



South Valley University  
Faculty of Education  
Department of English  
First Year ( Basic Education)

*The History of American  
Literature*

*مقرر اختياري*

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**Compiled**

**by**

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## **Preface**

The course offers an intensive survey of American literature written since the 17<sup>th</sup>. century till the 20<sup>th</sup>. century. It covers the three main literary genres – poetry, fiction, and drama in American literature. The course overviews the developments in each genre and then focuses on representative texts belonging to these genres. Students read short texts wholly, and read selections from long texts. Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to acquire sufficient knowledge of developments in American literature, analyze particular contemporary literary texts belonging to poetry, fiction and drama, and identify main contemporary writers of American literature and their representative works.

Best Wishes & Regards

Dr. Nabil Abdel Fattah

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## *American Literature in the 17<sup>th</sup>. Century*

American literature, the body of written works produced in the English language in the United States.

Like other national literatures, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and a half, America was merely a group of colonies scattered along the eastern seaboard of the North American continent—colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation. By the end of the 19th century this nation extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico, northward to the 49th parallel, and westward to the Pacific. By the end of the 19th century, too, it had taken its place among the powers of the world—its fortunes so interrelated with those of other nations that inevitably it became involved in two world wars and, following these conflicts, with the problems of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in ways of thinking and feeling, wrought many modifications in people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States molded the literature of the country.

### **The 17th century**

This history of American literature begins with the arrival of English-speaking Europeans in what would become the United States. At first American literature was naturally a colonial literature, by authors who were Englishmen and who thought and wrote as such. John Smith, a soldier of fortune, is credited with initiating American literature. His chief books included *A True Relation of...Virginia...* (1608) and *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the*

Summer Isles (1624). Although these volumes often glorified their author, they were avowedly written to explain colonizing opportunities to Englishmen. In time, each colony was similarly described: Daniel Denton's *Brief Description of New York* (1670), William Penn's *Brief Account of the Province of Pennsylvania* (1682), and Thomas Ashe's *Carolina* (1682) were only a few of many works praising America as a land of economic promise.

Such writers acknowledged British allegiance, but others stressed the differences of opinion that spurred the colonists to leave their homeland. More important, they argued questions of government involving the relationship between church and state. The attitude that most authors attacked was jauntily set forth by Nathaniel Ward of Massachusetts Bay in *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America* (1647). Ward amusingly defended the status quo and railed at colonists who sponsored newfangled notions. A variety of counterarguments to such a conservative view were published. John Winthrop's *Journal* (written 1630–49) told sympathetically of the attempt of Massachusetts Bay Colony to form a theocracy—a state with God at its head and with its laws based upon the Bible. Later defenders of the theocratic ideal were Increase Mather and his son Cotton. William Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation* (through 1646) showed how his pilgrim Separatists broke completely with Anglicanism. Even more radical than Bradford was Roger Williams, who, in a series of controversial pamphlets, advocated not only the separation of church and state but also the vesting of power in the people and the tolerance of different religious beliefs.

The utilitarian writings of the 17th century included biographies, treatises, accounts of voyages, and sermons. There were few achievements in drama or fiction, since

there was a widespread prejudice against these forms. Bad but popular poetry appeared in the Bay Psalm Book of 1640 and in Michael Wigglesworth's summary in doggerel verse of Calvinistic belief, *The Day of Doom* (1662). There was some poetry, at least, of a higher order. Anne Bradstreet of Massachusetts wrote some lyrics published in *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650), which movingly conveyed her feelings concerning religion and her family. Ranked still higher by modern critics is a poet whose works were not discovered and published until 1939: Edward Taylor, an English-born minister and physician who lived in Boston and Westfield, Massachusetts. Less touched by gloom than the typical Puritan, Taylor wrote lyrics that showed his delight in Christian belief and experience.

All 17th-century American writings were in the manner of British writings of the same period. John Smith wrote in the tradition of geographic literature, Bradford echoed the cadences of the King James Bible, while the Mathers and Roger Williams wrote bejeweled prose typical of the day. Anne Bradstreet's poetic style derived from a long line of British poets, including Spenser and Sidney, while Taylor was in the tradition of such Metaphysical poets as George Herbert and John Donne. Both the content and form of the literature of this first century in America were thus markedly English.

## *American Literature in the 18<sup>th</sup>. Century*

In America in the early years of the 18th century, some writers, such as Cotton Mather, carried on the older traditions. His huge history and biography of Puritan New England, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, in 1702, and his vigorous *Manuductio ad Ministerium*, or introduction to the ministry, in 1726, were defenses of ancient Puritan convictions. Jonathan Edwards, initiator of the Great Awakening, a religious revival that stirred the eastern seacoast for many years, eloquently defended his burning belief in Calvinistic doctrine—of the concept that man, born totally depraved, could attain virtue and salvation only through God’s grace—in his powerful sermons and most notably in the philosophical treatise *Freedom of Will* (1754). He supported his claims by relating them to a complex metaphysical system and by reasoning brilliantly in clear and often beautiful prose.

. But Mather and Edwards were defending a doomed cause. Liberal New England ministers such as John Wise and Jonathan Mayhew moved toward a less rigid religion. Samuel Sewall heralded other changes in his amusing *Diary*, covering the years 1673–1729. Though sincerely religious, he showed in daily records how commercial life in New England replaced rigid Puritanism with more worldly attitudes. The *Journal of Mme Sara Kemble Knight* comically detailed a journey that lady took to New York in 1704. She wrote vividly of what she saw and commented upon it from the standpoint of an orthodox believer, but a quality of levity in her witty writings showed that she was much less fervent than the Pilgrim founders had been. In the South, William Byrd of Virginia, an aristocratic plantation owner, contrasted sharply with gloomier predecessors. His record of a surveying trip in 1728, *The History of the Dividing Line*, and his account of a visit

to his frontier properties in 1733, *A Journey to the Land of Eden*, were his chief works. Years in England, on the Continent, and among the gentry of the South had created gaiety and grace of expression, and, although a devout Anglican, Byrd was as playful as the Restoration wits whose works he clearly admired.

The wrench of the American Revolution emphasized differences that had been growing between American and British political concepts. As the colonists moved to the belief that rebellion was inevitable, fought the bitter war, and worked to found the new nation's government, they were influenced by a number of very effective political writers, such as Samuel Adams and John Dickinson, both of whom favoured the colonists, and loyalist Joseph Galloway. But two figures loomed above these—Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine.

. Franklin, born in 1706, had started to publish his writings in his brother's newspaper, the *New England Courant*, as early as 1722. This newspaper championed the cause of the "Leather Apron" man and the farmer and appealed by using easily understood language and practical arguments. The idea that common sense was a good guide was clear in both the popular *Poor Richard's* almanac, which Franklin edited between 1732 and 1757 and filled with prudent and witty aphorisms purportedly written by uneducated but experienced Richard Saunders, and in the author's *Autobiography*, written between 1771 and 1788, a record of his rise from humble circumstances that offered worldly wise suggestions for future success. Franklin's self-attained culture, deep and wide, gave substance and skill to varied articles, pamphlets, and reports that he wrote concerning the dispute with Great Britain, many of them extremely effective in stating and shaping the colonists' cause.



## **The new nation**

In the postwar period some of these eloquent men were no longer able to win a hearing. Thomas Paine and Samuel Adams lacked the constructive ideas that appealed to those interested in forming a new government. Others fared better—for example, Franklin, whose tolerance and sense showed in addresses to the constitutional convention. A different group of authors, however, became leaders in the new period—Thomas Jefferson and the talented writers of the Federalist papers, a series of 85 essays published in 1787 and 1788 urging the virtues of the proposed new constitution. They were written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. More distinguished for insight into problems of government and cool logic than for eloquence, these works became a classic statement of American governmental, and more generally of republican, theory. At the time they were highly effective in influencing legislators who voted on the new constitution. Hamilton, who wrote perhaps 51 of the Federalist papers, became a leader of the Federalist Party and, as first secretary of the treasury (1789–95), wrote messages that were influential in increasing the power of national government at the expense of the state governments..

Thomas Jefferson was an influential political writer during and after the war. The merits of his great summary, the Declaration of Independence, consisted, as Madison pointed out, “in a lucid communication of human rights...in a style and tone appropriate to the great occasion, and to the spirit of the American people.” After the war he formulated the exact tenets of his faith in various papers but most richly in his letters and inaugural addresses, in which he urged individual freedom and local autonomy—a theory of decentralization differing from Hamilton’s belief in strong federal government. Though he held that all men are created equal,

Jefferson thought that “a natural aristocracy” of “virtues and talents” should hold high governmental positions.

## **Notable works of the period**

### **Poets and poetry**

Poetry became a weapon during the American Revolution, with both loyalists and Continentals urging their forces on, stating their arguments, and celebrating their heroes in verse and songs such as “Yankee Doodle,” “Nathan Hale,” and “The Epilogue,” mostly set to popular British melodies and in manner resembling other British poems of the period.

The most memorable American poet of the period was Philip Freneau, whose first well-known poems, Revolutionary War satires, served as effective propaganda; later he turned to various aspects of the American scene. Although he wrote much in the stilted manner of the Neoclassicists, such poems as “The Indian Burying Ground,” “The Wild Honey Suckle,” “To a Caty-did,” and “On a Honey Bee” were romantic lyrics of real grace and feeling that were forerunners of a literary movement destined to be important in the 19th century.

### **Drama and the novel**

In the years toward the close of the 18th century, both dramas and novels of some historical importance were produced. Though theatrical groups had long been active in America, the first American comedy presented professionally was Royall Tyler’s Contrast (1787). This drama was full of echoes of Goldsmith and Sheridan, but it contained a Yankee character (the predecessor of many such in years to

follow) who brought something native to the stage.

William Hill Brown wrote the first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), which showed authors how to overcome ancient prejudices against this form by following the sentimental novel form invented by Samuel Richardson. A flood of sentimental novels followed to the end of the 19th century. Hugh Henry Brackenridge succeeded Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Henry Fielding with some popular success in *Modern Chivalry* (1792–1815), an amusing satire on democracy and an interesting portrayal of frontier life. Gothic thrillers were to some extent nationalized in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798), *Arthur Mervyn* (1799–1800), and *Edgar Huntly* (1799).

## *American Literature in the 19<sup>th</sup>. Century*

### **Early 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature**

After the American Revolution, and increasingly after the War of 1812, American writers were exhorted to produce a literature that was truly native. As if in response, four authors of very respectable stature appeared. William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe initiated a great half century of literary development.

Bryant, a New Englander by birth, attracted attention in his 23<sup>rd</sup> year when the first version of his poem “Thanatopsis” (1817) appeared. This, as well as some later poems, was written under the influence of English 18<sup>th</sup>-century poets. Still later, however, under the influence of Wordsworth and other Romantics, he wrote nature lyrics that vividly represented the New England scene. Turning to journalism, he had a long career as a fighting liberal editor of *The Evening Post*. He himself was overshadowed, in renown at least, by a native-born New Yorker, Washington Irving.

Irving, the youngest member of a prosperous merchant family, joined with ebullient young men of the town in producing the *Salmagundi* papers (1807–08), which satirized the foibles of Manhattan’s citizenry. This was followed by *A History of New York* (1809), by “Diedrich Knickerbocker,” a burlesque history that mocked pedantic scholarship and sniped at the old Dutch families. Irving’s models in these works were obviously Neoclassical English satirists, from whom he had learned to write in a polished, bright style. Later, having met Sir Walter Scott and

having become acquainted with imaginative German literature, he introduced a new Romantic note in *The Sketch Book* (1819–20), *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and other works. He was the first American writer to win the ungrudging (if somewhat surprised) respect of British critics.

James Fenimore Cooper won even wider fame. Following the pattern of Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley" novels, he did his best work in the "Leatherstocking" tales (1823–41), a five-volume series celebrating the career of a great frontiersman named Natty Bumppo. His skill in weaving history into inventive plots and in characterizing his compatriots brought him acclaim not only in America and England but on the continent of Europe as well.

Edgar Allan Poe, reared in the South, lived and worked as an author and editor in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Richmond, and New York City. His work was shaped largely by analytical skill that showed clearly in his role as an editor: time after time he gauged the taste of readers so accurately that circulation figures of magazines under his direction soared impressively. It showed itself in his critical essays, wherein he lucidly explained and logically applied his criteria. His gothic tales of terror were written in accordance with his findings when he studied the most popular magazines of the day. His masterpieces of terror—"The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842), "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846), and others—were written according to a carefully worked out psychological method. So were his detective stories, such as "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), which historians credited as the first of the genre. As a poet, he achieved fame with "The Raven" (1845). His work, especially his critical writings and carefully crafted poems, had perhaps a greater influence in France,

where they were translated by Charles Baudelaire, than in his own country.

Two Southern novelists were also outstanding in the earlier part of the century: John Pendleton Kennedy and William Gilmore Simms. In *Swallow Barn* (1832), Kennedy wrote delightfully of life on the plantations. Simms's forte was the writing of historical novels like those of Scott and Cooper, which treated the history of the frontier and his native South Carolina. *The Yemassee* (1835) and Revolutionary romances show him at his best.

### **American Renaissance**

The authors who began to come to prominence in the 1830s and were active until about the end of the Civil War—the humorists, the classic New Englanders, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and others—did their work in a new spirit, and their achievements were of a new sort. In part this was because they were in some way influenced by the broadening democratic concepts that in 1829 triumphed in Andrew Jackson's inauguration as president. In part it was because, in this Romantic period of emphasis upon native scenes and characters in many literatures, they put much of America into their books.

Particularly full of vivid touches were the writings of two groups of American humorists whose works appeared between 1830 and 1867. One group created several down-east Yankee characters who used commonsense arguments to comment upon the political and social scene. The most important of this group were Seba Smith, James Russell Lowell, and Benjamin P. Shillaber. These authors caught the talk and character of New England at that time as no one else had done. In the old Southwest, meanwhile, such writers as Davy Crockett, Augustus Baldwin

Longstreet, Johnson J. Hooper, Thomas Bangs Thorpe, Joseph G. Baldwin, and George Washington Harris drew lively pictures of the ebullient frontier and showed the interest in the common man that was a part of Jacksonian democracy.

