widow of an alcoholic who had attracted his pity and ardor long before the death of her husband. Dostoevsky committed himself to taking

care of her, her difficult son, and a rival lover, for whom he secured a teaching position. In fact, getting the rival a job seems to have been a condition for the marriage. Among the relationships he had with women between his two marriages, one was with Martha Brown who lived with and cared for an alcoholic lover.[17] Despite life-long financial problems of his own, he was burdened by the debts of his two alcoholic brothers, Mikhail and Nikolai.[18] One motive for the writing of Crime and Punishment was financial necessity: in addition to his own debts, which were pressing, he had voluntarily assumed responsibility for the debts of his brother, Mikhail, who had died of cirrhosis of the liver shortly after being released from debtors' prison[19] and for the maintenance of the widow and four children. Keeping Mikhail's journal Epoch functioning was made even more difficult by the death of Apollon Grigoriev, "the journal's foremost contributing editor,"[20] another alcoholic. To stay out of debtor's prison himself, Dostoevsky made desperate overtures to publishers for cash advances, finally committing himself in the summer of 1865 to an unscrupulous publisher to whom he promised an entire new novel by November 1, 1866. The agreement was that all his existing and future works would become the property of the bookseller if the deadline were not met. This was a gamble, and his ambivalent reaction to the crisis, recorded in a letter to his friend Baron Wrangel, is utterly typical of a tired Family Hero, artificially invigorated by the challenge:

> And now I've been suddenly left alone and things have become simply terrible for me. My whole life is broken in two. . . . Oh my friend, I'd readily go back to penal servitude for as many years, just to pay off my debts and feel free again. Now I'll start writing a novel with a stick over my head, i.e. from need, in haste. And meanwhile, it always appears to me that I'm really just beginning to live. Funny, isn't it? A cat's vitality.[21]

This addiction to crises was related in Fyodor's case to his problem with gambling, itself a compulsive behavior. He fled from his creditors to Wiesbaden, gambled all his money away in five days, and then worked feverishly, in his own words, to beat the almost impossible deadline. In fact, he churned out not only Crime and Punishment. but The Gambler as well. As the deadline loomed, friends suggested that he hire a stenographer and dictate the text of The Gambler: when the stenographer, Anna Snitkina (who was to become Dostoevsky's second wife) left after their first session, Dostoevsky said, "I am glad that you are a woman and not a man." Anna asked "Why?" and he responded, "Because a man would be quite sure to get drunk, but you, I hope, won't."[22] Clearly, Dostoevsky's overwhelming sense of responsibility for his family's misfortunes was one of the motivations for his journalism and his fiction.

IV The Original Intention: The Drunks

Not only was the context in which Crime and Punishment written suggestive of Dostoevsky's experience of addictions, the original intention for the novel was explicitly concerned with the miseries of alcoholism. In his letter to the publisher Krayevsky, he made his purpose clear: "My novel is called The Drunks and will deal with the current problem of drunkenness. Not only is the question analyzed, but I am also exposing all its ramifications, especially pictures of families, the upbringing of children in this atmosphere and so forth. . . .[23] This is obviously the Marmeladov story. Dostoevsky's interest in the ramifications for families is especially intriguing and remains clear even in the final version of the novel with its murder and repentance plot.

V Crime and Punishment

My principal concern is with the inner dynamics of the text of Crime and Punishment. I have drawn attention, nevertheless, to extra-literary considerations--to Dostoevsky's personal experience of addiction and to current thinking in addiction counselling--because they account for a striking feature of the text which has not been paid much critical attention by those who think that he was promoting suffering of an undifferentiated kind. The saintly prostitute Sonia and the murderer Raskolnikov learn, as most of the others do not, to be reconciled to authentic, undistorted notions of personal responsibility which open the possibilities of genuine, intersubjective bonds. They grow beyond the manipulative, power-oriented relationships which characterize those around them.

The necessity of briefly summarizing this great baggy monster of a novel almost equals the impossibility of doing so. Raskolnikov, an impoverished student whose widowed mother and sister have made many sacrifices for his education, murders a loathsome old woman, a pawnbroker who has victimized him and many others. His motives are tangled. Another suspect is apprehended and then released although he has confessed to the crime; Raskolnikov fears that the wise detective Porfiry, so interested in psychology, knows that he is the killer. Having met the drunkard Marmeladov shortly before both the murder and Marmeladov's own death under a horse-drawn coach, which he witnesses, Raskolnikov becomes emotionally involved with the wretched family whom he aids: the half-mad consumptive widow, Katerina, who also dies shortly after her husband's scandalous funeral; her starving children; and especially Marmeladov's daughter, Sonia--the timid and religious prostitute who is their only means of support and to whom Raskolnikov eventually confesses the great secret which has been torturing him. She encourages him to confess publicly and to repent to God; he

similarly challenges her to realize that she cannot go on as a prostitute. Raskolnikov's mother, Pulcheria, and sister, Dounia, who is engaged briefly to Luzhin, a domineering and unscrupulous businessman, arrive in St. Petersburg, as does Dounia's former employer, Svidrigailov, a sexual deviant who may be responsible for the deaths of his wife, Marfa Petrovna, a deaf-mute adolescent girl whom he has sexually abused, and a male servant. Svidrigailov, having eavesdropped and learned that Raskolnikov is the killer, promises Dounia to get him out of the country in exchange for sexual favors from her. She refuses. After having made arrangements to care for Sonia and Katerina's children, Svidrigailov commits suicide. Sonia, Dounia, and Raskolnikov's friend Razumihin, whom Dounia will marry, stand by Raskolnikov at his trial; Sonia follows him to Siberia, where he is sentenced, and where he eventually moves beyond his formal confession of his transgression toward authentic repentance.

This skeletal outline fails to disclose the text's fascination with alcoholism and codependency but the explicit references to problem drinking in the novel itself are overwhelming. The Marmeladov family's predicament is treated with compassion, but no sentiment: the narrator gazes unflinchingly at every detail of their suffering. Their cycle of misery is so obvious that any detailed analysis here would be superfluous: the exposure of the degradation, material poverty, fear, anger, pathos, and tissue of illusions on the part of the three adult Marmeladovs has few literary parallels. Katerina's delusions about the grandeur of her past and future, and Sonia's naive faith that her prostitution is helpful, are extreme and pathetic examples of system enabling. But the Marmeladovs are not alone: their sort of misery is everywhere in St. Petersburg. Raskolnikov passes "drunken men whom he met continually, though it was a working day" (2). It is a drunk who notices his potentially incriminating hat (3). He himself walks like a drunk when he first meets the pawnbroker Alyona, sees the drunks "abusing and supporting one another," feels free of his own burden when he drinks, yet has a foreboding that this feeling is not normal (7). He intuitively senses a bond with Marmeladov, who, like him, experiences alienation and agitation (8); he feels a "thirst" for company (9). Marmeladov's tavern monologue is an extraordinary catalogue of compulsive responses: he drinks, he says, to impose punishment on himself (13). For what? For drinking? Perhaps this irreducible statement is Dostoevsky's metaphor for the radical impenetrability of the mystery of human evil. Marmeladov tells us that he has married the widow of a gambler to save her from destitution (a mirror image of the gambler Dostoevsky's marriage to the widow of the drunkard); however, Marmeladov spends the money his daughter earns from prostitution on drink. He has an incongruous, masochistic, skewed sense of personal responsibility: he has an apocalyptic vision of mercy and understanding plus an enjoyment of being beaten by Katerina in the here and now. (Interestingly, she

calls him a criminal and a monster, labels which Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov consider for themselves as well.) Pulcheria's letter tells us that Svidrigailov gave Dounia a hard time when he was drunk (28). The passersby think that Raskolnikov is drunk (36); the abused girl (a child prostitute?) whom he tries to help is drunk (42). The interlude in the tavern precipitates the horrific dream in which the drunken peasants emerge from their tavern to kill the little mare (49-50). After the murder, he can even tell the time (2:00 a.m.) by the despairing cries of the drunks coming home from the closing taverns (79). He is whipped on the way home from Razumihin's and is thought to be faking drunkenness (102). Dushkin tells the police that he gave Nikolay, the painter and murder suspect, the money for the loot because it would only be spent on drink (120). Raskolnikov's musing on the idea of spending life on a ledge is provoked by his observation of the abused women begging for money outside the tavern (138-39). When he enters the tavern, the waiters almost force vodka on him. He reads a newspaper article about the spontaneous combustion of a shop-keeper from alcohol (140)! He witnesses a drunken woman trying to commit suicide by drowning (149). The coachman who runs over Marmeladov cannot tell whether he was drunk or whether he deliberately strayed into the path of the vehicle (154)--as if the distinction matters. Razumihin is drunk at his own party (169) and stresses twice that Dr. Zossimov is not, as if his sobriety is an unusual accomplishment (176). Razumihin is very ashamed of his drunkenness before Dounia, and significantly (though erroneously) thinks that he cannot be forgiven (183). At Marmeladov's tragicomic funeral, just about everyone is drunk: naturally, in the confrontation with the villainous Luzhin, Lebeziatnikov suggests that he may be drunk (342). Porfiry says that he does not smoke because he drinks (386), and says that a witness's credibility could have been undermined by the fact that he was a notorious drunkard (394). Svidrigailov, though drinking very little, says he is drunk (404) and is thought to be so by his fiancée's parents (430). He dreams of comforting a five year old abused by her drunken mother (438) and must step over a drunk on his way to commit suicide (440). And Raskolnikov, on his way to confess--finally--has to pass a drunk dancing (452). When he kisses the ground, as Sonia had told him to do, the crowd, naturally, thinks he is drunk (453). Obviously, Dostoevsky's horrified fascination with intoxication is far broader than the particular miseries of the Marmeladovs. It is hard to imagine another novel in which alcohol abuse is more prominent.

The magnitude of the social problem is staggering. What is at stake, however, is not just a question of the sociological novel suggested to Krayevsky. The fusion of the experience of addictions with the Raskolnikov murder plot creates a metaphysical level. This is no patchwork job: the fundamental unity of the novel derives from the informing principle of the language of addictions which provides a symbol for human evil,

and of recovery from addiction as spiritual reconciliation of God and humanity. That this is so is evident from the astonishing fact that although none of the principal characters--with the exception of poor Sonia--comes from an alcoholic household, to some degree, all of them behave as if they did. And not only do they respond to situations the way that adult children of alcoholics do; they respond as "Family Heroes" specifically would. They waste much energy attempting to "rescue" one another from situations which are not their responsibility and in doing so, they raise the level of tension in their relationships. That Dostoevsky was repudiating "rescuing" is exposed by the fact that all the rescue attempts fail, whereas the only characters to grow beyond their roles--Raskolnikov and Sonia--help each other to see and deal with reality, which is always open to growth and genuine recovery. Raskolnikov and Sonia are defined over and against the other characters--some of them likable and some not--all of whom overestimate the extent of their own power.

Let us see how Dostoevsky undermines the concept of rescuing through dramatizing its futility; he does so sometimes with poignancy and sometimes through caricature.

First, there are some extraordinary dreams or fantasies of rescue. It is striking that none of these succeeds, even as fantasy. Raskolnikov's heartbreaking and horrifying dream of the death of the mare is a case in point. In it, a small mare, given the impossible task of pulling a wagonload of drunken peasants, is beaten to death for her failure by the driver, who is cheered on by the tavern crowd. In the dream, Raskolnikov is a helpless child, impotent to protect the mare. But he is also the mare and the killer.[24] Without repeating the critical arguments for this position, I will point out that it is consistent with the emotional experience of a child of an addicted household: he tries to stop the suffering, his own and his parents'; he fails, and at some level he concludes that the perpetuation of the suffering is his fault because he did not try hard enough.

In the fantasies and behavior of the contemptible Luzhin, we see a caricature of a rescuer: Dostoevsky exposes an unpleasant truth here about rescuing, that its primary purpose is not genuinely altruistic but is self-serving instead. Luzhin indulges himself in absurd reveries about Dounia's total dependence on him. He wanted Dounia to perceive him as her benefactor, rescuing her from her poverty; in turn, he imagines that Dounia would be "one who would all her life look on him as her saviour, worship him, admire him, and only him" (266). The incongruously religious language here is a clue to how inappropriate his desire is. That we are meant to repudiate his role of rescuer is emphasized by the fact that in his unsuccessful scheme to win back Dounia's affection, he poses as Sonia's benefactor in order to humiliate her. After Marmeladov's death, Luzhin offers Sonia a small sum, ten roubles for her

impoverished family, and furtively places a hundred roubles in her pocket without her knowledge. At the funeral dinner, he accuses her of theft (Part V, Ch. 1 and 2). The point is that his ludicrous fantasies undermine any inclination a reader might have to romanticize heroic fantasies of rescue.

Svidrigailov's rescue fantasies are more complex, as he is a far more complex character, but the theme is nonetheless similar. He dreams of rescuing a pathetic waif (the abused child of a drunken cook), but the child metamorphoses into a harlot figure, thus tempting him with his own desires, which is all a rescue can do since it is not genuinely concerned with the welfare of the other. The problem here is very complicated and beyond the scope of this discussion; one might argue that there is something unselfish in Svidrigailov's choice of death rather than submission to his deviant fantasies. Even so, the point is that associating a failed rescue fantasy with the character of Svidrigailov certainly undermines it as an appropriate response to suffering. Similarly, in Raskolnikov's painful struggle to understand his own motives for the murder, he recognizes (and then repudiates) his self-deceptive philanthropic urge (360).[25] He acknowledges that he did not really kill Alyona to save others from suffering but to be a Napoleon, to dare.

In addition to these fantasies, there are many actual rescue attempts, all of which also fail. Here is a brief sketch of some of these attempts.

Marmeladov's attempt to rescue the unhappy Katerina from her misery by marrying her was obviously an absolute failure. The unemployed drunkard cannot provide even the most basic necessities for her and her children. Dounia's willingness to marry Luzhin for the sake of her mother and brother is inappropriate, as she learns. Although ostensibly more respectable, it invites comparison with Sonia's prostitution. And although it is certainly not as revolting as Luzhin's scheme to pose as her and Sonia's benefactor, Dounia has a similarly exaggerated notion of her responsibility for her mother and brother; she actually asks Raskolnikov what right he has to refuse her sacrifice (172).

Svidrigailov's wife, the late Marfa Petrovna--a rescuer par excellence--not only paid Svidrigailov's card debts, thus freeing him from debtors' prison (407), but also bribed officials so that he would escape a murder charge (258). These rescues neither won her Svidrigailov's love, nor did they make him feel loved. Her well-meaning attempts to protect him from the consequence of his actions are obviously futile. His suicide is the closest he can come to assuming moral responsibility for himself, and it is a hollow parody of Raskolnikov's struggle.

Another failed rescue is Pulcheria's attempt to protect

Raskolnikov from the painful knowledge of Dounia's troubles. As governess in Svidrigailov's household, Dounia had been slandered, dismissed, and disgraced. Pulcheria's presumption enrages Raskolnikov; moreover, the intolerable manipulation one reads between the lines of her letters is symptomatic of an unhealthy relationship in which one partner wishes to have control.

Raskolnikov's attraction to his first fiancée and his feeling that he would have preferred her had she been a lame hunchback (201) are disturbingly reminiscent of Luzhin's sick imagination.

The absurd willingness of the painter Nikolay (arrested for the murder committed by Raskolnikov) to bear the guilt for the crime should not be seen as a Christ-like sacrifice; his confession is an inauthentic martyrdom rooted in false, neurotic piety. Interestingly, the name of Nikolay's religious sect in Russian is Raskolniki. Raskolnikov's inner fragmentation is indicated by his surname, derived from the same word, meaning schism. Nikolay is a pathetic character, not an admirable one, and his action is not in Raskolnikov's interest.

Dounia, as Svidrigailov correctly sees (404), was a rescuer, though one who grew somewhat beyond her role. She had tried to save his servant girl Parasha from him (410), and Dounia had attempted to reform him. Counting on that element of her nature, Svidrigailov attempts to win her affections by offering to rescue Raskolnikov, getting him out of the country. He appeals to her exaggerated sense of responsibility by saying that both Raskolnikov's and Pulcheria's future depends on whether she chooses to be seduced by him (424-26). His history of seductions had followed this pattern; he was able to "protect" women from the reality of their own moral responsibilities by claiming that they were innocent of all lusts and that he was guilty for both parties (410), but this skill certainly brought him no lasting satisfaction. All in all, the association of Svidrigailov's unsavory seductions with rescuing once again undermines its validity as a mode of response to suffering.

Raskolnikov's and Lebeziatnikov's rescue of Sonia from Luzhin's malicious charges is also interesting. Lebeziatnikov had witnessed Luzhin's surreptitious placing of the hundred rouble note in Sonia's pocket and confronted him with the disgraceful truth in the presence of the funeral dinner guests before whom Sonia had been humiliated. While motivated by worthy intentions, this rescue too is futile, since the outraged landlady evicts them all anyway, despite Sonia's vindication.

Dounia has not really learned her lesson: after Raskolnikov's trial, she and Razumihin ineffectually try to protect Pulcheria from the knowledge of Raskolnikov's imprisonment (461); Pulcheria, in turn, conceals her intuitive

awareness of the truth from them (464). The strain undoubtedly contributes to her mental and physical decline, which is reminiscent of poor mad Katerina's hysterical delusions. Similarly, Dounia and Razumihin fail in their attempt to protect Raskolnikov from the knowledge of Pulcheria's death (464). This familial dishonesty, the urge to protect one another from reality, is clearly pointless.