### **Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman**

History also figured in tales and romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the leading New England fictionist of the period. Many tales and longer works—for example, his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)—were set against a background of colonial America with emphasis upon its distance in time from 19th-century New England. Others, such as *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), dealt with the past as well as the present. Still others, such as *The Marble Faun* (1860), were set in distant countries. Remote though they were at times from what Hawthorne called “the light of common day,” they showed deep psychological insight and probed into complex ethical problems.

Another great American fiction writer, for a time a neighbour and associate of Hawthorne, was Herman Melville. After relatively little schooling, Melville went to sea; a whaling ship, as he put it, was his “Yale College and his Harvard.” His first books were fiction in the guise of factual writing based upon experiences as a sailor—*Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847); so were such later works as *Redburn* (1849) and *White-Jacket* (1850). Between 1846 and 1851, however, Melville’s reading in philosophy and literary classics, as well as in Hawthorne’s allegorical and symbolic writings, gave him new interests and aims. The first sign of this interest was *Mardi* (1849), an uneven and disjointed transitional book that used allegory after the model of Rabelais to comment upon ideas afloat in the period—about nations, politics, institutions, literature, and religion. The new

techniques came to fruition in *Moby Dick; or, The Whale* (1851), a richly symbolic work, complex but brilliantly integrated. Only in short stories, *Benito Cereno*—a masterpiece of its genre—and others, in the psychological novel *Pierre* (1852), and in the novelette *Billy Budd* (written 1890?) was Melville later to show sporadic flashes of the genius that created *Moby Dick*.

An ardent singer of the praise of Manhattan, Walt Whitman saw less of the dark side of life than Melville did. He was a believer in Jacksonian democracy, in the splendour of the common man. Inspired by the Romantic concept of a poet as prophet and also by the Transcendental philosophy of Emerson, Whitman in 1855 published the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. As years passed, nine revised and expanded editions of this work were published. This autobiography in verse was intended to show the ideas, beliefs, emotions, and experiences of the common man in a great period of American individualism. Whitman had a hard time winning a following because he was frank and unconventional in his Transcendental thinking, because he used free verse rather than rhymed or regularly metred verse, and because his poems were not conventionally organized. Nevertheless, he steadily gained the approval of critics and in time came to be recognized as one of the great poets of America.

From the Civil War to 1914

Like the Revolution and the election of Andrew Jackson, the Civil War was a turning point in U.S. history and a beginning of new ways of living. Industry became increasingly important, factories rose and cities grew, and agrarian preeminence declined. The frontier, which before had always been an important factor in the economic scheme, moved steadily westward and, toward the end of the



19th century, vanished. The rise of modern America was accompanied, naturally, by important mutations in literature.

### Literary comedians

Although they continued to employ some devices of the older American humorists, a group of comic writers that rose to prominence was different in important ways from the older group. Charles Farrar Browne, David Ross Locke, Charles Henry Smith, Henry Wheeler Shaw, and Edgar Wilson Nye wrote, respectively, as Artemus Ward, Petroleum V. (for Vesuvius) Nasby, Bill Arp, Josh Billings, and Bill Nye. Appealing to a national audience, these authors forsook the sectional characterizations of earlier humorists and assumed the roles of less individualized literary comedians. The nature of the humour thus shifted from character portrayal to verbal devices such as poor grammar, bad spelling, and slang, incongruously combined with Latinate words and learned allusions. Most that they wrote wore badly, but thousands of Americans in their time and some in later times found these authors vastly amusing.

### . **Fiction and local colourists**

The first group of fiction writers to become popular—the local colourists—took over to some extent the task of portraying sectional groups that had been abandoned by writers of the new humour. Bret Harte, first of these writers to achieve wide success, admitted an indebtedness to prewar sectional humorists, as did some others; and all showed resemblances to the earlier group. Within a brief period, books by pioneers in the movement appeared: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Oldtown Folks* (1869) and *Sam Lawson's Oldtown Fireside Stories* (1871), delightful vignettes of New England; Harte's *Luck of Roaring Camp, and Other Sketches* (1870), humorous and sentimental tales of California mining camp life;

and Edward Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871), a novel of the early days of the settlement of Indiana. Down into the 20th century, short stories (and a relatively small number of novels) in patterns set by these three continued to appear. In time, practically every corner of the country had been portrayed in local-colour fiction. Additional writings were the depictions of Louisiana Creoles by George W. Cable, of Virginia Blacks by Thomas Nelson Page, of Georgia Blacks by Joel Chandler Harris, of Tennessee mountaineers by Mary Noailles Murfree (Charles Egbert Craddock), of tight-lipped folk of New England by Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, of people of New York City by Henry Cuyler Bunner and William Sydney Porter (“O. Henry”). The avowed aim of some of these writers was to portray realistically the lives of various sections and thus to promote understanding in a united nation. The stories as a rule were only partially realistic, however, since the authors tended nostalgically to revisit the past instead of portraying their own time, to winnow out less glamorous aspects of life, or to develop their stories with sentiment or humour. Touched by romance though they were, these fictional works were transitional to realism, for they did portray common folk sympathetically; they did concern themselves with dialect and mores; and some at least avoided older sentimental or romantic formulas.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) was allied with literary comedians and local colourists. As a printer's apprentice, he knew and emulated the prewar sectional humorists. He rose to prominence in days when Artemus Ward, Bret Harte, and their followers were idols of the public. His first books, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872), like several of later periods, were travel books in which affiliations with postwar professional humorists were clearest. *The*

*Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), his best works, which re-created the life of the Mississippi valley in the past, were closest to the work of older humorists and local colourists. Despite his flaws, he was one of America's greatest writers. He was a very funny man. He had more skill than his teachers in selecting evocative details, and he had a genius for characterization.

Born and raised in Ohio, William Dean Howells was an effective advocate of a new realistic mode of fiction writing. At the start, Howells conceived of realism as a truthful portrayal of ordinary facets of life—with some limitations; he preferred comedy to tragedy, and he tended to be reticent to the point of prudishness. The formula was displayed at its best in *Their Wedding Journey* (1872), *A Modern Instance* (1882), and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). Howells preferred novels he wrote after he encountered Tolstoy's writings and was persuaded by them, as he said, to "set art forever below humanity." In such later novels as *Annie Kilburn* (1888) and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), he chose characters not only because they were commonplace but also because the stories he told about them were commentaries upon society, government, and ec

### **The naturalists**

Other American writers toward the close of the 19th century moved toward naturalism, a more advanced stage of realism. Hamlin Garland's writings exemplified some aspects of this development when he made short stories and novels vehicles for philosophical and social preachments and was franker than Howells in stressing the harsher details of the farmer's struggles and in treating the subject of sex. *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891) and *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* (1895)

displayed Garland's particular talents. These and a critical manifesto for the new fiction, *Crumbling Idols* (1894), were influential contributions to a developing movement.

Other American authors of the same period or slightly later were avowed followers of French naturalists led by Émile Zola. Theodore Dreiser, for instance, treated subjects that had seemed too daring to earlier realists and, like other Naturalists, illustrated his own beliefs by his depictions of characters and unfolding of plots. Holding that men's deeds were "chemical compulsions," he showed characters unable to direct their actions. Holding also that "the race was to the swift and the battle to the strong," he showed characters defeated by stronger and more ruthless opponents. His major books included *Sister Carrie* (1900), *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914), and—much later—*An American Tragedy* (1925).

Dreiser did not bother with—or did not care for—niceties of style or elaborate symbolism such as were found in French naturalistic works; but Stephen Crane and Frank Norris were attentive to such matters. In short novels, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), and in some of his short stories, Crane was an impressionist who made his details and his setting forth of them embody a conception of man overwhelmed by circumstance and environment. Frank Norris, who admired Crane's "aptitude for making phrases—sparks that cast a momentary gleam upon whole phases of life," himself tried to make phrases, scenes, and whole narratives cast such gleams in *McTeague* (1899), *The Octopus* (1901), and *The Pit* (1903). Both Crane and Norris died young, their full abilities undeveloped but their

experiments foreshadowing later achievements in the 20th-century novel.

### Henry James

In the books of Henry James, born in New York but later an expatriate in England, fiction took a different pathway. Like realists and naturalists of his time, he thought that fiction should reproduce reality. He conceived of reality, however, as twice translated—first, through the author's peculiar experiencing of it and, second, through his unique depicting of it. Deep insight and thorough experience were no more important, therefore, than the complicated and delicate task of the artist. The Art of Fiction (1884), essays on novelists, and brilliant prefaces to his collected works showed him struggling thoroughly and consciously with the problems of his craft. Together, they formed an important body of discussion of fictional artistry.

An excellent short-story writer, James nevertheless was chiefly important for novels in which his doctrines found concrete embodiment. Outstanding were The American (1877), The Portrait of a Lady (1881), The Spoils of Poynton (1897), What Maisie Knew (1897), The Wings of the Dove (1902), The Ambassadors (1903), and The Golden Bowl (1904). The earliest of these were international novels wherein conflicts arose from relationships between Americans and Europeans—each group with its own characteristics and morals. As time passed, he became increasingly interested in the psychological processes of his characters and in a subtle rendering of their limited insights, their perceptions, and their emotions.

### **Critics of the gilded age**

Writers of many types of works contributed to a great body of literature that

flourished between the Civil War and 1914—literature of social revolt. Novels attacked the growing power of business and the growing corruption of government, and some novelists outlined utopias. Political corruption and inefficiency figured in Henry Adams's novel *Democracy* (1880). Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) was both an indictment of the capitalistic system and an imaginative picturing of a utopia achieved by a collectivist society in the year 2000. Howells's *Traveler from Altruria* (1894) pleaded for an equalitarian state in which the government regimented men's lives. The year 1906 saw the publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, first of many works by him that criticized U.S. economic and political life and urged socialism as the remedy.

Two poets embodied criticisms in songs. Edwin Markham's "Man with the Hoe" (1899) was a protest against the exploitation of labour and vaguely threatened revolution; it immediately stimulated nationwide interest. A year later William Vaughn Moody's "Ode in Time of Hesitation" denounced growing U.S. imperialism as a desertion of earlier principles; his "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" (1901) developed the same theme even more effectively.

With the rise of journalistic magazines, a group of journalists became notable as critics of America—the group dubbed "the muckrakers" by Theodore Roosevelt. Ida M. Tarbell's *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904) and Lincoln Steffens's *The Shame of the Cities* (1904) were typical contributions by two members of a large group of journalistic crusaders.

### Henry Adams

One of the most devastating and most literate attacks on modern life was an autobiography of a scion of an ancient New England family, the Adamses. Educated

at Harvard and abroad, Henry Adams was a great teacher and historian (*History of the United States* [1889–91] and *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* [1904]). The Education of Henry Adams (printed privately 1906; published 1918), however, complained that a lifelong hunt for some sort of order in the world, some sort of faith for man, left him completely baffled. The quiet, urbane style served well to underline, in an ironic way, the message of this pessimistic book.

Poets of the era

The later 19th century and early years of the 20th century were a poor period for American poetry; yet (in addition to William Vaughn Moody) two poets of distinction wrote songs that survived long after scores of minor poets had been forgotten. One was Southern-born Sidney Lanier, a talented musician who utilized the rhythms of music and the thematic developments of symphonies in such fine songs as “Corn” (1875), “The Symphony” (1875), and “The Marshes of Glynn” (1878). Distressed, like many of his contemporaries, by changes in American life, he wove his doubts, fears, and suggestions into his richest poems.

. The other poet was a New Englander, Emily Dickinson. A shy, playful, odd personality, she allowed practically none of her writings to be published during her lifetime. Not until 1890, four years after her death, was the first book of her poems published, to be followed at intervals by other collections. Later poets were to be influenced by her individual techniques—use of imperfect, or eye, rhymes, avoidance of regular rhythms, and a tendency to pack brief stanzas with cryptic meanings. Like Lanier, she rediscovered the value of conceits for setting forth her thoughts and feelings. Such poems as “The Snake,” “I Like to See It Lap the

Miles,” “The Chariot,” “Farther in Summer than the Birds,” and “There’s a Certain Slant of Light” represented her unusual talent at its best



## *American Literature in the 20<sup>th</sup>. Century*

### **Writing from 1914 to 1945**

Important movements in drama, poetry, fiction, and criticism took shape in the years before, during, and after World War I. The eventful period that followed the war left its imprint upon books of all kinds. Literary forms of the period were extraordinarily varied, and in drama, poetry, and fiction the leading authors tended toward radical technical experiments.

### **Experiments in drama**

Although drama had not been a major art form in the 19th century, no type of writing was more experimental than a new drama that arose in rebellion against the glib commercial stage. In the early years of the 20th century, Americans traveling in Europe encountered a vital, flourishing theatre; returning home, some of them became active in founding the Little Theatre movement throughout the country. Freed from commercial limitations, playwrights experimented with dramatic forms and methods of production, and in time producers, actors, and dramatists appeared who had been trained in college classrooms and community playhouses. Some Little Theatre groups became commercial producers—for example, the Washington Square Players, founded in 1915, which became the Theatre Guild (first production in 1919). The resulting drama was marked by a spirit of innovation and by a new seriousness and maturity.

Eugene O'Neill, the most admired dramatist of the period, was a product of this movement. He worked with the Provincetown Players before his plays were

commercially produced. His dramas were remarkable for their range. *Beyond the Horizon* (first performed 1920), *Anna Christie* (1921), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), and *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) were naturalistic works, while *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922) made use of the Expressionistic techniques developed in German drama in the period 1914–24. He also employed a stream-of-consciousness form of psychological monologue in *Strange Interlude* (1928) and produced a work that combined myth, family drama, and psychological analysis in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931).

No other dramatist was as generally praised as O'Neill, but many others wrote plays that reflected the growth of a serious and varied drama, including Maxwell Anderson, whose verse dramas have dated badly, and Robert E. Sherwood, a Broadway professional who wrote both comedy (*Reunion in Vienna* [1931]) and tragedy (*There Shall Be No Night* [1940]). Marc Connelly wrote touching fantasy in an African American folk biblical play, *The Green Pastures* (1930). Like O'Neill, Elmer Rice made use of both Expressionistic techniques (*The Adding Machine* [1923]) and naturalism (*Street Scene* [1929]). Lillian Hellman wrote powerful, well-crafted melodramas in *The Children's Hour* (1934) and *The Little Foxes* (1939). Radical theatre experiments included Marc Blitzstein's savagely satiric musical *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937) and the work of Orson Welles and John Houseman for the government-sponsored Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Theatre Project. The premier radical theatre of the decade was the Group Theatre (1931–41) under Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, which became best known for presenting the work of Clifford Odets. In *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), a stirring plea for labour unionism, Odets roused the audience to an intense pitch of

fervour, and in *Awake and Sing* (1935), perhaps the best play of the decade, he created a lyrical work of family conflict and youthful yearning. Other important plays by Odets for the Group Theatre were *Paradise Lost* (1935), *Golden Boy* (1937), and *Rocket to the Moon* (1938). Thornton Wilder used stylized settings and poetic dialogue in *Our Town* (1938) and turned to fantasy in *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). William Saroyan shifted his lighthearted, anarchic vision from fiction to drama with *My Heart's in the Highlands* and *The Time of Your Life* (both 1939).

### **The new poetry**

Poetry ranged between traditional types of verse and experimental writing that departed radically from the established forms of the 19th century. Two New England poets, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost, who were not noted for technical experimentation, won both critical and popular acclaim in this period. Robinson, whose first book appeared in 1896, did his best work in sonnets, ballad stanzas, and blank verse. In the 1920s he won three Pulitzer Prizes—for his *Collected Poems* (published 1921), *The Man Who Died Twice* (1925), and *Tristram* (1927). Like Robinson, Frost used traditional stanzas and blank verse in volumes such as *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first book, and *North of Boston* (1914), *New Hampshire* (1923), *A Further Range* (1936), and *A Masque of Reason* (1945). The best-known poet of his generation, Frost, like Robinson, saw and commented upon the tragic aspects of life in poems such as “Design,” “Directive,” and “Provide, Provide.” Frost memorably crafted the language of common speech into traditional poetic form, with epigrammatic effect.

Just as modern American drama had its beginnings in little theatres, modern American poetry took form in little magazines. Particularly important was *Poetry: A*

*Magazine of Verse*, founded by Harriet Monroe in Chicago in 1912. The surrounding region soon became prominent as the home of three poets: Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, and Edgar Lee Masters. Lindsay's blend of legendary lore and native oratory in irregular odelike forms was well adapted to oral presentation, and his lively readings from his works contributed to the success of such books as *General William Booth Enters into Heaven, and Other Poems* (1913) and *The Congo, and Other Poems* (1914). Sandburg wrote of life on the prairies and in Midwestern cities in Whitmanesque free verse in such volumes as *Chicago Poems* (1916) and *The People, Yes* (1936). Masters's very popular *Spoon River Anthology* (1915) consisted of free-verse monologues by village men and women, most of whom spoke bitterly of their frustrated lives.

Except for a period after World War II, when he was confined in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., Ezra Pound lived outside the United States after 1908. He had, nevertheless, a profound influence on 20th-century writing in English, both as a practitioner of verse and as a patron and impresario of other writers. His most controversial work remained *The Cantos*, the first installment of which appeared in 1926 and the latest in 1959 (*Thrones: 96–109 de los cantares*), with a fragmentary addendum in 1968 (*Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX–CXVII*).

Like Pound, to whom he was much indebted, T.S. Eliot lived abroad most of his life, becoming a British subject in 1927. His first volume, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, was published in 1917. In 1922 appeared *The Waste Land*, the poem by which he first became famous. Filled with fragments, competing voices, learned allusions, and deeply buried personal details, the poem was read as a dark diagnosis of a disillusioned generation and of the modern world. As a poet and

critic, Eliot exercised a strong influence, especially in the period between World Wars I and II. In what some critics regard as his finest work, *The Four Quartets* (1943), Eliot explored through images of great beauty and haunting power his own past, the past of the human race, and the meaning of human history.

Eliot was an acknowledged master of a varied group of poets whose work was indebted to 17th-century English Metaphysical poets, especially to John Donne. Eliot's influence was clear in the writings of Archibald MacLeish, whose earlier poems showed resemblances to *The Waste Land*. A number of Southern poets (who were also critics) were influenced by Eliot—John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, and Allen Tate. Younger American Metaphysicals who emerged later included Louise Bogan, Léonie Adams, Muriel Rukeyser, Delmore Schwartz, and Karl Shapiro. But there were several major poets strongly opposed to Eliot's influence. Their style and subjects tended to be romantic and visionary. These included Hart Crane, whose long poem *The Bridge* (1930) aimed to create a Whitmanesque American epic, and Wallace Stevens, a lush and sensuous writer who made an astonishing literary debut with the poems collected in *Harmonium* (1923). Another opponent of Eliot was William Carlos Williams, who invested his experimental prose and magically simple lyrics—in works such as *Spring and All* (1923)—with the mundane details of American life and wrote about American myth and cultural history with great sweep in *In the American Grain* (1925).

### **Fiction**

The little magazines that helped the growth of the poetry of the era also contributed to a development of its fiction. They printed daring or unconventional short stories

and published attacks upon established writers. *The Dial* (1880–1929), *Little Review* (1914–29), *Seven Arts* (1916–17), and others encouraged Modernist innovation. More potent were two magazines edited by the ferociously funny journalist-critic H.L. Mencken—*The Smart Set* (editorship 1914–23) and *American Mercury* (which he coedited between 1924 and 1933). A powerful influence and a scathing critic of puritanism, Mencken helped launch the new fiction.

Mencken’s major enthusiasms included the fiction of Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, but he also promoted minor writers for their attacks on gentility, such as James Branch Cabell, or for their revolt against the narrow, frustrated quality of life in rural communities, including Zona Gale and Ruth Suckow. The most distinguished of these writers was Sherwood Anderson. His *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) were collections of short stories that showed villagers suffering from all sorts of phobias and suppressions. Anderson in time wrote several novels, the best being *Poor White* (1920).

In 1920 critics noticed that a new school of fiction had risen to prominence with the success of books such as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* and Sinclair Lewis’s *Main Street*, fictions that tended to be frankly psychological or modern in their unsparing portrayals of contemporary life. Novels of the 1920s were often not only lyrical and personal but also, in the despairing mood that followed World War I, apt to express the pervasive disillusionment of the postwar generation. Novels of the 1930s inclined toward radical social criticism in response to the miseries of the Great Depression, though some of the best, by writers such as Fitzgerald,

William Faulkner, Henry Roth, and Nathanael West, continued to explore the Modernist vein of the previous decade.

A number of authors wrote proletarian novels attacking capitalist exploitation, as in several novels based on a 1929 strike in the textile mills in Gastonia, N.C., such as Fielding Burke's *Call Home the Heart* and Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* (both 1932). Other notable proletarian novels included Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited* (1933), Robert Cantwell's *The Land of Plenty* (1934), and Albert Halper's *Union Square* (1933), *The Foundry* (1934), and *The Chute* (1937), as well as some grim evocations of the drifters and "bottom dogs" of the Depression era, such as Edward Anderson's *Hungry Men* and Tom Kromer's *Waiting for Nothing* (both 1935). The radical movement, combined with a nascent feminism, encouraged the talent of several politically committed women writers whose work was rediscovered later; they included Tillie Olsen, Meridel Le Sueur, and Josephine Herbst.

Particularly admired as a protest writer was John Dos Passos, who first attracted attention with an anti-World War I novel, *Three Soldiers* (1921). His most sweeping indictments of the modern social and economic system, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) and the U.S.A. trilogy (*The 42nd Parallel, 1919*, and *The Big Money* [1930–36]), employed various narrative innovations such as the "camera eye" and "newsreel," along with a large cast of characters, to attack society from the left. Nathanael West's novels, including *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), *A Cool Million* (1934), and *The Day of the Locust* (1939), used black comedy to create a bitter vision of an inhuman and brutal world and its depressing effects on his sensitive but ineffectual protagonists. West evoked the tawdry but rich materials of mass culture and

popular fantasy to mock the pathos of the American Dream, a frequent target during the Depression years.

Hemingway, Faulkner, and Steinbeck

Three authors whose writings showed a shift from disillusionment were Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck. Hemingway's early short stories and his first novels, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), were full of the existential disillusionment of the Lost Generation expatriates. The Spanish Civil War, however, led him to espouse the possibility of collective action to solve social problems, and his less-effective novels, including *To Have and Have Not* (1937) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), embodied this new belief. He regained some of his form in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) and his posthumously published memoir of Paris between the wars, *A Moveable Feast* (1964). Hemingway's writing was influenced by his background in journalism and by the spare manner and flat sentence rhythms of Gertrude Stein, his Paris friend and a pioneer Modernist, especially in such works of hers as *Three Lives* (1909). His own great impact on other writers came from his deceptively simple, stripped-down prose, full of unspoken implication, and from his tough but vulnerable masculinity, which created a myth that imprisoned the author and haunted the World War II generation.

Hemingway's great rival as a stylist and mythmaker was William Faulkner, whose writing was as baroque as Hemingway's was spare. Influenced by Sherwood Anderson, Herman Melville, and especially James Joyce, Faulkner combined stream-of-consciousness techniques with rich social history. Works such as *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in*



*August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), and *The Hamlet* (1940) were parts of the unfolding history of Yoknapatawpha County, a mythical Mississippi community, which depicted the transformation and the decadence of the South. Faulkner's work was dominated by a sense of guilt going back to the American Civil War and the appropriation of Indian lands. Though often comic, his work pictured the disintegration of the leading families and, in later books such as *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), showed a growing concern with the troubled role of race in Southern life..

# **I. Modern American Novel**

# **THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY**

By

Thornton Wilder

# **PART 1:**

## **PERHAPS AN ACCIDENT**

On Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below. This bridge was on the highroad between Lima and Cuzco and hundreds of persons passed over it every day. It had been woven of osier by the Incas more than a century before and visitors to the city were always led out to see it. It was a mere ladder of thin slats swung out over the gorge, with handrails of dried vine. Horses and coaches and chairs had to go down hundreds of feet below and pass over the narrow torrent on rafts, but no one, not even the Viceroy, not even the Archbishop of Lima, had descended with the baggage rather than cross by the famous bridge of San Luis Rey. St. Louis of France himself protected it, by his name and by the little mud church on the further side. The bridge seemed to be among the things that last forever; it was unthinkable that it should break. The moment a Peruvian heard of the accident he signed himself and made a mental calculation as to how recently he had crossed by it and how soon he had intended crossing by it again. People wandered about in a trance-like state, muttering; they had the hallucination of seeing themselves falling into a gulf.

There was a great service in the Cathedral. The bodies of the victims were approximately collected and approximately separated from one another, and there was great searching of hearts in the beautiful city of Lima. Servant girls returned

bracelets which they had stolen from their mistresses, and usurers harangued their wives angrily, in defense of usury. Yet it was rather strange that this event should have so impressed the Limeans, for in that country those catastrophes which lawyers shockingly call the "acts of God" were more than usually frequent. Tidal waves were continually washing away cities; earthquakes arrived every week and towers fell upon good men and women all the time. Diseases were forever flitting in and out of the provinces and old age carried away some of the most admirable citizens. That is why it was so surprising that the Peruvians should have been especially touched by the rent in the bridge of San Luis Rey.

Everyone was very deeply impressed, but only one person did anything about it, and that was Brother Juniper. By a series of coincidences so extraordinary that one almost suspects the presence of some Intention, this little red-haired Franciscan from Northern Italy happened to be in Peru converting the Indians and happened to witness the accident.

It was a very hot noon, that fatal noon, and coming around the shoulder of a hill Brother Juniper stopped to wipe his forehead and to gaze upon the screen of snowy peaks in the distance, then into the gorge below him filled with the dark plumage of green trees and green birds and traversed by its ladder of osier. Joy was in him; things were not going badly. He had opened several little abandoned churches and the Indians were crawling in to early Mass and groaning at the moment of miracle as though their hearts would break. Perhaps it was the pure air from the snows before him; perhaps it was the memory that brushed him for a moment of the poem that bade him raise his eyes to the helpful hills. At all events he felt at peace. Then

his glance fell upon the bridge, and at that moment a twanging noise filled the air, as when the string of some musical instrument snaps in a disused room, and he saw the bridge divide and Aling five gesticulating ants into the valley below.

Anyone else would have said to himself with secret joy: "Within ten minutes myself. . .!" But it was another thought that visited Brother Juniper: "Why did this happen to those five?" If there were any plan in the universe at all, if there were any pattern in a human life, surely it could be discovered mysteriously latent in those lives so suddenly cut off. Either we live by accident and die by accident, or we live by plan and die by plan. And on that instant Brother Juniper, made the resolve to inquire into the secret lives of those five persons, that moment falling through the air, and to surprise the reason of their taking off.

It seemed to Brother Juniper that it was high time for theology to take its place among the exact sciences and he had long intended putting it there. What he had lacked hitherto was a laboratory. Oh, there had never been any lack of specimens; any number of his charges had met calamity, spiders had stung them; their lungs had been touched; their houses had burned down and things had happened to their children from which one averts the mind. But these occasions of human woe had never been quite fit for scientific examination. They had lacked what our good savants were later to call proper control. The accident had been dependent upon human error, for example, or had contained elements of probability. But this collapse of the bridge of San Luis Rey was a sheer Act of God. It afforded a perfect laboratory. Here at last one could surprise His intentions in a pure state.

You and I can see that coming from anyone but Brother Juniper this plan would be the flower of a perfect skepticism. It resembled the effort of those presumptuous souls who wanted to walk on the pavements of Heaven and built the Tower of Babel to get there. But to our Franciscan there was no element of doubt in the experiment. He knew the answer. He merely wanted to prove it, historically, mathematically, to his converts, poor obstinate converts, so slow to believe that their pains were inserted into their lives for their own good. People were always asking for good sound proofs; doubt springs eternal in the human breast, even in countries where the Inquisition can read your very thoughts in your eyes.

This was not the first time that Brother Juniper had tried to resort to such methods. Often on the long trips he had to make (scurrying from parish to parish, his robe tucked up about his knees, for haste) he would fall to dreaming of experiments that justify the ways of God to man. For instance, a complete record of the Prayers for Rain and their results. Often he had stood on the steps of one of his little churches, his flock kneeling before him on the baked street. Often he had stretched his arms to the sky and declaimed the splendid ritual. Not often, but several times, he had felt the virtue enter him and seen the little cloud forming on the horizon. But there were many times when weeks went by ... but why think of them? It was not himself he was trying to convince that rain and drought were wisely apportioned.