All in all, the failure of both the rescue fantasies and of the actual rescue attempts dramatizes the inappropriateness of trying to save others from responsibility and reality. While I have argued that this pattern among the novel's characters who have no apparent connection with problem drinking is a subtle but strong displacement in the text of Dostoevsky's own anxieties about codependent rescuing, we should return, of course, to the explicitly codependent Sonia. Her pathetic attempt to save her family from destitution fits this pattern too. It is astonishing that critics uniformly praise her salvific influence on Raskolnikov without attending to the parallel influence he has on her. Her encouragement of his reconciliation to life is so much a matter of consensus that it needs no discussion here, except to stress that she makes him see the reality that he can be loved, despite his great sin. What I want to stress is the generally ignored passage in which he makes her see reality too, that she has also made a great mistake:

> "But you are a great sinner . . . and your worst sin is that you have destroyed and betrayed yourself for nothing. Isn't that fearful? Isn't it fearful that you are living in this filth which you loathe so, and at the same time you know yourself (you've only to open your eyes) that you are not helping anyone by it, not saving anyone from anything?" (279-80)

He makes her see that she too has destroyed a life, her own (286). Interestingly, the problem of Svidrigailov is pointedly relevant here. Raskolnikov has argued that Sonia's prostitution cannot save her family and that her little step-sister, Polya, will probably go the same route, a likelihood which Sonia has resisted up to this point. Without Svidrigailov's gift of money, which for once has no strings attached, Raskolnikov's prediction would have become the reality which Sonia had denied. If one adopts a particular theological perspective, it is possible to see Svidrigailov's gesture as a channel of grace: it is free, surprising, unconnected to the recipients' efforts, and is not manipulative. Moreover, Svidrigailov reinforces Raskolnikov's repudiation of Sonia's rescuing by warning her that she cannot get through life paying other people's debts (431). I am conscious of a contradiction here; it would seem that Sonia's liberation from self-destructive rescuing is dependent on

Svidrigailov's rescue of her, which coincides with (though is not causally related to) his suicide. If this paradox can be resolved, perhaps it will be only by underlining the tragic deficiency in Svidrigailov's imagination: he cannot envisage a life free of exploitive relationships and hence chooses death. If it cannot be resolved, it nevertheless points to Dostoevsky's obsession with rescuing.

Although Raskolnikov (prompted by Sonia) confesses to the police in the last line of the novel proper, his spiritual renewal or conversion is deferred until the Epilogue and deferred again beyond it. It is clearly an ongoing process, not merely a one-time leap into a stasis of belief. That Sonia and Raskolnikov can help one another is the psychological fulcrum of the novel. They challenge one another to turn from familiar and wretched paths, paths which are nonetheless enthralling for being so wretched, paths whose misery is addictive because it sustains strong but inappropriate images of their respective selves. Their gift is reciprocal, and both their "pale, sick faces were bright with the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection into a new life" (471). The language of healing is unmistakable. In their Siberian exile, they are recovering not just from their Siberian physical maladies but from the infected relationships of St. Petersburg. This apparently sudden recovery is not at all discontinuous with the rest of the novel, as is sometimes argued by critics who think that the Epilogue is flawed by a clumsy deus ex machina quality. This continuity is borne out by the Lazarus allusion in the Epilogue: Raskolnikov is surprised that Sonia had not pressed her Bible or her faith on him; she waited for him to ask. Similarly, he had asked her to read the Gospel to him on the night of his confession.

I want to comment very briefly on this controversial epilogue: sophisticated theories of narration have been used to attack and defend it, and while I do not wish to dispense with these responses, even though I cannot discuss them here, I cannot resist passing on a much simpler reaction. While preparing an earlier draft of this paper, I noticed that a very bright friend of mine, a recovering alcoholic untainted by any academic exposure to literary criticism or even much formal education, was reading Crime and Punishment just for fun. Curious, I asked her what she thought precipitated Raskolnikov's change of heart in the Epilogue. There was no hesitation: Sonia "got off his case," as she put it; Raskolnikov "bottomed out" when Sonia involuntarily withdrew because of her minor illness. Much more is involved, of course, I would argue. The Epilogue is all of a piece with the novel for various and complex reasons. Nevertheless, her answer is closer to the truth than the arguments of those who think that it is an aesthetic blunder.

The room Sonia leaves Raskolnikov for his own healing is consistent with the design of the plot and both are consistent

with what we know about codependence and recovery. Dr. Zossimov, much earlier had told Raskolnikov that "your recovery depends solely on yourself" (194). Raskolnikov, who has trouble accepting affection from anyone, is mystified at the attention he has been getting and says, frowning, "I simply don't know what I have done to deserve such special attention from you. I simply don't" (195).

The answer is, of course, "nothing." The free gift of regeneration in the Epilogue is perfectly consistent with the design of the whole, with its powerful identification of distorted notions of human responsibility with the illness and limitations associated with addiction experience. In this regeneration, we come to understand something of Dostoevsky's own spiritual illumination, his sense of grace. But that is the beginning of a new story.

I hope that I have not implied that any of the characters, no matter how ineffectual or contemptible, is beyond redemption. Even Svidrigailov, one could argue, has fed the hungry and clothed the naked. It is clear, however, that the novel promotes not the vain delusions of rescue, but the painfully acquired wisdom of Sonia and Raskolnikov who assist one another in honestly acknowledging the reality of their limitations. In doing so, they implicitly leave room for grace. Seen in this light, the Epilogue which brings them closer together and brings Raskolnikov closer to repentance is part of the trajectory of the whole novel. The well-known "Serenity Prayer" of Alcoholics Anonymous asks for three gifts: "the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." The fatalists of the world, like Marmeladov (and possibly Svidrigailov) settle too easily for pseudo-tragic and illusory acceptance of misery rather than the first gift, serenity or grace. The rescuers, trapped in the accelerating cycle of their own pride, mistakenly think that they possess the second. Only Raskolnikov and Sonia, who learn to be open to the third gift, acquire this most difficult of all powers of discernment.

That Dostoevsky's own experience of codependency helped to shape this novel is beyond doubt; the degree to which he was conscious of the impact of this experience remains, however, well beyond the reach of this paper. Even the best of his biographical critics have failed to come to grips with the centrality of addiction in his life for all the same reasons that ordinary people involved with alcoholics usually have failed in the same task--lack of awareness and denial. Now that the enigmas of alcoholism in general and codependency in particular are becoming better understood, critics and readers have a new responsibility to be sensitive to this dimension of texts such as Crime and Punishment, which invite and repay rereading.

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NOTES

[1] The text to which the page references in this paper correspond is Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, trans. Constance Garnett (Toronto: Bantam, 1982). However, to avoid being sent astray by nuances of translation, I also read Crime and Punishment, trans. Jessie Coulson, ed. George Gibian (New York: Norton, 1975); and Crime and Punishment, trans. Sidney Monas (New York: New American, 1980).

[2] I am grateful to Roger Forseth, who drew my attention to George Charles Noelke's "Alcoholism in The Brothers Karamazov" (The Counsellor [Nov./Dec., 1986]: 4-29) after the completion of this paper. Noelke's reading of The Brothers Karamazov also uses alcoholic family roles in its analysis and is therefore similar to my reading of Crime and Punishment. As far as I know, Noelke's paper is the only study of alcoholism in Dostoevsky's texts.

[3] The important texts about codependency from which my summary is drawn are these: see Sharon Wegscheider, Another Chance: Hope and Health for the Alcoholic Family (Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior, 1981); Claudia Black, It Will Never Happen to Me: Children of Alcoholics as Youngsters, Adolescents, Adults (Denver: M. A. C., 1982); Janet Geringer Woititz, Adult Children of Alcoholics (Hollywood, Florida: Health, 1983); Herbert L. Gravitz and Julie D. Bowden, (Recovery: a Guide for Adult Children of Alcoholics (New York: Simon, 1985); Anne Wilson Schaef, Co-dependence (San Francisco: Harper, 1986); and Rachel V., Family Secrets: Life Stories of Adult Children of Alcoholics (San Francisco: Harper, 1987).

[4] A special issue of The Journal of Drug Issues 17 (1987), guest edited by psycho-social theorist Stanton Peele, was devoted to a scholarly overview of the relevant debates; for a briefer account for general readers, see Peele's "Second Thoughts About a Gene for Alcoholism," The Atlantic 266.2 (August, 1990): 52-69.

[5] Roger Forseth, "Alcohol and the Writer: Some Biographical and Critical Issues (Hemingway)," Contemporary Drug Problems 13 (1986): 361-86.

[6] Henri Troyat, Firebrand: the Life of Dostoevsky, trans. N. Guterman (New York: Roy, 1946); Konstantin Mochulsky, Dostoevsky: His Life and Work, trans. Michael Minehan (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1967); Leonid P. Grossman, Dostoevsky, trans. Mary Mackler (London: Penguin, 1974); David Magarshack, Dostoevsky (New York: 1963); and Geir Kjetsaa, Fyodor Dostoevsky: A Writer's Life, trans. Siri Hustvedt and David McDuff (New York: Fawcett, 1987).

[7] Magarshack, 11.

[8] Grossman, 39.

[9] Troyat, 49.

[10] Magarshack, 10-11; Grossman, 40.

[11] Grossman 40.

[12] Hingley, 35.

[13] Magarshack, 11.

[14] Troyat, 52; Mochulsky, 4-6.

[15] Nonetheless, Freud's own assessment of Dostoevsky as a parricide, based on his reading of The Brothers Karamazov, is fascinating reading. See Freud's "Dostoevsky and Parricide" in Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. René Wellek (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice, 1962) 98-111; and Joseph Frank's assessment of both the murder and Freud's insights into Dostoevsky in Dostoevsky: the Seeds of Revolt (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton U P, 1976) 81-91, 379-91.

[16] Monas and Coulson say "own father."

[17] Grossman, 329-33.

[18] Magarshack, 39, 174, 271, 331.

[19] Grossman, 322,

[20] Kjetsaa, 173.

[21] Kjetsaa, 177; Mochulsky, 268-69.

[22] Magarshack, 248.

[23] Mochulsky, 271.

[24] W. D. Snodgrass's "Crime and Punishment: the Mare Beating Episode," Crime and Punishment and the Critics, ed. Edward Wasiolek (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1961) has an excellent account of the triple role of Raskolnikov in his own dream.