Thus it was that the determination rose within him at the moment of the accident. It prompted him to busy himself for six years, knocking at all the doors in Lima, asking thousands of questions, filling scores of notebooks, in his effort at

establishing the fact that each of the five lost lives was a perfect whole. Everyone knew that he was working on some sort of memorial of the accident and everyone was very helpful and misleading. A few even knew the principal aim of his activity and there were patrons in high places.

The result of all this diligence was an enormous book, which as we shall see later, was publicly burned on a beautiful Spring morning in the great square. But there was a secret copy and after a great many years and without much notice it found its way to the library of the University of San Marco. There it lies between two great wooden covers collecting dust in a cupboard. It deals with one after another of the victims of the accident, cataloguing thousands of little facts and anecdotes and testimonies, and concluding with a dignified passage describing why God had settled upon that person and upon that day for His demonstration of wisdom. Yet for all his diligence Brother Juniper never knew the central passion of Doña María's life; nor of Uncle Pio's, not even of Esteban's. And I, who claim to know so much more, isn't it possible that even I have missed the very spring within the spring?

Some say that we shall never know and that to the gods we are like the flies that the boys kill on a summer day, and some say, on the contrary, that the very sparrows do not lose a feather that has not been brushed away by the finger of God.



***PART II: THE MARQUESA***  
**DE MONTEMAYOR**

Any Spanish schoolboy is required to know today more about Doña María, Marquesa de Montemayor, than Brother Juniper was to discover in years of research. Within a century of her death her letters had become one of the monuments of Spanish literature and her life and times have ever since been the object of long studies. But her biographers have erred in one direction as greatly as the Franciscan did in another; they have tried to invest her with a host of graces, to read back into her life and person some of the beauties that abound in her letters, whereas all real knowledge of this wonderful woman must proceed from the act of humiliating her and of divesting her of all beauties save one.

She was the daughter of a cloth-merchant who had acquired the money and the hatred of the Limeans within a stone's throw of the Plaza. Her childhood was unhappy: she was ugly; she stuttered; her mother persecuted her with sarcasms in an effort to arouse some social charms and forced her to go about the town in a veritable harness of jewels. She lived alone and she thought alone. Many suitors, presented themselves, but as long as she could she fought against the convention of her time and was determined to remain single. There were hysterical scenes with her mother, recriminations, screams and slamming of doors. At last at twenty-six she found herself penned into marriage with a supercilious and ruined nobleman and the Cathedral of Lima fairly buzzed with the sneers of her guests. Still she lived alone and thought alone, and when an exquisite daughter was born to her she fastened upon her an idolatrous love. But little Clara took after her father; she was cold and intellectual. At the age of eight she was calmly correcting her mother's speech and presently regarding her with astonishment and repulsion. The frightened mother became meek and obsequious but she could not prevent herself from

persecuting Doña Clara with nervous attention and a fatiguing love. Again there were hysterical recriminations, screams and slamming of doors.

From the offers of marriage that fell to her, Doña Clara deliberately chose the one that required her removal to Spain. So to Spain she went, to that land from which it takes six months to receive an answer to one's letter. The leave-taking before so long a voyage became in Peru one of the formal services of the Church. The ship was blessed and as the space widened between the vessel and the beach both companies knelt and sang a hymn that never failed to sound weak and timid in all that open air. Doña Clara sailed with most admirable composure, leaving her mother to gaze after the bright ship, her hand pressing now her heart and now her mouth. Blurred and streaked became her view of the serene Pacific and the enormous clouds of pearl that hang forever motionless above it.

Left alone in Lima the Marquesa's life grew more and more inward. She became increasingly negligent in her dress and like all lonely people she talked to herself audibly. All her existence lay in the burning center of her mind. On that stage were performed endless dialogues with her daughter, impossible reconciliations, scenes eternally recommenced of remorse and forgiveness. On the street you beheld an old woman, her red wig fallen a little over one ear, her left cheek angry with a leprous affection, her right with a complementary adjustment of rouge. Her chin was never dry; her lips were never still. Lima was a city of eccentrics, but even there she became its jest as she drove through the streets or shuffled up the steps of its churches. She was thought to be continuously drunk. Worse things were said of her and petitions were afloat that she be locked up. She had been denounced three times before the Inquisition. It is not impossible that she might have been burned had her

son-in-law been less influential in Spain and had she not somehow collected a few friends about the viceregal court who suffered her for her oddity and her wide reading.

The distressing character of the relations between mother and daughter were further embittered by misunderstandings over money. The Condesa received a handsome allowance from her mother and frequent gifts. Doña Clara soon became the outstanding woman of intelligence at the Spanish court. All the wealth of Peru would have been insufficient to maintain her in the grandiose style she fancied for herself. Strangely enough her extravagance proceeded from one of the best traits in her nature: she regarded her friends, her servants and all the interesting people in the capital as her children. In fact there seemed only one person in the world towards whom she did not expend herself in kind offices. Among her protégés was the cartographer De Blasiis (whose Maps of the New World was dedicated to the Marquesa de Montemayor amid the roars of the courtiers at Lima who read that she was the "admiration of her city and a rising sun in the West"); another was the scientist Azuarius whose treatise on the laws of hydraulics was suppressed by the Inquisition as being too exciting. For a decade the Condesa literally sustained all the arts and sciences of Spain; it was not her fault that nothing memorable was produced in that time.

About four years after Doña Clara's departure Doña María received her permission to visit Europe. On both sides the visit was anticipated with resolutions well nourished on self-reproach: the one to be patient, the other to be undemonstrative. Both failed. Each tortured the other and was on the point of losing

her mind under the alternations of self rebuke and the outbursts of passion. At length one day Doña María rose before dawn, daring no more than to kiss the door behind which her daughter was sleeping, took ship and returned to America. Henceforth letter-writing had to take the place of all the affection that could not be lived.

Hers were the letters that in an astonishing world have become the text-book of schoolboys and the ant-hill of the grammarians. Doña María would have invented her genius had she not been born with it, so necessary was it to her love that she attract the attention, perhaps the admiration, of her distant child. She forced herself to go out into society in order to cull its ridicules; she taught her eye to observe; she read the masterpieces of her language to discover its effects she insinuated herself into the company of those who were celebrated for their conversation. Night after night in her baroque palace she wrote and rewrote the incredible pages, forcing from her despairing mind those miracles of wit and grace, those distilled chronicles of the viceregal court. We know now that her daughter barely glanced at the letters and that it is to the son-in-law that we owe their preservation.

The Marquesa would have been astonished to learn that her letters were immortal. Yet many critics have accused her of keeping one eye on posterity and point to a number of letters that have all the air of being bravura pieces. To them it seems impossible that Doña María should have put herself to the same pains to dazzle her daughter that most artists expend on dazzling the public. Like her son-in-law they misunderstood her: the Conde delighted in her letters, but he thought that when he had enjoyed the style he had extracted all their richness and intention, missing (as

most readers do) the whole purport of literature, which is the notation of the heart. Style is but the faintly contemptible vessel in which the bitter liquid is recommended to the world. The Marquesa would even have been astonished to learn that her letters were very good, for such authors live always in the noble weather of their own minds and those productions which seem remarkable to us are little better than a day's routine to them.

This was the old woman who hour by hour would sit upon her balcony, her odd straw hat casting a purple shadow across her lined and yellow face. How often as she turned her pages with her gemmed hands, she would ask herself, almost with amusement, whether the constant pain at her heart had an organic seat. She wondered whether a subtle doctor cutting through to that battered throne could at last discover a sign and lifting his face to the amphitheatre cry out to his students: "This woman has suffered, and her suffering has left its mark upon the structure of her heart." This idea had so often visited her that one day she wrote it into a letter and her daughter scolded her for an introspective and for making a cult of sorrow.

The knowledge that she would never be loved in return acted upon her ideas as a tide acts upon cliffs. Her religious beliefs went first, for all she could ask of a god, or of immortality, was the gift of a place where daughters love their mothers; the other attributes of Heaven you could have for a song. Next she lost her belief in the sincerity of those about her. She secretly refused to believe that anyone (herself excepted) loved anyone. All families lived in a wasteful atmosphere of custom and kissed one another with secret indifference. She saw that the people of this world moved about in an armour of egotism, drunk with self-gazing, athirst for

compliments, hearing little of what was said to them, unmoved by the accidents that befell their closest friends, in dread of all appeals that might interrupt their long communion with their own desires. These were the sons and daughters of Adam from Cathay to Peru. And when on the balcony her thoughts reached this turn, her mouth would contract with shame for she knew that she too sinned and that though her love for her daughter was vast enough to include all the colours of love, it was not without a shade of tyranny: she loved her daughter not for her daughter's sake, but for her own. She longed to free herself from this ignoble bond; but the passion was too fierce to cope with. And then on that green balcony a strange warfare would shake the hideous old lady, a singularly futile struggle against a temptation to which she would never have the opportunity of succumbing. How could she rule her daughter when her daughter saw to it that four thousand miles lay between them? Nevertheless Doña María wrestled with the ghost of her temptation and was worsted on every occasion. She wanted her daughter for herself; she wanted to hear her say: "You are the best of all possible mothers"; she longed to hear her whisper: "Forgive me."

About two years after her return from Spain there took place a series of inconspicuous events that had a great deal to tell about the inner life of the Marquesa. Only the faintest allusion to them occurs in the Correspondence, but as that is found in Letter XXII which contains other signs I shall do my best to give a translation and commentary of the first part of the letter:

"Are there no doctors in Spain? Where are those good men from Flanders that used to help you so? Oh, my treasure, how can we punish you enough for letting your cold endure so many weeks? Don Vicente, I implore you to make my child see reason. Angels of Heaven, I implore you to make my child see reason. Now that

you are better, I beg of you, resolve that when the first warning of a cold comes you will steam yourself well and go to bed. Here in Peru I am helpless; I can do nothing. Do not be self-willed, my beloved. God bless you. I am enclosing in today's packet the gum of some tree which the sisters of San Tomás peddle from door to door.

Whether it be of much use I know not. It can do no harm. I am told that in the convent the silly sisters inhale it so diligently that one cannot smell the incense at Mass. Whether it be worth anything I know not; try it.

"Rest easy, my love, I am sending His Most Catholic Majesty the perfect gold chain." (Her daughter had written her: "The chain arrived in good condition and I wore it at the christening of the Infante. His Most Catholic Majesty was gracious enough to admire it and when I told Him that you had given it me He sent you His compliments upon your taste. Do not fail to send Him one as like it as possible; send it at once, by way of the Chamberlain.") "He need never know that in order to obtain it I had to walk into a picture. Do you remember that in the sacristy of San Martín there is a portrait by Velasquez of the Viceroy who founded the monastery and of his wife and brat? and that his wife is wearing a gold chain? I resolved that only that chain would do. So one midnight I slipped into the sacristy, climbed upon the robing-table like a girl of twelve and walked in. The canvas resisted for a moment, but the painter himself came forward to lift me through the pigment. I told him that the most beautiful girl in Spain wished to present the finest gold chain that could be found to the most gracious king in the world. It was as simple as that, and there we stood talking, we four, in the gray and silvery air that makes a Velasquez. Now I keep thinking about a more golden light; I keep looking at the Palace: I must pass the evening in a Titian. Would the Viceroy let me?"



"But His Excellency has the gout again. I say 'again because the flattery of the court insists that there are times when he is free of it. This being Saint Mark's day His Excellency started out to visit the University where twenty two new doctors were being brought into the world. He had hardly been carried from his divan to his coach when he screamed and refused to go any farther. He was carried back to his bed where he broke a most delicious cigar and sent for the Perichole. And while we listened to long doctrinal addresses, more or less in Latin, he heard all about us, more or less in Spanish, from the reddest and cruellest lips in town." (Doña María permitted herself this passage, although she had just read in her daughter's last letter: "How many times must I tell you to be more cautious in the things you say in your letters? They often show signs of having been opened on the journey. Nothing could be more ill-judged than your remarks on the you-know-what-I-mean at Cuzco. Such remarks are not funny, even though Vicente did compliment you upon them in his postscript, and they might get us into a great deal of trouble with Certain Persons here in Spain. I continue to be astonished that your indiscretions have not long since led to your being ordered to retire to your farm.")

There was a great press at the Exercises and two women fell from the balcony, but God in His goodness saw that they fell on Doña Merced. All three are badly hurt, but will be thinking of other things within a year. The President was speaking at the moment of the accident and being shortsighted could not imagine what the disturbance of cries and jalk and falling bodies could be about. It was very pleasant to see him bowing, under the impression that he was being applauded.

"Speaking of the Perichole, and of applause, you should know that Pepita and I

decided to go to the Comedia this evening. The public still idolizes its Perichole; it even forgives her her years. We are told that she saves what she can, every morning, by passing alternate pencils of ice and fire across her cheeks.” (Translation falls especially short of this conceit which carries the whole flamboyance of the Spanish language. It was intended as an obsequious flattery of the Condesa, and was untrue. The great actress was twenty-eight at this time; her cheeks had the smoothness and polish of dark yellow marble and would certainly have retained that quality for many years. Apart from the cosmetics required by her performances the only treatment Camila Perichole afforded her face was to throw cold water at it twice a day, like a peasant woman at a horse trough.) "That curious man they call Uncle Pio is by her all the time. Don Rubío says that he cannot make out whether Uncle Pio is her father, her lover, or her son. The Perichole gave a wonderful performance. Scold me all you like for a provincial ninny, you have no such actresses in Spain.” And so on.