[25] For the confusion of his motives and his gradual recognition of them, see Maurice Beebe, "The Three Motives of Raskolnikov," Crime, Wasiolek. Also in Crime, Gibian.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Hamilton Cochrane

It was the last day of the year. Milt was at the office, the children were upstairs playing with Christmas toys, and Elaine was in the kitchen making snacks. She peeled and mashed two large avocados in a ceramic bowl and added lemon juice, paprika, salt, pepper, coriander, and chopped green peppers. She measured nothing, but tasted as she went and made additions as necessary. She spooned the mixture into a stainless steel serving dish and placed it in the middle of a pottery platter. She arranged crackers and chips on the plate around the dip and set the platter on the kitchen table.

She heard his key in the front door lock. He came into the kitchen wearing his overcoat, a cigarette dangling from his lip. She could smell the booze.

"Happy New Year," she said.

He opened the refrigerator and peered inside. He looked inside the vegetable crisper and the meat box and then picked up a cellophane-covered bowl from the bottom shelf. She leaned on the sink, watching.

"What is this?" he asked, removing the wrap and smelling the contents of the bowl.

"It's consommé, what do you think it is?"

He replaced the bowl in the refrigerator and went to the cupboard. He didn't look at her.

"Not even a month, you couldn't even make a month, you son of a bitch."

He took a can of chili from the shelf and rummaged through the silverware drawer. He took out a grater and tossed it on the counter top, then a potato peeler, a bottle opener, a spatula. He found the can opener and locked its teeth around the rim of the can.

"It's going to be a great year," she said. "I can see that."

He dumped the chili into a saucepan and put it on the front burner. "I don't have to listen to this," he said. He sat down at the kitchen table and stubbed out his cigarette in the empty chili can. He took off his coat and draped it over the back of his chair.

"Are we going to start this all over again?" she asked.

"I'm not starting anything."

"Christ."

"Lay off."

"What happened to all that program talk? What happened to your higher power?"

He picked up the platter of crackers and dip with both hands and threw it against the refrigerator. The platter split in two and hit the floor with a thud. Crackers spilled onto the floor and the pasty guacamole stuck to the refrigerator for a moment before sliding to the floor, leaving a pale green trail behind.

"There," he said. "There's your higher power."

He stood and walked into the living room. She heard the television go on. She sat down at the table and lit one of his cigarettes. She looked at the broken platter, the smeared refrigerator. She finished the cigarette and looked into the living room. He was lying on the couch, his shoes on, his eyes closed and his mouth open, snoring faintly.

She was on her knees wiping down the refrigerator and floor with a sponge and dish of soapy water when Rob, the oldest, stuck his head into the kitchen. Cindy and Charlie stood behind.

"Mom?"

She turned to them. "Yes?"

"What's going on?"

"Nothing."

"What's wrong?"

"Are we still going to have a party?"

"Yeah, sure. We're going to have a party."

"Can we play hearts? Will you play?"

"Listen," she said, standing slowly. "I want you to go to the store for me." She took a purse from the counter top and counted out three bills. "Here's three dollars. Rob, you hang on to it. I want you each to buy something, candy or pop, whatever you want. You each get a dollar."

"Anything?" Rob asked, suspicious.

"Anything."

"All right."

Elaine scraped the chili, blackened and stuck to the bottom and sides of the pan, into the garbage and filled the pan with hot water and put it in the sink. She fit the two pieces of the broken platter together and applied glue. She held the platter firm for a full minute. The glue held, and the crack was barely visible.

They returned twenty minutes later, each carrying a small bag. They had all bought big bottles of soda. The boys bought M&Ms and licorice and Cindy bought a glass collie.

They played hearts sitting on the living room floor under the Christmas tree. The tree stood in front of the window, where it could be seen from the street. It was over decorated, entirely covered with big lights that blinked, small lights that didn't, gold and red strings of tinsel, glass ornaments, multi-colored remnants of several sets, styrofoam ornaments that Cindy made in art class. Under the tree was a single unopened package, a gift for Uncle John, who had not shown up on Christmas Eve, and a small manger scene. The three wise men and their camel were about ten feet from the crib, near the radiator, where Charlie, in the interest of accuracy, insisted they be placed. He had been moving them a little closer each day since Christmas.

At the beginning of the game they spoke only in whispers and were careful not to shuffle the cards too loudly, looking at Milt to see if he was disturbed by the noise. Soon, though, when they became involved in the game, they spoke normally and laughed and even shouted and thumped important cards on the carpet when they were played. Rob played aggressively, trying almost every hand to shoot the moon, mostly unsuccessfully. Charlie played timidly, happiest when he could pass off all the high cards and avoid taking any tricks at all. Though glad to be a part of the game, he was a little frightened by it all, tight-lipped, like a Vegas gambler at four in the morning with his house on the line. Elaine kept the score and stopped Rob when he pressured Charlie to hurry up and play a card. Cindy, quiet but clever, on the last hand took all the hearts before anyone noticed and so won the game.

A few minutes before eleven o'clock, they turned on the television and watched the New Year's celebration in New York City. The exact time, kept to the second, was superimposed on the screen over a ballroom full of elegantly dressed couples dancing to the music of Guy Lombardo. At the stroke of midnight,

the band broke into an upbeat rendition of "Auld Lang Syne," the digits were replaced on the screen by a flashing "Happy New Year," and the camera spun wildly around the ballroom, showing glimpses of the couples kissing, some shyly and self-consciously, others passionately and with abandon. A few minutes after midnight Eastern time, they showed a video-taped replay of the great ball descending on Times Square while the crowd, bundled in thick coats and scarves, cheered.

Elaine brought out a bag of party favors that she'd bought earlier in the day at Woolworth's: hats, noisemakers, horns, confetti. They put on the pointed cardboard hats decorated with silver glitter and pulled the rubber bands under their chins.

They watched the big clock over the mantel move slowly toward midnight. At one minute before the hour, they stood and picked up the horns and noisemakers and confetti. At exactly twelve o'clock they shouted "Happy New Year" and blew the horns, which squawked like frightened geese, and threw confetti over their heads and clinked their bottles of soda together in imitation of the toasting revelers on television. From the middle of the room, Cindy threw a handful of confetti at Milt. It landed in his hair, and she giggled.

Charlie threw a long stream of confetti that landed on Milt's chest. Rob draped some over his shoes, and they went on adding more and more until he was well-covered. Milt snorted and brushed his cheek and turned over.

"We decorated Dad," Charlie said.

"I can see that," Elaine said. She motioned toward the center of the room with the camera she was holding. They lined up and faced her. They lifted their soda bottles over their heads and shouted "Happy New Year." Elaine centered them in the viewfinder and snapped the picture. "Okay," she said.

Elaine produced some firecrackers from a kitchen drawer, firecrackers that Milt had brought home on the previous Fourth of July from a fishing trip up north. She removed the black and white striped firecrackers--zebras, the label said--from the red cellophane wrapper and untangled the fuses. She lit one standing at the side door while the children stood timidly behind, afraid and excited that their mother was handling fireworks. The first one landed in the snow and did not explode. She held the next one longer before throwing it and it cracked in midair.

"Mom!"

"Mrs. Sullivan's going to call the cops."

"Do another."

"Yeah. Do another."

She lit the remaining firecrackers, twelve in all, and there was only one dud.

"Okay," Elaine said. "It's time to go to bed." Nobody protested. They were all sleepy. They followed each other up the stairs still wearing their cardboard hats. Elaine turned off the lights and unplugged the Christmas tree. She heard them upstairs in bed, Rob and Charlie in their bunkbeds shouting down the hall to Cindy, "Good night. Happy New Year."

"Mom?" Cindy called.

She came to the bottom of the stairs. "What?"

"Happy New Year."

"Happy New Year."

About a month later Elaine and the children picked up the film at the drugstore. Rob tore open the envelope in the front seat of the car and they handed the pictures around. There were many shots of Charlie's birthday party--his cake, decorated to resemble a football field, complete with green frosting, goal posts, and plastic players, had been photographed from several angles, along with Charlie in his new cowboy hat aiming his new six-shooter at the camera. There were a few pictures from Thanksgiving at Grandma's, and, at the very bottom of the stack, the picture from New Year's. The children passed it back and forth and they all seemed to get a big kick out of it: the three of them, two boys and a girl, wearing cardboard hats, blowing horns and twirling noisemakers, raising bottles of soda up to toast, and, in the background, faint but unmistakable, their father, sleeping on the couch, his back turned to them, bound, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, with delicate ropes of blue and white confetti.

ALCOHOLIC

My father (didn't everybody's?) drank--
the Dread Disease, plague of his generation--
and we were patient, swallowed down his spite,
and understood him as he thrashed and sank,
and all forgave (oh, life means brief duration!)
and all refrained from saying wrong or right.
We knew in dry bright Oklahoma City
the only cure for drink was love and pity.
We knew the flesh was frail, with delicate breath,
and so indulged each other into death.

But when he dared me--cursing me, demanding--
and shuffling scrawnily down halls of my mind,
sagging his jaw, speaking with tongue gone blind,
should I have answered him with understanding?
He cannot help the things he does, we said.
(He grinned and snitched a ten and drove off, weaving.)
His heart, we said, is spotless--but his head
disturbed. (Late I would hear him: racketing, heaving.)