It is on this visit to the theatre that further matter hangs. She decided to go to the Comedia where the Perichole was playing Doña Leonor in Moreto's *Trampa Adelante*; perhaps some material could be derived from the visit for her daughter's next letter. She took with her Pepita, a little girl about whom later we shall learn much. Doña María had borrowed her from the orphanage connected with the Convent of Santa María Rosa de las Rosas to be her companion. The Marquesa sat in her box gazing with flagging attention at the brilliant stage. Between the acts it was the Perichole's custom to lay aside the courtly rôle and appear before the curtain to sing a few topical songs. The malicious actress had seen the Marquesa arrive and presently began improvising couplets alluding to her appearance, her avarice, her drunkenness, and even to her daughter's flight from her. The attention

of the house was subtly directed to the old woman and a rising murmur of contempt accompanied the laughter of the audience. But the Marquesa, deeply moved by the first two acts of the comedy, scarcely saw the singer and sat staring before her, thinking about Spain. Camila Perichole became bolder and the air was electric with the hatred and glee of the crowd. At last Pepita plucked the Marquesa's sleeve and whispered to her that they should go. As they left the box the house arose and burst into a roar of triumph; the Perichole flung herself into a frenzied dance, for she saw the manager at the back of the hall and knew that her salary had been increased. But the Marquesa remained unaware of what had taken place; in fact she was quite pleased, for during the visit she had contrived a few felicitous phrases, phrases (who knows) that might bring a smile to her daughter's face and might make her murmur: "Really, my mother is charming."

In due time the report reached the Viceroy's ears that one of his aristocrats had been openly baited in the theatre. He summoned the Perichole to the Palace and ordered her to call upon the Marquesa and to apologize. The trip was to be made barefoot and in a black dress. Camila argued and fought, but all she gained was a pair of shoes.

The Viceroy had three reasons for insisting. In the first place the singer had taken liberties with his court. Don Andrés had contrived to make exile endurable by building up a ceremonial so complicated that it could be remembered only by a society that had nothing else to think about. He nursed his little aristocracy and its minute distinctions and any insult paid to a Marquesa was an insult to His Person. In the second place, Doña María's son-in-law was an increasingly important

personage in Spain, laden with possibilities of injury to the Viceroy, nay with the possibility of supplanting him. The Conde Vicente d'Abuirre must not be vexed, even through his half-wit mother-in-law. Finally, the Viceroy was delighted to humble the actress. He suspected that she was deceiving him with a matador, perhaps with an actor, between the flattery of the court and the inertia of gout he could not quite make out who it was; at all events, it was clear that the singer was beginning to forget that he was one of the first men in the world.

The Marquesa, beside not having heard the scurrilous songs, was in other ways unprepared for the actress's visit. You should know that after the departure of her daughter, Doña María had lighted upon a certain consolation: she had taken to drinking. Everyone drank chicha in Peru and there was no particular disgrace in being found unconscious on a feast day. Doña María had begun to discover that her feverish monologues had a way of keeping her awake all night. Once she took a delicate fluted glassful of chicha on retiring. Oblivion was so sweet that presently she stole larger amounts and tried dissimulating their effects from Pepita; she hinted that she was not well, and represented herself as going into a decline. At last she resigned all pretense. The boats that carried her letter to Spain did not leave oftener than once a month. During the week that preceded the making of the packet she observed a strict regimen and cultivated the city assiduously for material. At last on the eve of the post she wrote the letter, making up the bundle towards dawn and leaving it for Pepita to deliver to the agent. Then as the sun rose she would shut herself up in her room with some flagons and drift through the next few weeks without the burden of consciousness. Finally she would emerge from her happiness and prepare to go into a state of training" in preparation for the writing of another letter..

Thus on the night following the scandal in the theatre she wrote Letter xxii and retired to bed with a carafe. All next day Pepita moved about the room, glancing anxiously at the figure on the bed. The next afternoon Pepita brought her needlework into the room. The Marquesa lay staring at the ceiling with wide-open eyes, talking to herself. Towards dusk Pepita was called to the door and informed that the Perichole had come to see the mistress. Pepita remembered the theatre very well and sent back word angrily that the mistress refused to see her. The man carried the message to the street door, but returned awestruck with the news that the Señora Perichole was armed with a letter from the Viceroy presenting her to the lady. Pepita tiptoed to the bed and started talking to the Marquesa. The glazed eyes moved to the girl's face. Pepita shook her gently. With great effort Doña María tried to fix her mind on what was being said to her. Twice she lay back, refusing to seize the meaning, but at last, like a general calling together in a rain and by night the dispersed division of his army she assembled memory and attention and a few other faculties and painfully pressing her hand to her forehead she asked for a bowl of snow. When it was brought her, she long and drowsily pressed handfuls of it against her temples and cheeks; then rising she stood for a long time leaning against the bed and looking at her shoes. At last she raised her head with decision, she called for her fur-trimmed cloak and a veil. She put them on and tottered into her handsomest reception room where the actress stood waiting for her.

Camila had intended to be perfunctory and if possible impudent, but now she was struck for the first time with the dignity of the old woman. The mercer's daughter could carry herself at times with all the distinction of the Montemayors and when she was drunk she wore the grandeur of Hecuba. For Camila the half-closed eyes

had the air of weary authority and she began almost timidly:

"I come, señora, to make sure that you could not have misunderstood anything I said on the evening that Your Grace did me the honour to visit my theatre".

"Misunderstood? Misunderstood?" said the Marquesa.

"Your Grace might have misunderstood and thought that my words were intended to be disrespectful to Your Grace".

"To me"?

"Your Grace is not offended at her humble servant? Your Grace is aware that a poor actress in my position may be carried beyond her intentions . . . that it is very difficult ... that everything" ... .

"How can I be offended, señora? All that I can remember is that you gave a beautiful performance. You are a great artist. You should be happy, happy. My handkerchief, Pepita" ... .

The Marquesa brought out these words very rapidly and vaguely, but the Perichole was confounded. A piercing sense of shame filled her. She turned crimson. At last she was able to murmur:

"It was in the songs between the acts of the comedy. I was afraid Your Grace ..."  
{ "Yes, yes. I remember now. I left early. Pepita, we left early, did we not? But, señora, you are good enough to forgive my leaving early, yes, even in the middle of your admirable performance. I forget why we left. Pepita ... oh, some indisposition . . .  
...

It was impossible that anyone in the theatre could have missed the intention of the songs. Camila could only assume that the Marquesa, out of a sort of fantastic magnanimity, was playing the farce of not having noticed it. She was almost in tears: "But you are so good to overlook my childishness, señora,—I mean Your

Grace. I did not know. I did not know your goodness. Señora, permit me to kiss your hand”.

Doña María held out her hand astonished. She had not for a long time been addressed with such consideration. Her neighbors, her tradespeople, her servants—for even Pepita lived in awe of her,—her very daughter had never approached her thus. It induced a new mood in her; one that must very likely be called maudlin. She became loquacious:

"Offended, offended at you, my beautiful, ... my gifted child? Who am I, a ... an unwise and unloved old woman, to be offended at you? I felt, my daughter, as though I were—what says the poet?—surprising through a cloud the conversation of the angels. Your voice kept finding new wonders in our Moreto.

When you said:

Don Juan, si mi amor estimas,

Y la fe segura es necia,

Enojarte mis temores

Es no querarme discreta.

Tan seguros. ...

and so on,—that was true! And what a gesture you made at the close of the First Day. There, with your hand so. Such a . gesture as the Virgin made, saying to Gabriel: How is it possible that I shall have a child? No, no, you will begin to have resentment at me, for I am going to tell you about a gesture that you may remember to use some day. Yes, it would fit well into that scene where you forgive your Don Juan de Lara. Perhaps I should tell you that I saw it made one day by my daughter. My daughter is a very beautiful woman .... everyone thinks. Did ... did you know my Doña Clara, Señora”?

"Her Grace often did me the honour of visiting my theatre. I knew the Condesa well by sight".

"Do not remain so, on one knee, my child.—Pepita, tell Jenarito to bring this lady some sweetcakes at once. Think, one day we fell out, I forget over what. Oh, there is nothing strange in that; all we mothers from time to time. ..: Look, can you come a little closer? You must not believe the town that says she was unkind to me. You are a great woman with a beautiful nature and you can see further than the crowd sees in these matters. It is a pleasure to talk to you. What beautiful hair you have! What beautiful hair!—She had not a warm impulsive nature, I know that. But, oh, my child, she has such a store of intelligence and graciousness. Any misunderstandings between us are so plainly my fault; is it not wonderful that she is so quick to forgive me? This day there fell one of those little moments. We both said hasty things and went off to our rooms. Then each turned back to be forgiven. Finally only a door separated us and there we were pulling it in contrary ways. But at last she . . . took my ... face . . . thus, in her two white hands. So! Look"!

The Marquesa almost fell out of her chair as she leaned forward, her face streaming with happy tears, and made the beatific gesture. I should say the mythical gesture, for the incident was but a recurring dream.

"I am glad you are here," she continued, "for now you have heard from my own lips that she is not unkind to me, as some people say. Listen, señora, the fault was mine. Look at me. Look at me. There was some mistake that made me the mother of so beautiful a girl. I am difficult. I am trying. You and she are great women. No, do not stop me: you are rare women, and I am only a nervous ... a foolish ...a stupid woman. Let me kiss your feet. I am impossible. I am impossible. I am impossible.'



Here indeed the old woman did fall out of her chair and was gathered up by Pepita and led back to her bed. The Perichole walked home in consternation and sat for a long time gazing into her eyes in the mirror, her palms pressed against her cheeks.

But the person who saw most of the difficult hours of the Marquesa was her little companion, Pepita. Pepita was an orphan and had been brought up by that strange genius of Lima, the Abbess Madre María del Pilar. The only occasion upon which the two great women of Peru (as the perspective • of history was to reveal them) met face to face was on the day when Doña María called upon the directress of the Convent of Santa María Rosa de las Rosas and asked if she might borrow some bright girl from the orphanage to be her companion. The Abbess gazed hard at the grotesque old woman. Even the wisest people in the world are not perfectly wise and Madre María del Pilar who was able to divine the poor human heart behind all the masks of folly and defiance, had always refused to concede one to the Marquesa de Montemayor. She asked her a great many questions and then paused to think. She wanted to give Pepita the worldly experience of living in the palace. She also wanted to bend the old woman to her own interests. And she was filled with a sombre indignation, for she knew she was gazing at one of the richest women in Peru, and the blindest.

She was one of those persons who have allowed their lives to be gnawed away because they have fallen in love with an idea several centuries before its appointed appearance in the history of civilization. She hurled herself against the obstinacy of her time in her desire to attach a little dignity to women. At midnight when she had finished adding up the accounts of the House she would fall into insane vision of an

age when women could be organized to protect women, women travelling, women as servants, women when they are old or ill, the women she had discovered in the mines of Potosí, or in the workrooms of the cloth-merchants, the girls she had collected out of doorways on rainy nights. But always the next morning she had to face the fact that the women in Peru, even her nuns, went through life with two notions: one, that all the misfortunes that might befall them were merely due to the fact that they were not sufficiently attractive to bind some man to their maintenance and, two, that all the misery in the world was worth his caress. She had never known any country but the environs of Lima and she assumed that all its corruption was the normal state of mankind. Looking back from our century we can see the whole folly of her hope. Twenty such women would have failed to make any impression on that age. Yet she continued diligently in her task. She resembled the swallow in the fable who once every thousand years transferred a grain of wheat, in the hope of rearing a mountain to reach the moon. Such persons are raised up in every age; they obstinately insist on transporting their grains of wheat and they derive a certain exhilaration from the sneers of the bystanders. "How queerly they dress!" we cry. "How queerly they dress"!

Her plain red face had great kindness, and more idealism than kindness, and more generalship than idealism. All her work, her hospitals, her orphanage, her convent, her sudden journeys of rescue, depended upon money. No one harbored a fairer admiration for mere goodness, but she had been obliged to watch herself sacrificing her kindness, almost her idealism, to generalship, so dreadful were the struggles to obtain her subsidies from her superiors in the church. The Archbishop of Lima, whom we shall know later in a more graceful connection, hated her with

what he called a Vatinian hate and counted the cessation of her visits among the compensations for dying.

Lately she had felt not only the breath of old age against her cheek, but a graver warning. A chill of terror went through her, not for herself, but for her work. Who was there in Peru to value the things she had valued? And rising one day at dawn she had made a rapid journey through her hospital and convent and orphanage, looking for a soul she might train to be her successor. She hurried from empty face to empty, face, occasionally pausing more from hope than conviction. In the courtyard she came upon a company of girls at work over the linen and her eyes fell at once upon a girl of twelve who was directing the others at the trough and at the same time recounting to them with great dramatic fire the less probable miracles in the life of Saint Rose of Lima. So it was that the search ended with Pepita. The education for greatness is difficult enough at any time, but amid the sensibilities and jealousies of a convent it must be conducted with fantastic indirection. Pepita was assigned to the most disliked tasks in the House, but she came to understand all the aspects of its administration. She accompanied the Abbess on her journeys, even though it was in the capacity of custodian of the eggs and vegetables. And everywhere, by surprise, hours would open up in which the Directress suddenly appeared and talked to her at great length, not only on religious experience, but on how to manage women and how to plan contagious wards and how to beg for money. It was a step in this education for greatness that led to Pepita's arriving one day and entering upon the crazy duties of being Doña María's companion. For the first two years she merely came. for occasional afternoons, but finally she came to the palace to live. She never had been taught to expect happiness, and the

inconveniences, not to say terrors, of her new position did not seem to her excessive for a girl of fourteen. She did not suspect that the Abbess, even there, was hovering above the house, herself estimating the stresses and watching for the moment when a burden harms and not strengthens.

A few of Pepita's trials were physical: for example, the servants in the house took advantage of Doña María's indisposition; they opened up the bedrooms of the palace to their relatives; they stole freely. Alone Pepita stood out against them and suffered a persecution of small discomforts and practical jokes. Her mind, similarly, had its distresses: when she accompanied Doña María on her errands in the city, the older woman would be seized with the desire to dash into a church, for what she had lost of religion as faith she had replaced with religion as magic. "Stay here in the sunlight, my dear child; I shall not be long," she would say. Doña María would then forget herself in a reverie before the altar and leave the church by another door. Pepita had been brought up by Madre María del Pilar to an almost morbid obedience and when after many hours she ventured into the church and made sure that her mistress was no longer there, still she returned to the street-corner and waited while the shadows fell gradually across the square. Thus waiting in public she suffered all the torture of a little girl's self consciousness. She still wore the uniform of the orphanage (which a minute's thoughtfulness on the part of Doña María could have altered) and she suffered hallucinations wherein men seemed to be staring at her and whispering—nor were these always hallucinations. No less her heart suffered, for on some days Doña María would suddenly become aware of her and would talk to her cordially and humorously, would let appear for a few hours all the exquisite sensibility of the Letters; then, on the morrow she would withdraw

into herself again and, while never harsh, would become impersonal and unseeing. The beginnings of hope and affection that Pepita had such need to expend would be wounded. She tiptoed about the palace, silent, bewildered, clinging only to her sense of duty and her loyalty to her “mother in the Lord,” Madre María del Pilar, who had sent her there.

Finally a new fact appeared that was to have considerable effect on the lives of both the Marquesa and her companion: "My dear mother," wrote the Condesa, "the weather has been most exhausting and the fact that the orchards and gardens are in bloom only makes it the more trying. I could endure flowers if only they had no perfume. I shall therefore ask your permission to write you at less length than usual. If Vicente returns before the post leaves he will be delighted to finish out the leaf and supply you with those tiresome details about myself which you seem to enjoy so. I shall not go to Grignan in Provence as I expected this Fall, as my child will be born in early October”.

What child? The Marquesa leaned against the wall. Doña Clara had foreseen the exhausting importunities that this news would waken in her mother and had sought to mitigate them by the casualness of her announcement. The ruse did not succeed. The famous Letter XLII was the answer.

Now at length the Marquesa had something to be anxious about: her daughter was to become a mother. This event, which merely bored Doña Clara, discovered a whole new scale of emotions in the Marquesa. She became a mine of medical knowledge and suggestion. She combed the city for wise old women and poured into her letters the whole folkwisdom of the New World. She fell into the most abominable superstition. She practiced a degrading system of taboos for her child's

protection. She refused to allow a knot in the house. The maids were forbidden to tie up their hair and she concealed upon her person ridiculous symbols of a happy delivery. On the stairs the even steps were marked with red chalk and a maid who accidentally stepped upon an even step was driven from the house with tears and screams. Doña Clara was in the hands of malignant Nature who reserves the right to inflict upon her children the most sferifying jests. There was an etiquette of propitiation which generations of peasant women had found comforting. So vast in army of witnesses surely implied that there was some truth in it. At least it could do no harm, and Perhaps it did good. Bet the Marquesa did not only satisfy the rites of paganism; she studied the prescriptions of Christianity as well. She arose in the dark and stumbled through the streets to the earliest Masses. She hysterically hugged the altar-rails trying to rend from the gaudy statuettes a sign, only a sign, the ghost of a smile, the furtive nod of a waxen head. Would all be well? Sweet, sweet Mother, would all be well?

At times, after a day's frantic resort to such invocations, a revulsion would sweep over her. Nature is deaf. God is indifferent. Nothing in man's power can alter the course of law. Then on some street-corner she would stop, dizzy with despair, and leaning against a wall would long to be taken from a world that had no plan in it. But soon a belief in the great Perhaps would surge up from the depths of her nature and she would fairly run home to renew the candles above her daughter's bed. At last the time came to satisfy the supreme rite of Peruvian households looking forward to this event: she made the pilgrimage to the shrine of Santa María de Cluxambuqua. If there resided any efficacy in devotion at all, surely it lay in a visit to this great shrine. The ground had been holy through three religions; even before

the Incan civilization distraught human beings had hugged the rocks and lashed themselves with whips to wring their will from the skies. Thither the Marquesa was carried in her chair, crossing the bridge of San Luis Rey and ascending up into the hills toward the city of large-girdled women, a tranquil town, slow-moving and slow-smiling; a city of crystal air, cold as the springs that fed its many fountains; a city of bells, soft and musical, and tuned to carry on with one another the happiest quarrels. If anything turned out for disappointment in the town of Cluxambuqua the grief was somehow assimilated by the overwhelming immanence of the Andes and by the weather of quiet joy that flowed in and about the side streets. No sooner did the Marquesa see from a distance the white walls of this town perched on the knees of the highest peaks than her fingers ceased turning the beads and the busy prayers of her fright were cut short on her lips

She did not even alight at the inn, but leaving Pepita to arrange for their stay she went on to the church and knelt for a long time patting her hands softly together. She was listening to the new tide of resignation that was rising within her. Perhaps she would learn in time to permit both her daughter and her gods to govern their own affairs. She was not annoyed by the whispering of the old women in padded garments who sold candles and medals and talked about money from dawn to dark. She was not even distracted by an officious sacristan who tried to collect a fee for something or other and who, from spite, made her change her place under the pretext of repairing a tile on the floor. Presently she went out into the sunshine and sat on the steps of the fountain. She watched the little processions of invalids slowly revolving about the gardens. She watched three hawks plunging about the sky. The children who had been playing by the fountain stared at her for a moment, and went

away alarmed, but a llama (a lady with a long neck and sweet shallow eyes, burdened down by a fur cape too heavy for her and picking her way delicately down an interminable staircase) came over and offered her a velvet cleft nose to stroke. The llama is deeply interested in the men about her, is even fond of pretending that she too is one of them and of inserting her head into their conversations as though in a moment she would lift her voice and contribute a wry and helpful comment. Soon Doña María was surrounded by a number of these sisters who seemed on the point of asking her why she clapped her hands so and how much her veiling cost a yard.

Doña María had arranged that any letters arriving from Spain should be brought to her at once by a special messenger. She had travelled slowly from Lima and even now as she sat in the square a boy from her farm ran up and put into her hand a large packet wrapped in parchment and dangling some nuggets of sealing-wax. Slowly she undid the wrappings. With measured stoic gestures she read first an affectionate and jocose note from her son-in-law; then her daughter's letter. It was full of wounding remarks rather brilliantly said, perhaps said for the sheer virtuosity of giving pain neatly. Each of its phrases found its way through the eyes of the Marquesa, then, carefully wrapped in understanding and forgiveness it sank into her heart. At last she arose, gently dispersed the sympathetic llamas, and with a grave face returned to the shrine.

While Doña María was passing the late afternoon in the Church and in the Square, Pepita was left to prepare their lodging. She showed the porters where to lay down the great wicker hampers and set about unpacking the altar, the brazier, the tapestries and the portraits of Doña Clara. She descended into the kitchen and gave



the cook exact instructions as to the preparations of a certain porridge upon which the Marquesa principally subsisted. Then she returned to the rooms and waited. She resolved to write a letter to the Abbess. She hung for a long time over the quill, staring into the distance with trembling lip. She saw the face of Madre María del Pilar, so red and scrubbed, and the wonderful black eyes. She heard her voice as at the close of supper (the orphans sitting with lowered eyes and folded hands) she commented on the events of the day, or as, by candlelight, she stood among the beds of the hospital and announced the theme for meditation during the night. But most clearly of all Pepita remembered the sudden interviews when the Abbess (not daring to wait until the girl was older) had discussed with her the duties of her office. She had talked to Pepita as to an equal. Such speech is troubling and wonderful to an intelligent child and Madre María del Pilar had abused it. She had expanded Pepita's vision of how she should feel and act beyond the measure of her years. And she had unthinkingly turned upon Pepita the full blaze of her personality, as Jupiter had turned his upon Semele. Pepita was frightened by her sense of insufficiency; she hid it and wept.

And then the Abbess had cast the child into the discipline of or this long solitude, where Pepita struggled, refusing to let herself believe that she had been abandoned. And now from this strange inn in these strange mountains, where the altitude was making her lightheaded, Pepita longed for the dear presence, the only real thing in her life

. She wrote a letter, all inkstains and incoherence. Then she o went downstairs to see about fresh charcoal and to taste the porridge.

The Marquesa came in and sat down at the table. "I can do no more. What will be,

will be," she whispered. She unbound from her neck the amulets of her superstition and dropped them into the glowing brazier. She had a strange sense of having antagonized God by too much prayer and so in addressed Him now obliquely. "After all it is in the hands of be another. I no longer claim the least influence. What will be, b will be." She sat for a long time, her palms against her cheeks, making a blank of her mind. Her eyes fell on Pepita's is letter. She opened it mechanically and started to read. She had read a full half of it before her attention was aware of meaning of the words: "... but all this is nothing if like me and wish me to stay with her. I oughtn't to tell but every now and then the bad chambermaids lock me in rooms and steal things and perhaps My Lady will think that I steal them. I hope not. I hope you are well and not ping any trouble in the hospital or anywhere. Though I Der see you I think of you all the time and I remember bat you told me, my dear mother in God. I want to do only bat you want, but if you could let me come back for a few days to the convent, but not if you do not wish it. But I am so ach alone and not talking to anyone, and everything. Sometimes I do not know whether you have forgotten me d if you could find a minute to write me a little letter or something, I could keep it, but I know how busy you are ...."

Doña María read no further. She folded the letter and put aside. For a moment she was filled with envy: she longed command another's soul as completely as this nun was able do. Most of all she longed to be back in this simplicity of love, to throw off the burden of pride and vanity that hers ad always carried. To quiet the tumult in her mind she picked up a book of devotion and tried to fix her attention pon the words. But after a moment she suddenly felt the need to reread the whole letter, to surprise, if possible, the secret of so much felicity.

Pepita returned bringing the supper in her hands, followed by a maid. Doña María watched her over the top of her book as she would have watched a visitor from Heaven. Pepita tiptoed about the room laying the table and whispering directions to her assistant. "Your supper is ready, My Lady," she said at last. "But, my child, you are going to eat with me?" In Lima Pepita generally sat down at the table with her mistress. "I thought you would be tired, My Lady. I had my supper downstairs".

"She does not wish to eat with me," thought the Marquesa. "She knows me and has rejected me."

"Would you like me to read aloud to you while you are still eating, My Lady?" asked Pepita, who felt that she had made a mistake.

"No. You may go to bed, if you choose." "Thank you, My Lady."

Doña María had risen and approached the table. With one hand on the back of the chair she said haltingly: "My dear child, I am sending off a letter to Lima in the morning. If you have one you can enclose it with mine."

"No, I have none," said Pepita. She added hastily: "I must go downstairs and get you the new charcoal." "But, my dear, you have one for ... Madre María del Pilar. Wouldn't you . . .?"

Pepita pretended to be busy over the brazier. "No, I'm not going to send it," she said. She was aware during the long pause that followed that the Marquesa was staring at her in stupefaction. "I've changed my mind".

"I know she would like a letter from you, Pepita. It would make her very happy. I know".

Pepita was reddening. She said loudly: "The innkeeper said that there would be some new charcoal ready for you at dark. I'll tell them to bring it up now." She

glanced hastily at the old woman and saw that she had not ceased from staring at her with great sad inquiring eyes. Pepita felt that these were not things one talked about, but the strange woman seemed to be feeling the matter so strongly that Pepita was willing to concede one more answer: "No, it was a bad letter. It wasn't a good letter".

Doña María fairly gasped. "Why, my dear Pepita, I think was very beautiful. Believe me, I know. No, no; what could have made it a bad letter?"

Pepita frowned, hunting for a word that would close the matter.

"It wasn't ... it wasn't ... brave," she said. And then she would say no more. She carried the letter off into her own room and could be heard tearing it up. Then she got into bed and lay staring into the darkness, still uncomfortable at having talked in such a fashion. And Doña María sat down to her dish amazed.

She had never brought courage to either life or love. Her eyes ransacked her heart. She thought of the amulets and of her beads, her drunkenness . . . she thought of her daughter. She remembered the long relationship, crowded with the wreckage of exhumed conversations, of fancied slights, of inopportune confidences, of charges of neglect and exclusion (but she must have been mad that day; she remembered beating upon the table). "But it's not my fault," she cried. "It's not my fault that I was so. It was circumstance. It was the way I was brought up. Tomorrow I begin a new life. Wait and see, oh my child." At last she cleared away the table and sitting down wrote what she called her first letter, her first stumbling misspelled letter in courage. She remembered with shame that in the previous' one she had piteously asked her daughter how much she loved her, and had greedily quoted the few and hesitant endearments that Doña Clara had lately ventured to her. Doña María could

not recall those pages, but she could write some new ones, free and generous. No one else has regarded them as stumbling. It is the famous Letter LVI, known to the Encyclopedists as her Second Corinthians because of its immortal paragraph about love: "Of the thousands of persons we meet in a lifetime, my child ..." and so on. It was almost dawn when she finished the letter. She opened the door upon her balcony and looked at the great tiers of stars that glittered above the Andes. Throughout the hours of the night, though there had been few to hear it, the whole sky had been loud with the singing of these constellations. Then she took a candle into the next room and looked at Pepita as she slept, and pushed back the damp hair from the girl's face. "Let me live now," she whispered. "Let me begin again".

Two days later they started back to Lima, and while crossing the bridge of San Luis Rey the accident which we now befell them.

## **PART III: ESTEBAN**

One morning twin boys were discovered in the foundlings' basket before the door of the Convent of Santa María Rosa de las Rosas. Names were found for them almost before the arrival of the wet-nurse, but the names were not as useful to men as our names are to most of us, for no one ever succeeded in telling the boys apart. There was no way of knowing who their parents were, but Limean gossips, noticing as the boys grew older how straight they held themselves and how silent and sombre they were, declared them to be Casañian and laid them in turn at all sorts of crested door ways. The person in the world who came nearest to being their guardian was the Abbess of the Convent. Madre María del Pilar had come to hate all men, but she grew fond of Manuel and Esteban. In the late afternoon she would call them into her office, send for some cakes from the kitchen, and tell them stories about the Cid and Judas Maccabeus and the thirty-six misfortunes of Harlequin. She grew to love them so, that she would catch herself gazing deep into their black and frowning eyes, looking for those traits that would appear when they grew to be men, all that ugliness, all that soullessness that made hideous the world she worked in. They grew up about the convent until they were a little past the age when their presence began to be a slight distraction to the dedicated sisters. From thence they became vaguely attached to all the sacristies in town: they trimmed all the cloister hedges; they polished every possible crucifix; they passed a damp cloth once a year over most of the ecclesiastical ceilings. All Lima knew them well. When the priest rushed through the streets carrying his precious burden into a sickroom either Esteban or Manuel was to be seen striding behind him, swinging a censer. As they grew older, however, they showed no desire for the clerical life. They gradually assumed the profession of the scribe. There were few printing presses in the New World and the boys soon made a fair living transcribing comedies for the theatre,

ballads for the crowds, and advertisements for the merchants. Above all they were the copyists of the choirmasters and made endless parts of the motets of Morales and Vittoria.