Years after he was gone I think I saw
how we insulted him, drove him along:
His spirit we called nerves, said nerves were raw,
denied his holy sanction to be wrong.
The sonofabitch (God bless him) drank and died
because we understood away his pride.

Judson Jerome

DRINK, SYMBOLISM, AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Nicholas O. Warner

Susanna Barrows and Robin Room, eds. Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991. 480 pp. $17.95.

"The emphasis in this volume is on symbols, ideologies and cultural meanings of drinking" (11). Aptly summarizing the approach of Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History. this sentence from the book's introduction also suggests the relevance of the essays collected here to scholars of drinking in literature. Though drawing on psychological, medical, and anthropological data, these essays chiefly represent the perspectives of social history, with special attention to the symbolic values of drinking and drunkenness. As such, their approach dovetails with traditional literary interests in symbolism as well as with the recent turn to ideological and cultural criticism in literary study. At the same time, the essays are richly diverse in viewpoint, and remarkably free, for the most part, of dogmatism and jargon. While considerably enriching our sense of what socio-historical perspectives can contribute to our understanding of alcohol, the book also illustrates how much more remains to be done with the interdisciplinary analysis of drinking in relation to ethnicity, class, gender, religious belief, and politics, as well as to the social rituals, behavioral conventions, and economic conditions of particular times and places.

As the volume editors, Susanna Barrows and Robin Room provide a superb introduction to the book. The introduction touches on important aspects of individual essays, and lucidly explains the rationale for the volume as a whole. In their summary of the development of social history over the past couple of decades, and of its relevance to alcohol studies, Barrows and Room perform a useful synthesizing function for students of alcohol history. They concisely bring together several complementary approaches and relate them to earlier historical studies of drinking, like Brian Harrison's Drink and the Victorians and Joseph Gusfield's Symbolic Crusade. Yet the introduction is also accessible enough to establish a helpful framework for readers less familiar with socio-historical or socio-cultural approaches to drinking.

The eighteen essays following the introduction are divided into four sections. Part 1, "The Many Worlds of Drink in Europe and America," focuses primarily on public drinking, with particular attention to the world of taverns, cafés, and saloons in three national contexts: French, German, American. Arranged in loose chronological order, the section begins with David Conroy's study of cultural conflict between magistrates and

citizens in Puritan Massachusetts, a conflict centering on the tavern. The next piece, by Thomas Brennan, is a densely argued study of elite vs. laboring groups' perceptions of drinking in old regime Paris. Drawing on such disparate sources as the essays of Montaigne, the writings of various philosophes. popular literature, police depositions and fiscal records showing the rate of alcohol consumption in the eighteenth century, Brennan looks at the ways that differing "vocabularies" of drinking and drunkenness co-existed and clashed in the pre-revolutionary era. Turning to a later period in French history, Susanna Barrows presents an elegantly written, meticulously researched study of the nineteenth-century French café's association with republican political views, and traces the attempts of conservative authorities to curb these "parliaments of the people." She concludes that, while the political culture of the café has continued to this day, the "arenas for politics" (95) in France have greatly diversified over the decades. Thus, already by 1900, "the café could no longer be viewed as the sole parliament of the people" (95).

A similar discussion of the political role of the public drinking place is found in James S. Roberts's convincing study of the importance of the tavern and its social ambience to the German labor movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Less concerned with issues of specific political partisanship, however, is Madelon Powers's discussion of the American saloon, an institution that declined as much from internal decay as from external pressure. The first section concludes with Geoffrey Giles's exploration of a fascinating and unusual topic--the relations between traditions of student drinking and the ambivalent, often contradictory views of drinking held by the Nazis.

Part 2, "Politics, Ideology, and Power," consists of four essays dealing with various attempts to regulate drinking and to legislate drinking morality. The focus here is, appropriately enough, on varieties of temperance reform and politics. George Bretherton's essay on temperance's role in the making of modern Ireland pays considerable attention to Father Mathew and also shows the intersection of temperance with large political issues, such as Catholic-Protestant strife and the relations between landlords and tenants.

Many readers of this journal will be somewhat familiar with the social and historical contexts of Bretherton's essay from their own related studies of Irish literary history. Much less familiar, to most, will be the subject matter of Charles H. Ambler's discussion of alcohol regulation in colonial Kenya from 1900 to 1939. Ambler illustrates the ways that British colonial alcohol policies served as a vehicle for imperialism in Kenya, paying close attention to the inter-relations of morality, colonial ideology, and economics. The third essay in this

section, by Ray Hutchison, uses Harvey, Illinois, as a case study of the development and decline of the temperance town in the United States. Like Ambler, Hutchison subtly weaves together moral, economic, political and social considerations in his essay. Hutchison and Ambler both demonstrate the value that a narrowly focused study of drinking can have. Without denying the importance of such studies, or of national histories of alcohol use, Ian Tyrrell makes a compelling argument for greater internationalism in historical analysis of this topic. Concentrating on women's temperance, specifically the WCTU, Tyrrell observes that "In leadership, in ideology, in sentiment, in organization, we are not comparing completely self-contained national experiences. We are entering the territory of international history" (235).

Part 3, "The Inebriate, the Expert, and the State," overlaps with Parts 1 and 2 in exploring attempts to control drinking, but with a greater emphasis on problems of actual drunkenness or alcoholism. George Snow's study of socialism, alcoholism and the Russian working classes before 1917 is one of the most impressive pieces of research that the present reviewer, as a reader of Russian, has seen. It relies on an extensive range of Russian-language sources, and skillfully places the Russian alcohol problem into the context of Russian political history. Snow also recognizes the significant differences between the Russian temperance movement and its more familiar American and British counterparts.

Turning their attention to an even more specific place and time, namely Massachusetts between 1880 and 1916, Thomas F. Babor and Barbara G. Rosenkrantz study the influence of social researchers on the "public debate surrounding alcoholic beverage control (ABC) legislation in Massachusetts before the enactment of national prohibition" (265), while Patrick M. McLaughlin examines the development of inebriate reformatories in Scotland at the turn of the century. Aware that his subject might seem in some ways to be "worthy of no more than a footnote in the history of moral reform," McLaughlin argues that the history of inebriate reformatories actually "contains some important lessons for the contemporary management of habitual drunkenness" (308). Like Part 1, the third section concludes with a look at drinking in Nazi Germany, as Hermann Fahrenkrug discusses Nazi policies for controlling alcoholic beverages or, as they were often called in Nazi parlance, "poisons of pleasure" (317). Although his essay overlaps slightly with the earlier piece by Geoffrey Giles on student drinking in the Third Reich, Fahrenkrug mostly covers different ground, bringing to our attention little-known but intriguing aspects of what he calls "the pathology of the modern" (332).

The fourth and final section, "Perspectives on Drinking and Social History," consists of (somewhat) more theoretical, broadly

based essays. Joel Bernard begins Part 4 with an intelligent, knowledgeable discussion of the origins of the American temperance movement and its symbolic dimensions. A similar concern with symbolism informs Denise Herd's thorough, lucid analysis of African-Americans and temperance in the nineteenth century. Herd touches on many interesting themes, one of the most important being the eventual disappearance of alcohol reform "as a meaningful political issue in the black population" (370).

Employing a Marxist approach in the next essay, Marianna Adler provocatively analyzes the "commodification of drinking," which "operates by recalling relations of symbolic exchange only to fetishize them within the mythic discourse of capitalist social relations" (379). The final analytical essay (a brief bibliographical piece closes the volume) is by Joseph Gusfield, whose pioneering Symbolic Crusade (1963, 1986) seems like a presiding spirit over much of the volume. Gusfield examines the relevance to alcohol studies of such concepts as work and play, cultural meaning, structure, social control and class interest. His essay is a genuinely thought-provoking, judicious, balanced piece of work. It is followed by Jeffrey Verhe's thorough summary of sources for the social history of alcohol.

My first instinct on finishing this book was to go back to the beginning and start all over again. The essays are often fascinating in and of themselves, and the literary scholar of intoxication can extrapolate much of value to his or her own interests. Though any individual reader may disagree with a particular essay's approach, assumptions or conclusions, Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History is a significant achievement in alcohol studies. It will be an illuminating volume for literary scholars--or anyone else--concerned with the topics indicated in its title.

THE POSTHUMOUS CONFESSION OF ANNE SEXTON

Virginia Ross

Diane Wood Middlebrook. Anne Sexton: A Biography. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991. 488 pp. $24.95.

> My friend, my friend, I was born
> doing reference work in sin, and born
> confessing it. This is what poems are:
> with mercy
> for the greedy,
> they are the tongue's wrangle,
> the world's pottage, the rat's star.
> --"With Mercy for the Greedy"

The most striking aspect of Diane Wood Middlebrook's biography of Anne Sexton is the emotional whirlwind surrounding not only the life it chronicles but also the event of its publication. A New England housewife-turned-poet, Sexton took her own tumultuous life in 1974 at age 45. Nearly 20 years later, immediately before and after publication of Anne Sexton: A Biography.[1] The New York Times Letters to the Editor became the forum for support and censure of the biography's revelations. Letter writers included officials of psychiatric and psychoanalytic national organizations, psychiatrists in private practice, Sexton's daughter, son-in-law, friends, and nieces. The chief object of both attacks and defenses is neither Sexton herself nor her biographer, but her psychiatrist, Martin T. Orne, who once encouraged Sexton to channel her suffering into poetry, and who has now released to Middlebrook audiotaped recordings of more than 300 hours of his psychotherapy sessions with her.