Because they had no family, because they were twins, and because they were brought up by women, they were silent. There was in them a curious shame in regard to their resemblance. They had to live in a world where it was the subject of continual comment and joking. It was never funny to them and they suffered the eternal pleasantries with stolid patience. From the years when they first learned to speak they invented a secret language for themselves, one that was scarcely dependent on the Spanish for its vocabulary, or even for its syntax. They resorted to it only when they were alone, or at great intervals in moments of stress whispered it in the presence of others. The Archbishop of Lima was something of a philologist; he dabbled in dialects; he had even evolved quite a brilliant table for the vowel and consonant changes from Latin into Spanish and from Spanish into IndianSpanish. He was storing up notebooks of quaint lore against an amusing old age he planned to offer himself back on his estates outside Segovia. So when he heard one day about the secret language of the twin brothers, he trimmed some quills and sent for them. The boys stood humiliated upon the rich carpets of his study while he tried to extract from them their bread and tree and their I see and I saw. They did not know, why the experience was so horrible to them. They bled. Long shocked silences followed each of the Archbishop's questions, until finally one or the other mumbled an answer. The priest thought for a while that they were merely in awe before his rank and before the luxury of his apartment, but at last, much perplexed, he divined the presence of some deeper reluctance and sadly let them go.



This language was the symbol of their profound identity with one another, for just as resignation was a word insufficient to describe the spiritual change that came over the Marquesa de Montemayor on that night in the inn at Cluxambuqua, so love is inadequate to describe the tacit almost ashamed oneness of these brothers. What relationship is it in which few words are exchanged, and those only about the details of food, clothing and occupation; in which the two persons have a curious reluctance even to glance at one another; and in which there is a tacit arrangement not to appear together in the city and to go on the same errand by different streets? And yet side by side with this there existed a need of one another so terrible that it produced miracles as naturally as the charged air of a sultry day produces lightning. The brothers were scarcely aware of it themselves, but telepathy was a common occurrence in their lives, and when one returned home the other was always aware of it when his brother was still several streets away.

Suddenly they discovered that they were tired of writing. They went down to the sea and found an occupation in loading and unloading vessels, not ashamed of working side by side with Indians. They drove teams across the provinces. They picked fruit. They were ferrymen. And always they were silent. Their sombre faces took on from these labors a male and gypsy cast. Their hair was seldom cut and under the dark mat their eyes looked up suddenly surprised and a little sullen. All the world was remote and strange and hostile except one's brother.

But at last the first shadow fell across this unity and the shadow was cast by the love of women. They had returned to the city and resumed the copying of parts for the theatre. One night the manager, foreseeing a thinning house, gave them a free

admission. The boys did not like what they found there. Even speech was for them a debased form of silence; how much more futile is poetry which is a debased form of speech. All those allusions to honour, reputation, and the Fame of love, all the metaphors about birds, Achilles and the jewels of Ceylon were fatiguing. In the presence of literature they had the same darkling intelligence that stirs for a time behind the eyes of a dog, but they sat on patiently, gazing at the bright candles and the rich clothes. Between the acts of the comedy the Perichole stepped out of her role, put on twelve petticoats and danced before the curtain. Esteban had some copying still to do, or pretended so, and went home early; but Manuel stayed on. The red stockings and shoes of the Perichole had made their impression.

Both brothers had fetched and carried their manuscripts up and down the dusty stairs behind the stage. There they had seen an irritable girl in a soiled bodice mending her stockings before a mirror while her stage director read aloud her lines for memorization. She had let fall upon the boys for a moment the detonation of her amazing eyes, immediately dissipated in her amused recognition that they were twins. Forthwith she had dragged them into the room and placed them side by side. Carefully, amusedly and remorselessly she had peered into every square inch of their faces, until finally laying one hand on Esteban's shoulder she had cried out: "This one is the younger!" That had been several years before and neither brother had thought of the episode again.

Henceforth all Manuel's errands seemed to lead him past on the theatre. Late at night he would drift about among the trees beneath her dressing-room window. It was not the first time that Manuel had been fascinated by a woman (both

brothers had possessed women, and often, especially during t their years at the waterfront; but simply, latinly), but it was to the first time that his will and imagination had been thus no overwhelmed. He had lost that privilege of simple nature, : bs the dissociation of love and pleasure. Pleasure was no longer as simple as eating; it was being complicated by love. Now was beginning that crazy loss of one's self, that neglect of everything but one's dramatic thoughts about the beloved, that feverish inner life all turning upon the Perichole and which would so have astonished and disgusted her had she been permitted to divine it. This Manuel had not fallen in love through any imitation of literature. It was not of him, at all events, that the bitterest tongue in France had remarked only fifty years before: that many people would never have fallen in love if they had not heard about it. Manuel read little; he had only been once to the theatre (where above all there reigns the legend that love is a devotion) and the Peruvian tavern-songs that he might have heard, unlike those of Spain, reflected very little of the romantic cult of an idealized woman. When he said over to himself that she was beautiful and rich and fatiguingly witty and the Viceroy's mistress, none of these attributes that made her less obtainable had the power to quench his curious and tender excitement. So he leaned against the trees in the dark, his knuckles between his teeth, and listened to his loud heart-beats. . But the life that Esteban was leading had been full enough for him. There was no room in his imagination for a new loyalty, not because his heart was less large than Manuel's, but because it was of a simpler texture. Now he discovered. that secret from which one never quite recovers, that even in the most perfect love one person loves less profoundly than the other. There may be two equally good, equally gifted, equally beautiful, but there may never be two that love one another equally well. So Esteban sat up in their room by a guttering candle, his

knuckles between his teeth, and wondered why Manuel was so changed and why the whole meaning had gone out of their life.

One evening Manuel was stopped on the street by a small boy who announced to him that the Perichole wished him to call upon her at once. Manuel turned in his path and went to the theatre. Straight, sombre and impersonal, he entered the actress's room and stood waiting. Camila had a service to ask of Manuel and she thought a few preliminary blandishments were necessary, but she scarcely paused in combing a blond wig that was dressed upon the table before her.

"You write letters for people, don't you? I want you to write a letter for me, please. Please come in".

He came forward two steps.

"You never pay me the least visit either of you. That's not Spanish of you."

(Meaning courteous.) "Which are you, |Manuel or Esteban"?

"Manuel."

"It doesn't matter. You are both unfriendly. Neither of you ever comes to see me. Here I sit learning stupid lines all day and no one ever comes to see me but a lot of peddlers. It is because I am an actress, no"?

This was not very artful, but for Manuel it was unspeakably complicated. He merely stared at her from the shadows of his long hair and left her to improvise.

"I am going to engage you to write a letter for me, a very secret letter. But now I can see that you don't like me and that to ask you to write a letter would be as good as reading it in all the wine-shops. What does that look mean, Manuel? Are you my friend?" ."

"Yes, señora." girl "Go away. Send me Esteban. You do not even say Yes, señora

as a friend would say it."

Long pause. Presently she raised her head: "Are you still there, Unfriendly"?

"Yes, señora . . . you can trust me to do anything for you . . . you can trust"...

"If I ask you to write one letter for me, or two letters, you promise never to mention to a human being what is in them, or even that you wrote them?" on "Yes, señora".

in the "What do you promise by?—by the Virgin Mary?" DOO "Yes, señora." 2

any "And by the heart of Saint Rose of Lima?" "Yes, señora." ti to ang stod

"Name of the Name, Manuel, anyone would think you were as stupid as an ox.

Manuel, I am very angry with you. You are not stupid. You don't look stupid.

Please don't say just Yes, señora again. Don't be stupid or I'll send for Esteban. Is

anything the matter with you?" to an 9 Here Manuel cast himself upon the Spanish

language and exclaimed with unnecessary vigor: "I swear by the Virgin Mary and the heart of Saint Rose of Lima that all that has to do with the letter will be secret."

"Even from Esteban," prompted the Perichole. "Even from Esteban".

"Well, that's better." She motioned him to sit down at a table where writing

materials were already laid out. As she dictated she strode about the room,

frowning, swinging her hips. With her arms akimbo, she hugged her shawl about her shoulders defiantly.

"Camila Perichole kisses the hands of Your Excellency and says—No, take another piece of paper and begin again. The señora Micaela Villegas, artist, kisses the hands of Your Excellency and says that, being the victim of the envious and lying friends that Y.E.'s goodness permits about Him, she can no longer fight against the calumnies that Y.E. believes servant has always valued Y.E.'s friendship and has never committed, nor even thought, an offense against it, but she can no longer fight against the calumnies that Y.E. believes so readily. Señora Villegas, artist, called

the Perichole, therefore returns herewith such of Y.E.'s gifts as have not been placed beyond recall, since without Y.E.'s confidence, Y.E.'s servant can take no pleasure in them.”

Camila continued walking about the room for several minutes, consumed by her thoughts. Presently without so much as glancing at her secretary, she commanded: "Take another leaf. Have you gone mad? Do not ever think of dedicating another bull to me again. It has caused a frightful war. Heaven protect you, my colt. Friday night, the same place, the same time. I may be a little late, for the fox is wideawake. That will be all”.

Manuel rose. "You swear that you have made no errors?"

"Yes, I swear.” od gone to \_\_ "There is your money.”

Manuel took the money.

"I shall want you to write me more letters from time to time. My uncle Pio generally writes my letters; these I do not wish him to know about. Good night. Go with God.” . "Go with God.” said

Manuel descended the stairs and stood for a long time among the trees, not thinking, not moving.

292296 Esteban knew that his brother was continually brooding over the Perichole, but he never suspected that he saw her. From time to time during the next two months a small boy would approach him in great haste and ask whether he were Manuel or Esteban, and being informed that he was only Esteban, the boy would add that Manuel was wanted at the theatre. Esteban assumed that the call was for copyist's work

and was therefore utterly unprepared for a visit that they received one night in their room. It was almost midnight. Esteban had gone to bed, and lay gazing out from

under the blanket at the candle beside which his brother was working. There was a light tap at the door and Manuel opened to admit a lady heavily veiled, out of breath and nervous. She threw back the scarf from her face and said hurriedly:

"Quick, ink and paper. You are Manuel, yes? You must do a letter for me at once."

For a moment her glance fell on the two bright eyes that glared at her from the edge of the cot. She murmured: "Eu . . . you must excuse me. I know it is late. It was necessary . . . I must come." Then turning to Manuel, she whispered into his ear:

"Write this: I, the Perichole, am not accustomed to wait at a rendez-vous. Have you finished that? You are only a cholo, and there are better matadors than you, even in Lima. I am half Castilian and there are no better actresses in the world. You shall not have the opportunity. Have you got that?—to keep me waiting again, cholo, and I shall laugh the last, for even an actress does not grow old as fast as a bullfighter."

To Esteban in the shadows the picture of Camila leaning over his brother's hand and whispering into his ear was complete evidence that a new congeniality had formed such as he would never know. He seemed to shrink away into space, infinitely tiny, infinitely unwanted. He took one more glance at the tableau of love, all the paradise from which he was shut out, and turned his face to the wall.

Camila seized the note the moment it was done, pushed a coin along the table and in a last flurry of black lace, scarlet beads and excited whispers left the room. Manuel turned from the door with his candle. He sat down, put his hands over his ears, his elbows on his knees. He worshipped her. He murmured to himself over and over again that he worshipped her, making of the sound a sort of incantation and an obstacle to thought.

He emptied his mind of everything but a singsong, and it was this vacancy that

permitted him to become aware of Esteban's mood. He seemed to hear a voice that proceeded from the shadows saying: "Go and follow her, Manuel. Don't stay here. You'll be happy. There's room for us all in the world." Then the realization became even more intense and he received a mental image of Esteban going a long way off and saying good-bye many times as he went. He was filled with terror; by the light of it he saw that all the other attachments in the world were shadows, or the illusions of fever, even Madre María del Pilar, even the Perichole. He could not understand why Esteban's misery should present itself as demanding a choice between him and the Perichole,

but he could understand Esteban's misery, as misery. And at once he sacrificed everything to it, if it can be said we ever sacrifice anything save what we know we can never attain, or what some secret wisdom tells us it would be uncomfortable or saddening to possess. To be sure there was nothing on which Esteban could base a complaint. It was not jealousy, for in their earlier affairs it had never occurred to either of them that their loyalty to one another had been diminished. It was merely that in the heart of one of them there was left room for an elaborate imaginative attachment and in the heart of the other there was not. Manuel could not quite understand this and, as we shall see, he nourished a dim sense of being accused unjustly. But he did understand that Esteban was suffering. In his excitement he groped for a means of holding this brother who seemed to be receding into the distance. And at once, in one unhesitating stroke of the will, he removed the Perichole from his heart.

He blew out the candle and lay down on his bed. He was trembling. He said aloud with exaggerated casualness: "Well, that's the last letter I write for that woman. She can go and find a pander somewhere else. If ever she calls here or sends for me



when I'm out, tell her so. Make it plain. That's the last I have to do with her," and with that he began reciting his evening psalm aloud. But he had hardly reached *A sagitta volante in die* when he became aware that Esteban had risen and was lighting the candle.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I'm going out for a walk," replied Esteban sombrely, fastening his belt. After a moment, he broke out with an assumption of anger: "You don't have to say . . . what you just said, for me. I don't care whether you write her letters or not. You don't have to change for me. I haven't anything to do with that".

"Go to bed, you fool. God, you're a fool, Esteban. What made you think I said that, for you? Don't you believe I mean it when I say I'm through with her? Do you think I want to write any more of her dirty letters and get paid for them like that"?

"It's all right. You love her. You don't have to change because of me".

"Love her? Love her? You're crazy, Esteban. How could I love her? What chance would there be for me? Do you suppose she'd give me those letters to write if there were any chance? Do you suppose she'd push a piece of money across the table every time. . . . You're crazy, Esteban, that's all".

There was a long pause. Esteban would not go to bed. He sat by the candle in the middle of the room, tapping with his hand on the edge of the table.

"Go to bed, you fool," shouted Manuel, rising on one elbow under the blanket. He was talking in their secret language and the new pain at his heart gave a greater ring of reality to his assumption of rage. "I'm all right."