The intensity of language and emotion provoked by Orne's release of the tapes and the biography is remarkable. From Peter Gay, Sterling Professor of History at Yale and biographer of Freud: "As a biographer, I was voracious and angry at anyone who withheld things, but I would despise any analyst willing to do this."[2] Sexton's nieces Lisa Taylor Tompson and Mary Gray Ford focus on the content of the released conversations. "To take [material from Sexton's therapy] as truth and slather blame across an entire family of normal, loving, caring people in order to explain the roots of Anne's self-inflicted anguish, is simply outrageous. . . . Some families, confronted with a child like Anne, would have turned her over to state agencies for warehousing."[3] Sexton's son-in-law, John G. Freund, finds "almost comic" his wife's cousins' use of the word "normal." He continues in a September 22 letter to the Times, "Two of the three daughters of Ralph Harvey--Anne Sexton and her sister Jane Jealous--committed suicide, as did Ralph's sister, Frances Harvey (Anne's aunt). Ralph himself was institutionalized for alcoholism; his father, Louis Harvey, suffered several nervous

breakdowns, as did beloved great-aunt Anna Ladd Dingley, who was then institutionalized for many years."[4]

In the foreword to Middlebrook's Anne Sexton: A Biography. Martin T. Orne defends his decision to release tapes he made to help his patient counter the amnesia she tended to develop around powerful emotions. In the absence of explicit directions from Sexton to destroy the tapes, Sexton's daughter and literary executor Linda Gray Sexton authorized the release. Moreover, Orne contends that Anne Sexton would have wanted--and often expressed the wish for--her suffering to help others. Finally, he insists that Sexton had no interest in protecting her own privacy. After all, this woman from the region of Puritan privilege crashed the limits of decorum in American poetry and introduced to the page the most intimate features of female sexuality.

Each of these explanations seems a bit suspect. Linda Gray Sexton's decision to allow the release of her mother's taped psychotherapy sessions was clearly not a dispassionate one. Although struggling through the taped materials and discussing with her mother's biographer family incidents they evoked may have ultimately been therapeutic for her, her own--no doubt justified--anger toward her mother is palpable in many of her remarks that Middlebrook quotes.

The view that Sexton's privacy needed no protection because she was a confessional poet is echoed by Sexton's son-in-law, John G. Freund. In a letter to the Times of July 26, he argues, "To Anne Sexton, who made a career of what quickly and aptly became known as confessional poetry, neither the doctor-patient relationship, the priest-penitent relationship nor anything else of literary value was in the slightest way confidential."[5] This argument incorrectly assumes that confessional poetry is unmediated autobiography. Sexton herself wrote, "Poetic truth is not necessarily autobiographical truth. It is truth that goes beyond the immediate self. . . . As Yeats said, 'I have lived many lives, I have been a slave and a prince. Many a beloved has sat upon my knee, and I have sat upon the knee of many a beloved. Everything that has been shall be again.'"[6] In one of her poems, for instance, Sexton, who was the mother of daughters, has the first-person narrator speak to her married sons.

Dr. Orne, Linda Gray Sexton, and Anne Sexton's closest friend, Maxine Kumin, may argue correctly that Sexton would have wanted the tapes to be released. It is easy to imagine that the flamboyant, self-dramatizing woman Middlebrook portrays would indeed enjoy all this undigested emotional trauma and power wielded from beyond the grave. The public spotlight has beamed on Martin T. Orne as Anne Sexton's psychiatrist. Sexton's subsequent psychiatrist, whose name and sexual involvement with her are revealed in the biography, must now experience belated

repercussions of his affair with her. All the attention might gratify a woman who once contrasted herself with this psychiatrist/lover's solidly present wife: "As for me, I am a watercolor./I wash off."[7]

The material in the tapes as well as the notoriety Orne's decision brought to this book no doubt helped catapult Anne Sexton: A Biography to The New York Times bestseller list. But the media attention could lead to the mistaken impression that Middlebrook's book belongs to the genre of haphazardly constructed, gossipy celebrity exposé. Actually, Anne Sexton is a carefully researched literary biography that draws not only on Orne's tapes but on letters, journals, and interviews with Sexton's family, friends, and colleagues to illuminate the poetry by exposing the conflicts and struggles in Sexton's life. Middlebrook sustains a balanced outlook on her subject that encompasses Sexton's courage, wit, and intensity as well as her exasperating and destructive darker side.

Because the tapes were available, Middlebrook had no need for the elegant sleuthing that has led many biographers to piece together from clues in the life and from between the lines of letters a mosaic that becomes a believable portrait. Putting aside the psychiatrist's ethical dilemma in releasing the tapes, the presence of passages quoted from psychotherapy sessions remains disturbing within the biography. Middlebrook carefully qualifies Sexton's perceptions and comments about her family members--particularly those suggesting incestuous involvement--as insupportable and probably distortions, but their very appearance in print makes them difficult to discredit or ignore. As Lance Morrow writes, "The sick, brilliant woman has the inestimable advantage of being dead and therefore beyond examination on questions of who abused whom and how."[8] Unlike poetry, letters, or even a diary, the words of a patient in psychotherapy are spoken without pressure toward coherence. Psychiatrist Scott Goldsmith argues that psychotherapy sessions involve more than confessions and confidences. "A person often navigates a stormy sea of primitive emotions, projections, and retrospective distortions that can make the healthiest of patients seem disorganized and unstable."[9]

Some small flaws prove distracting. Casual expressions like "hanging out" and "cooked up" seem out of place in this serious study. Sometimes Middlebrook assumes a reader's familiarity with the psychoanalytic framework she applies to Sexton's life; at other times, often not the first occasion concepts are mentioned, she seems obliged to explain her terms or methodology.

However, Anne Sexton: A Biography effectively explores how Sexton's mastery of her craft in spite of her suffering was a shining achievement. Middlebrook's analysis sheds light on Sexton's poetic legacy, which includes poems that blaze with a

dark intensity and a sharply sardonic wit turned on the plastic homemaker image of American woman. The inspiring part of this book chronicles an American success story: uneducated housewife paralyzed by phobias turns to poetry and wins the Pulitzer Prize. Yet this progress is darkly undercut by the disintegration of the woman and poet Anne Sexton, a process to which readers of Middlebrook's biography are witnesses.

Part of the undertow in Anne Sexton's life was alcoholism. Her poetry reveals the prominent part that alcohol always played in her life. In "All My Pretty Ones," Sexton addresses a yellowed picture of her father: "my drunkard, my navigator, my first lost keeper." Even the family's denial is evident. The mother of the poem furnishes the excuse that her husband overslept, "telling all she does not say/Of your alcoholic tendency."[10] At times, Sexton sounds defiant: "I make arrangements for a pint-sized journey/I'm the queen of this condition."[11] At other moments she seems painfully aware that alcohol was destroying her life and work, as she admits deteriorating from martinis to "rot-gut bourbon."

Middlebrook quotes Dr. Orne's clear warning to Sexton given after she had begun to require a thermos of martinis before facing any challenge: "Alcoholism is happening at the level of tissue, not just at the level of psychology" (211). Apparently Sexton and her husband considered this meddling. Middlebrook observes of the period after Sexton's divorce and about a year before her suicide, "Alcohol was now Sexton's chief, self-prescribed medication, taken morning, noon, and night. In combination with loneliness, it was lethal to her art. Alcohol helped generate the curves of feeling on which her poetry lifted its wings, but it dropped her too, into depression, remorse, sleeplessness, paranoia--the normal host of furies that pursue alcoholics. More serious for her poetry, it deprived her of 'the little critic' in her head. . . . She had the drunk's fluency but not the artist's cunning" (380).

In one of her posthumously published poems, Anne Sexton alludes to the Hippocratic Oath: "but all the doctors remember:/First do no harm."[12] One wishes that Dr. Orne had read or remembered more of Hippocrates' words: "Whatsoever things I see or hear concerning the life of man, I will keep silent thereon." Whether or not Sexton would have enjoyed her posthumous power, one wishes simply that Martin T. Orne had protected the boundaries of a patient who lacked them, and had kept silent.

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NOTES

[1] Diane Wood Middlebrook, Anne Sexton: A Biography (Boston: Houghton, 1991). All references to this book are cited parenthetically.

[2] Peter Gay in Alessandra Stanley, "Poet Told All; Therapist Provides the Record," New York Times 15 July 1991: A1.

[3] Lisa Taylor Tompson and Mary Gray Ford, letter, New York Times Book Review 25 August 1991: 4.

[4] John G. Freund, letter, New York Times Book Review. 22 September 1991: 55.

[5] John G. Freund, letter, New York Times 26 July 1991: A10.

[6] William Butler Yeats in Diana Hume George, Oedipus Anne: The Poetry of Anne Sexton (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1987) 89.

[7] Anne Sexton, "For My Lover, Returning to His Wife," Love Poems (Boston: Houghton, 1967) 22.

[8] Lance Morrow, "Pains of the Poet--And Miracles," Time. 23 September 1991: 21.

[9] Scott Goldsmith, letter, New York Times Book Review. 22 September 1991: 55.

[10] Anne Sexton, All My Pretty Ones (Boston: Houghton, 1962) 4-5.

[11] Anne Sexton, "The Addict," Live or Die (Boston, Houghton, 1966) 85.

[12] Anne Sexton, "Doctors," The Awful Rowing Toward God (Boston: Houghton, 1975) 47.

POETS ON THE EDGE

Donald C. Irving

Jeffrey Meyers. Manic Power: Robert Lowell and His Circle. New York: Arbor House, 1987. 228 pp. $17.95.

Early in Manic Power, Jeffrey Meyers quotes Winfield Scott: "Our saddest stories are biographies of 20th Century American writers, Thomas Wolfe, Hart Crane, Vachel Lindsay, Scott Fitzgerald, Edna Millay, Eugene O'Neill, probably Hemingway. . . . It would require . . . a combination of psychologist, sociologist, literary historian and critic, as well as an expert in alcoholism, to try to explain why."[1] In Manic Power, Meyers gives us more sad stories, this time about the great "middle generation" of mid-century poets, Robert Lowell and his "circle," Randall Jarrell, John Berryman, and Theodore Roethke.

Meyers asserts that his book examines the "nourishing effects as well as the destructive dynamics" among these poets, as well as "explores ways in which their art reflected contemporary society" (1), but in fact Manic Power concentrates on the "mania" and not the "power" of their poetry. All of these poets lived on the "edge" of sanity, sobriety, and social responsibility. To answer why they did so--by choice or because psychosis and addiction took away choice--is the complication and unfulfilled burden of this book. Meyers is a prolific scholar. Among his twenty books are four biographies before Manic Power (of Katherine Mansfield, Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence and Hemingway) and two collections of essays on biography.[2] He is an encyclopedic collector of biographical facts, but here the social and political history of Lowell's "contemporary society" remains truncated, and he offers no particular expertise on alcoholism.

Meyers' Freudian eye dwells on the remarkable similarities in the backgrounds, careers, and behavior of these poets. All were traumatized in childhood by the loss of their fathers through death or abandonment. All had domineering or difficult mothers and tempestuous or failed marriages. All had recurring mental breakdowns and were institutionalized: Lowell, Jarrell, and Roethke for manic-depression, Berryman for alcoholism and depression. All died untimely deaths, Jarrell and Berryman by suicide, Lowell and Roethke by heart disease, though brought on by their manic depression and excessive drinking. Roethke's The Lost Son poems could be their epitaph.

They were so similar in their careers, Meyers asserts, that they took to "imitating each other." All supported themselves by teaching and public readings (only Lowell didn't need the income), all fiercely competed for awards, favorable reviews and honors beyond the boundaries of normal ambition. Each cultivated the role of poète maudit, the mad poet, which resulted in public

displays of egotism, petty back biting, drunkenness (Jarrell apparently substituted petulance for drinking), and other "manic" behavior. In their private lives their cruelty, infidelity, and mania produced enormous physical and emotional drain on their spouses and families.

In its singular focus, Manic Power illustrates the kind of biography Norman Denzin calls "pathography":

> those culturally based, popular autobiographies that draw upon a member's condition, or pathology, like alcoholism, mental illness, child abuse, or sexual violence. . . . Like its television counterpart, "docudrama," a story is reduced to a category which had a ready-made readership in the larger market place of cultural consumers.[3]

Denzin means those popular "pathographies" by Betty Ford, Kitty Dukakis, Dennis Wholley, Norman Cousins, and dozens of others who recount their struggles with addiction, childhood abuse, cancer, and other diseases. Their popular appeal exists in the focus on heroic and successful struggles over debilitating obstacles or abuse. Although Meyers writes for scholars and has larger concerns about literature and history than the popular pathographies, his book, if not reductionist in its concentration on mania, is incomplete and unbalanced because of its one-sidedness. There is too little about the good in the characters or the art of these poets. There is almost no mention of Roethke's mysticism, Berryman's revolutionary idiom and form, Jarrell's classical restraint and rationalism, and Lowell's democratic elegies and lyrical ease.

For historical context, Meyers touches on two antecedents. The first consists of the great, modern precursors of whom T. S. Eliot is the father-figure, but also includes Frost, Stevens, Pound, and Williams. As this "first generation" made "self-consciousness" a concern in modern poetry (Meyers refers to Eliot's assertion that "Poetry is . . . an escape from personality"),[4] so Lowell and his circle made "self-exposure" their theme (Lowell "virtually invented the genre of "confessional" poetry, Meyers asserts) (22). He means the very private events that Lowell, for example, recounts in "the razor's edge" of mental disintegration that put him in the madhouse ("Waking in the Blue") or his wife's fear of his physical attacks ("To Speak of the Woe that is in Marriage"); and Berryman's documentation of each humiliating stage of his alcoholism in Dream Songs and Delusions; of Roethke's sounds from the madhouse in "The Gibber" section of The Lost Son. and Jarrell's poems of soldiers' despair and death in war. (Jarrell masked the personal in his poems more than the others, but was the only one of the four in uniform during World War II.) These poems are more than

autobiographical fragments, of course, but Meyers points out that these poets believed in, and even sought suffering as authentic experience for their poetry.

Meyers' second literary antecedent concerns the tradition of the poète maudit, the suffering or accursed poet. All four poets consciously subscribed to the connection between poetry and madness that goes back to Plato's Ion and can be traced through Swift and Johnson (in his Life of Savage), the Romantics (in biography and poetry), and Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Sartre and others. For example, like Rimbaud's "derangement of the senses," or artificially induced states of feeling, Meyers notes that Roethke also sometimes deliberately induced his own mania. Roethke epitomizes this connection between madness and art in his line, "What's madness but nobility of soul/At odds with circumstance?" ("In a Dark Time"). All four poets believed their illnesses gave them heightened perceptions and experience beyond the normal. Three of the four used alcohol as a stimulus for similar reasons. They worshipped at the shrine of Dionysos, the Greek god of wine, excess and ecstacy, and the source of poetry. Their contemporary model was Dylan Thomas, another Dionysian-like genius, who publicly played the role of alcoholic, suffering poet until he destroyed himself.

All pushed themselves beyond sanity's edge and society's norms and then created poems out of the experience. "The edge is what I have," Roethke wrote in one of his best poems. "My mind's not right," Lowell wrote in Skunk Hour, and Berryman's Henry chants, "Madness & booze, madness & booze/Which'll can tell who preceded whose? (Dream Song #225).

The negative side of the connection between madness and art is the poète manqué, the lost poet victimized by suffering or society--not Dionysos, but Philoctetes with his wound and his bow. Thus, they also drank to dull pain and forget guilt; madness became a retreat from reality; institutionalization provided necessary care and therapy, but did the society make them victims? Meyers summarizes the time of cold-war tensions, the threat of nuclear holocaust, and the materialism, greed and aggression of American society. But he doesn't probe these deficiencies in the culture. After reading Manic Power, one still can't decide if Lowell's mania was caused by the culture or represented it or was a means to criticize it. All three are indicated, but in what degree, and especially in what cause and effect relationship is unclear. Meyers gives us a biographical monograph of 179 pages when his topic requires a treatise, perhaps several treatises or perhaps, as we've seen in the pages of this journal repeatedly, the necessity to rewrite the biographies of alcoholic, psychotic (and other pathologic) writers with more attention to disease and its relation to the art.

We appreciate Meyers' inexorable collection of facts, but they raise questions about the causal relations between madness and art: were these poets alcoholic and suicidal because of their psychic wounds? Or were they wounded by a violent society that sought to destroy them? Meyers, like A. Alvarez and others, implies it was difficult for innovative artists in America to stay sane.[5] But there's a gap here between explaining how art is made and what it is made of. What are we to make of art and culture when the biographer tells us Lowell broke his wife's nose or Roethke tweaked Edmund Wilson's nose in public? Not everyone excuses the violent behavior of genius (Wilson never did nor did Berryman's first wife).

Meyers provides a coda to Manic Power in an Epilogue about Sylvia Plath that is unanticipated by the rest of the book. Plath was not part of the Lowell circle; she was younger, never met Jarrell nor worked with Berryman, but "apprenticed herself" to Lowell and Roethke whom she also knew socially. Meyers couldn't resist this coda, one suspects, because of the remarkable parallels, again, in her education, ambition, career, depression, and suicide. Like the others, the childhood loss of her father was perhaps the traumatic event of her life. But above all, "Her poetry also derived its power from madness" (139). She too was one of the "extremist" poets: confessing and exposing her disintegration in her poems. One of her last poems was entitled "Edge," which may predict her death: "We have come so far, it is over." But again it's difficult to know how to sort out the correspondences between life, illness, and art.

Meyers concludes unequivocally that Lowell and his circle represented the ills of the age in both their lives and their art:

> Our age is obsessed by its own capacity for self-destruction: by pollution, drugs, AIDS, poison gas, radiation, terrorism, genocide, death camps, and nuclear war. The manic poets, who enriched our lives as they ruined their own, symbolize individual examples of this destructive impulse. We are fascinated by their suffering and see it as a vicarious substitute for our own (179).

That's surely true, but not the whole story. There were healthy writers at mid-century who didn't replicate the ills of the age or behave like Dionysos in drunken ecstacy. However, the value of Manic Power is that it further lifts the taboos from alcoholism, insanity, and suicide.

There is evidence for measuring how far biographical scholarship has come in lifting these taboos (the more popular pathographies have helped too; even if they function as purgative

confessions for their authors or gossip for their audiences, they help overcome the stigmas associated with pathologic behavior). In 1985, Meyers published a study of disease in the novels of Tolstoy, Hemingway, Gide, Mann, Ellis, and Solzhenitsyn.[6] The diseases were tuberculosis, cancer, gangrene, and syphilis--none about madness nor addiction. The first book-length study of alcoholism in literature, by Thomas Gilmore, did not appear until 1987.[7] One suspects that after Meyers' own extensive research into biographies of alcoholic and manic writers and his study of disease in the novel, he wrote Manic Power to focus on these topics that heretofore were muted in biography. This implies again (often repeated in the pages of this journal) that many literary biographies need to be rewritten or added to after more research to determine the relation of disease to the creative author's life. We have the documentation; now analytical explanation is called for.

Does this indicate the biographies of Lowell and his circle need recasting? Ian Hamilton's definitive biography of Lowell hardly touches on (did he know?) Lowell's excessive drinking, though he is judicious about Lowell's manic-depression. Allan Seager's biography of Roethke documents his illness and some of the drinking but not their connection to the art. Seager was ill himself at the time, was Roethke's friend, and delicately balanced friend's and family's feelings sensitively and well. Two biographies of Berryman, John Haffenden's and Paul Mariani's impressively document in encyclopedic detail his drinking bouts, stays in treatment centers (including transcripts of his counselor's diagnosis and notes), interviews with members of Alcoholics Anonymous and even summaries of Berryman's responses at AA meetings.[8] But descriptions of Berryman's drinking and writing in his last years blur creativity and destruction. These are all excellent biographies of their kind, but William Pritchard best describes their partial purpose in his biography of Jarrell, "My object in the pages that follow is to tell a story of that work and of the life in which it occurred--a story, not the story."[9] These are "good stories," though sad, but biographers do indeed, as Winfield Scott suggests, need the help of psychologists, sociologists, and experts on alcoholism to write them. Manic Power at least helps lift the taboo and provides some focus.

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[1] Winfield Scott, "Our Saddest Stories are Biographies," New Republic 145 (November 30 1961): 18.

[2] Katherine Mansfield: A Biography (New York: New Directions, 1978); The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis (London: Routledge, 1980); D. H. Lawrence and the Experience of

Italy (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1982); Hemingway: A Biography (New York: Harper, 1985). Also, Meyers edited essays by various hands in The Craft of Literary Biography (New York: Schocken, 1985) and a collection of his own essays in The Spirit of Biography (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989).

[3] Norman K. Denzin, Interpretative Biography (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989) 83.

[4] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Selected Essays, 1917-1932 (New York: Harcourt, 1932) 10.

[5] A. Alvarez, The Savage God: A Study of Suicide (London: Weidenfeld, 1971) 198, passim.

[6] Jeffrey Meyers, Disease and the Novel, 1880-1960 (London: Macmillan, 1985).

[7] Thomas B. Gilmore, Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth Century Literature (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1987). Reviewed in Dionysos 1.3 (Winter 1990): 31-33.

[8] Ian Hamilton, Robert Lowell: A Biography (New York: Random, 1982); Allan Seager, The Glass House: The Life of Theodore Roethke (New York: McGraw, 1968); John Haffenden, The Life of John Berryman (Boston: Routledge, 1982); Paul Mariani, Dream Song: The Life of John Berryman (New York: Morrow, 1990).

[9] William H. Pritchard, Randall Jarrell: A Literary Life (New York: Farrar, 1990) 9.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Sue Vice, lecturer in English literature at the University of Sheffield, has been appointed European Editor of Dionysos. She has a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Oxford, has edited books on D. H. Lawrence and Malcolm Lowry, and reviews for TLS. (Dept. of English Literature, Univ. of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN UK. Fax 0742 824 246; phone 0742 768 555.)

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NOTES AND COMMENT

We are saddened by the news that Judson Jerome, whose poem "Alcoholic" appears in this issue, died August 5. For thirty years he wrote a poetry column for Writer's Digest, where (in his article, "Poetry and Alcohol: Fantasies Associated With Drink and Poetry Can Be Dangerous" [Jan 1989]) "Alcoholic" first appeared. Writer's Digest is planning a memorial tribute and appreciation for its December 1991 issue. . . . The editorial board of Dionysos has been discussing the possibility of a title change, replacing "intoxication" with "addiction." A number of readers feel, for example, that "addiction studies" is the preferred generic designation of our critical and research concerns. We welcome comment on this possiblility from our readers. . . . A display advertisement for Dionysos will appear again this year in the learned journals review issue of The Times Literary Supplement (Nov. 15). Dionysos will also be on display in the Council of Editors of Learned Journals booth at the December meeting of the Modern Language Association, San Francisco. . . . Lawrence Block's latest Matt Scudder mystery, A Dance at the Slaughterhouse, has just appeared. See George Wedge's piece on Block's alcoholic detective in the Spring 1991 issue. All of the Matt Scudder books will soon be back in print (Avon Books). . . . Tom Dardis's The Thirsty Muse (reviewed by Connie Perry in Dionysos, Fall 1989) has just appeared in a Houghton Mifflin paperback ($8.95). . . . Bob Dunham writes that he is working on a revision of his pioneering article, "The Curse of the Writing Class: Why Are So Many Writers Alcoholics?" (Saturday Review, January-February 1984: 26-30). . . . Susan Searles (Ohio University) writes that her (and John Harvey's) promising panel proposal, "Literature Under the Influence," was rejected by the M/MLA as "outdated, something out of the sixties." The national MLA is also in the habit of rejecting special session proposals on literature and addiction; since the current M/MLA and MLA programs appear to a large extent to be "out of the sixties," one may perhaps be forgiven for observing certain inconsistencies in their program decisions. . . . Anne Hudson Jones (editor of Literature and Medicine, The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston) writes that "I . . . think your journal is of interest and importance for our medical school library, and I have recommended that our library add it to their holdings." . . . We received a number of welcome comments and suggestions along with the current renewal checks, among them: "include the number of pages and the prices in the book reviews"; "what about reviews of literature in foreign languages?"; "how about more articles on film?" We will attempt to oblige (in the case of the first request, we already have). . . . The University of Michigan Press will publish the proceedings of last year's John Berryman Conference (see Dionysos, Winter 1991: 46-47), including the papers on Berryman's alcoholism by Lewis Hyde, George Wedge, Alan Altimont, and Roger Forseth.

Conferences

The Thirty-Sixth International Congress on Alcohol and Drug Dependence will meet in Glasgow, Scotland 16-21 August 1992. Topics for the Workshop Sessions include Literature, History, and Anthropology. For information write: ICAA Congress Secretariat, c/o The S.C.A., 5th Floor, 137/145 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3EW, Scotland.

Work in Progress

Marty Roth (Department of English, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 55455; see his "'The Milk of Wonder': Fitzgerald, Alcoholism, and The Great Gatsby." Dionysos, Fall 1990) writes: "I'm looking forward to Dionysos in the coming year. It's been of much use to me in a course I'm planning and a book I'm writing (both the same as yet) tentatively entitled Theorizing Addiction. . . . Right now I'm projecting a theoretical survey of the entire territory as I see it: the theorization of drink and intoxication; of alcoholism; of culture and civilization as addictive. The latter sections are ambitious and pretty much involve a rereading of Western culture (the sort of thing Clifford Siskin undertook in brief in his book, The Historicity of Romantic Discourse) and a reading of Western history as an imperialist drug war. . . . I'm currently working on an article on art as carnival and art as addiction in which I look at the notions of carnival and saturnalia which have been used to ground high culture (Nietzsche, Frye, Barber, Bakhtin) as it exists in conflict with the contrary notion of genius as divine control; and then the sneering and dismissive associations of popular literature to narcotics, junk, mood-altering substances of various kinds."

Thomasin LaMay (Music/Women's Studies Departments, Goucher College, Towson, MD 21204) writes: "I am currently working on a study of dysfunctional family life as presented by Louisa May Alcott in a variety of her writings. . . . My own particular bent, in working with Alcott, was the function of incest in 19th century families, how it could be described, and conversely, how a whole body of 'domestic literature' created for the public a 'fantasy life,' rather than a real life story, how it depicted what they thought they should have had, rather than what they did have. I'm sure this is also related to notions of alcoholism, women's temperance novels, ways of fixing things through writing."

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Hamilton Cochrane is an assistant professor of English at Canisius College, where he teaches courses in literature and creative writing. His essay "Alcoholism and Recovery in the Fiction of Raymond Carver" recently appeared in the University of Dayton Review.

Donald C. Irving, professor and chairman of English & American Studies at Grinnell College, has had a long scholarly interest in America's literary landmarks and is collecting materials toward a biography of the Chicago poet, painter, and dancer Mark Turbyfil. He wrote the essays on the biographies of J. F. Cooper and Theodore Roethke for the St. James Press Guide to Biography.

Judson Jerome (1927-1991) was one of our most distinguished poets and teachers. Time's Fool: A Story in the Sonnets Based on Those in Shakespeare is to be published by his widow, Marty Jerome. For more information, see Notes and Comment (above).

Catherine MacGregor is a doctoral student at the University of Ottawa. She has published two articles on codependency in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano and is working on an article on codependency in Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.

Virginia Ross was an assistant professor of English at Mercer University, and is currently doing free-lance (mostly medical) writing while working on a book about Nathaniel Hawthorne from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Nicholas O. Warner, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Claremont McKenna College, is currently working on a book on intoxication in American literature.