"I won't. I'm going out for a walk," replied Esteban picking up his coat

"You can't go out for a walk. It's two o'clock. It's raining. You can't go and walk about for hours like that. Look, Esteban, I swear to you there's nothing left to all

that. I don't love her. I only did for a time”.

By now Esteban stood in the dark of the open door. In the unnatural voice with which we make the greatest declarations of our lives, he muttered: "I'm in your way," and turned to go.

Manuel leapt out of his bed. His head seemed to be full of a great din, a voice crying out that Esteban was going away forever, was leaving him alone forever. "In the name of God, in the name of God, Esteban, come back here".

Esteban came back and went to bed and the matter was not mentioned again for many weeks. The very next evening Manuel had an opportunity of declaring his position. A messenger arrived from the Perichole and was told harshly to inform the actress that Manuel would write no more letters for her.

Tom Blow motions One evening Manuel tore open the flesh on his knee against a piece of metal. Neither brother had ever been ill for as much as a day in his life, and now Manuel, utterly bewildered, watched his leg swell and felt the waves of pain rise and fall in his body.

Esteban sat by and stared at his face trying to imagine what great pain was. At last one midnight Manuel remembered that the signboard of a certain hairdresser in the city described the proprietor as an experienced barber and surgeon. Esteban ran through the streets to fetch him. He pounded on the door. Presently a woman leaned out of a window and announced that her husband would be back in the morning. During the fearful hours that followed, they told one another that when the doctor had seen the leg all would be well. He would do something about it, and Manuel would be out around the town in a day or two, even in a day perhaps, even less than a day. The barber arrived and prescribed various draughts and ointments. Esteban was instructed to lay cold cloths on his brother's leg every hour. The barber

withdrew and the brothers sat down to wait for the pain to subside. But while they continued staring into one another's face waiting for the miracle of science the pain grew worse. Hour after hour Esteban approached with his dripping towel and they discovered that the moment of its application was the worst of all. With all the fortitude in the world Manuel could not prevent himself from shouting and from flinging himself about upon the bed. Night came on and still Esteban stolidly waited and watched and worked. Nine, ten, eleven. Now when the time drew near to apply the cloths (the hour struck so musically from all those towers) Manuel would plead with Esteban not to do his work. He would resort to guile and declare that he scarcely felt it. But Esteban, his heart bursting with pain and his lips a line of iron, would roll back the blanket and bind the towel fiercely in its place. Manuel gradually became delirious and under this application all the thoughts he did not permit himself in his right mind would burst magnified from his mouth.

Finally at two o'clock, out of his mind with rage and pain, and flinging himself half out of the bed until his head struck the floor, Manuel cried: "God condemn your soul to the hottest hell there is. A thousand devils torture you forever, Esteban. God condemn your soul, do you hear?" At first, the air gone out of his body, Esteban went out into the hall and leaned against the door, his mouth and eyes wide open. Still he heard from within: "Yes, Esteban, may God damn your beastly soul forever, do you hear that? For coming between me and what was mine by right. She was mine, do you hear, and what right had you. . .," and he would go off into an elaborate description of the Perichole.

These outbursts recurred hourly. It was some time before Esteban was able to realize that his brother's mind was not then clear. After some moments of horror, in which his being a devout believer had its part, he would return to the room and go

about his duties with bent head.

Towards dawn his brother became serener. (For what human ill does not dawn seem to be an alleviation?) It was in one of these intervals that Manuel said quite calmly: "God's son! I feel better, Esteban. Those cloths must be good after all. You'll see. I'll be up and around tomorrow. You haven't slept for days. You'll see I won't cause you any more trouble, Esteban".

"It's no trouble, vou fool".

"You mustn't take me seriously when I try and stop you putting on the old cloths, Esteban".

A long pause. At last Esteban brought out, barely audible:

"I think ... don't you think it would be fine if I sent for the Perichole? She could just come and see you for a few minutes, I mean:.. .

"Her? You still thinking about her? I wouldn't have her here for anything. No".

But Esteban was not content yet. He dragged up a few more phrases from the very centre of his being: " "Manuel, you still feel, don't you, that I came between you and the Perichole and you don't remember that I told you it was all right with me. I swear to you I'd have been glad if you'd gone away with her, or anything".

"What are you bringing that up for, Esteban? I tell you, in God's own name, I never think of that. She's nothing to me. When are you going to forget that, Esteban? I tell you I'm glad things are as they are. Look, I got to get angry when you keep going back to that".

"Manuel, I wouldn't speak of it again, only when you get angry at me about the cloths . . . you, you get angry at me about that, too. And you talk about it and you  
" ...

"Look, I'm not responsible what I say. My old leg hurts then, see".

STOM "Then you don't damn me to hell because ... it looks like I came between you and the Perichole"?

"Damn you to ...? What makes you say that? You're going crazy, Esteban; you're imagining things. You haven't had any sleep, Esteban. I've been a curse to you and you're losing your health because of me. But you'll see, I won't trouble you much more. How could I damn you to hell, Esteban, when you're all I've got? Understand, see, that when the cold cloths go on, I just lose myself, see. You know. Don't think about it twice. It's time to put them on now. I won't say a word".

"No, Manuel, I'll skip this time. It won't do you any harm, I'll just skip this time".

"I've got to get well, Esteban. I've got to get up soon, you know. Put them on. But one minute-give me the crucifix. I swear by the blood and body of Christ that if I say anything against Esteban, I don't mean it and it's just the foolish words when I'm dreaming because of the pain in my leg.

God make me well again soon, amen. Put it back. There. Now I'm ready".

"Look, Manuel, it won't hurt if I skip just this once, see. It'll be good for you, sure, to not get it all stirred up just this once".

I M SECTORSYRODA CHE "No, I've got to get well. The doctor said it had to be done. I won't say a word, Esteban."

And it would begin all over again.

During the second night a prostitute in the next room started beating on the wall, outraged at such language. A priest in the room on the other side would come out into the hall and beat on the door. The whole floor would gather before the room in exasperation. The innkeeper came up the stairs, loudly promising his guests that the brothers would be dumped into the street the very next morning. Esteban, holding his candle, would go into the hall and permit them to rage at him for as long as they

pleased; but after that he took to pressing his hand firmly over his brother's mouth during the moments of greatest stress. This increased Manuel's personal rage at him and he would babble all through the night.

On the third night, Esteban sent for the priest and amidst the enormous shadows Manuel received the sacrament, and died: .

Thereafter Esteban refused to come near the building. He would start off upon long walks, but presently drifting back, would hang about, staring at passers-by, within two streets of where his brother lay. The innkeeper failing to make any impression upon him and remembering that the boys were brought up at the Convent of Santa María Rosa de las Rosas, sent for the Abbess. Simply and soundly she directed all that was to be done. At last she went down to the street corner and spoke to Esteban. He watched her approach him, a glance mixed of longing and distrust. But when she stood near him he turned sideways and looked away. 2015SC Date

"I want you to help me. Won't you come in and see your brother? Won't you come in and help me?" "No".

"You won't help me!" A long pause. Suddenly as she stood there full of her helplessness there flashed through her mind an incident of many years before: the twin brothers about fifteen years old were sitting at her knee and she was telling them the story of the crucifixion. Their large grave eyes were fixed upon her lips. Suddenly Manuel had cried out loudly: "If Esteban and I had been there we would have prevented it".

"Well, then, if you won't help me, will you tell me which you are"?

"Manuel," said Esteban.

"Manuel, won't you come and sit with me up there for just a short time?"

After a long pause: "No."

"But Manuel, dear Manuel, can't you remember as children how you did so many things for me? You were willing to go across the town on some little errand. When I was ill you made the cook let you bring me my soup?" Another woman would have said: "Do you remember how much I did for you?"

"Yes."

"I, too, Manuel have lost. I too ... once. We know that God has taken them into His hands...." But this did not do at all. Esteban turned vaguely and walked away from her. When he had gone about twenty paces he stopped and stared down a side-street, like a dog who wants to go away, but is reluctant to offend the master who calls him back. That was all they could get out of him. When the fearful procession passed through the city, with its black hoods and masks, its candles in broad daylight, its display of heaped-up skulls, its terrifying psalms, Esteban followed it in the parallel streets, catching glimpses of it from a distance, like a savage. All Lima was interested in this separation of the brothers. Housewives whispered together sympathetically about it as they unfurled their carpets from the balconies. The men in the wine shops, alluding to it, shook their heads and smoked in silence for a while. Travellers from the interior told of seeing Esteban as he strayed with eyes like coals along the dried-up beds of rivers or through the great ruins of the old race. A herder of llamas had come upon him standing upon a hilltop, asleep or dazed, wet with dew under the stars. Some fishermen surprised him swimming far out from shore. From time to time he would find work to do, he would become a shepherd or a carter, but after a few months he would disappear and stride from province to province. But he always returned to Lima. One day he appeared at the door of the Perichole's dressing-room; he made as though to speak, I

gazed earnestly at her and vanished. One day a sister came to running into the office of Madre María del Pilar with the news that Esteban (whom the world called Manuel) was lingering about the door of the convent. The Abbess hurried out into the street. For months she had been asking herself what strategy could reconcile this half-demented boy to living among them again. She assembled as grave and calm a manner as she was able and appearing at the street door murmured "My friend" and looked at him. He gazed back at her with the same glance of longing and distrust that he had shown her before, and stood trembling. Again she whispered "My friend" and moved a step forward. Suddenly Esteban turned and breaking into a run disappeared. Madre María del 25 Pilar rushed stumbling back to her desk and fell upon her knees, exclaiming angrily: "I have prayed for wisdom and You have given me none. You have not chosen to give me the least grace. I am a mere scrubber of floors. . . ." But during the penance she set herself for this impudence the thought came to her to send for Captain Alvarado. Three weeks later she had a ten-minute conversation with him. And the next day he started for Cuzco where, it was said, Esteban was doing some copying for the University.

There was this strange and noble figure in Peru during these years, the Captain Alvarado, the traveller. He was blackened and cured by all weathers. He stood in the Square with feet apart as though they were planted on a shifting deck. His eyes were strange, unaccustomed to the shorter range, too used to seizing the appearances of a constellation between a cloud and a cloud, and the outline of a cape in rain. His reticence was sufficiently explained for most of us by his voyages, but the Marquesa de Montemayor had other light on the matter. "Captain Alvarado is bringing you this letter in person," she wrote to her daughter. "Introduce him to some of your geographers, my treasure, though it may make them a little



uncomfortable, for he is the diamond of sincerity. They will never see anyone who has travelled so far. Last night he described to me some of his voyages. Imagine him pushing his prow through a sea of weeds, stirring up a cloud of fish like grasshoppers in June; or sailing between islands of ice. Oh, he has been to China and up the rivers of Africa. But he is not merely an adventurer and he seems to take no pride in discovering new places; is he a mere merchant. One day I asked him narrowly why he lived so, and he avoided my question. I found out from the laundress what I think is the reason of his wandering: child, he had a child; my daughter, he had a daughter. She was just old enough to cook a holiday meal, and do all the sewing for him. In those days he merely sailed between Mexico and Peru and hundreds of times she waved farewell or welcome. We have no way of knowing she was more beautiful or intelligent than the thousand other girls that lived about him, but she was his. It seems ignoble to you that a great oak of a man should be about the world like a blind man about an empty bin merely because a child of a girl has been withdrawn. No, no, you cannot understand this, my adored one, do not understand and grow pale. Last night he sat with me and talked of her. He laid his cheek against his hand and looked into the fire, he said: 'It sometimes seems to me that I sit away upon a voyage and that I shall see her again. It seems to me that she is in England.' You will laugh at me, but I tell you he goes about the hemispheres to pass the time between his old age and his old age''.

The brothers had always entertained a great respect for Captain Alvarado. They had worked for him a short while and the silence of the three of them had made a little kernel of sense in a world of boasting, self-excuse and rhetoric. So now when the great traveller came into the dark kitchen where Esteban was eating the boy drew his chair farther into the shadow, but at a distance, he was glad. The Captain gave no sign of recognizing or even of seeing him until he had finished his meal. Esteban

had finished long before, but not wishing to be spoken to, waited until the Captain should have left the cave. At last the Captain walked over to him and said:

"You are Esteban or Manuel. You helped me once with some unloading. I am Captain Alvarado." Yes, said Esteban.

"How are you"?

Esteban muttered something. "I am looking for some strong fellows to go on my next trip with me." Pause. "Would you like to come?" Longer pause. "England. And Russia. . . . Hard work. Good wages. . . . A long way from Peru.—Well"?

Apparently Esteban had not been listening. He sat with his eyes on the table. At last the Captain raised his voice, as to a deaf person:

"I said: Do you want to go on my next trip with me. ..." "Yes, I'll go," answered Esteban suddenly. it's "Fine. That's fine. I want your brother, too, of course." "No."

#### THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY

"What's the matter? Wouldn't he want to come?" 19 Esteban mumbled something, looking away. Then half

rising, he said: "I got to go now. I've got to see somebody

about something." "Let me see your brother myself. Where is he?"..!dead." said Esteban.

"Oh, I didn't know. I didn't know. I'm sorry." in med "Yes," said Esteban. "I got to go".

"Hmm.-Which are you? What's your name?" DISA "Esteban".

"When did Manuel die?"

"Oh, just a ... just a few weeks. He hit his knee against something and ... just a few weeks ago".

They both kept their eyes on the floor. "How old are you. Esteban?" STORE Do

"Twenty-two." bode "Well, that's settled then, you're coming with me?" "Yes".

"You may not be used to the cold " "Yes, I'm used to it. I've got to go now. I got to go in the city and see somebody about something".

"Well, Esteban. Come back here for supper and we'll talk about the trip. Come back and have some wine with me, see. Will you"?

"Yes, I will."

"Go with God." "Go with God." They had supper together and it was arranged that they were to start for Lima the next morning. The Captain got him very drunk. At first they poured and drank and poured and drank in silence. Then the Captain began to talk about ships and their courses. He asked Esteban questions about tackle and about the guide-stars. Then Esteban began to talk about other things, and to talk very loudly: BĪROM STEAM

"On the ship you must give me something to do all the time. I'll do anything, anything. I'll climb up high and fix ropes; and I'll watch all night,—because, you know, I don't sleep well anyway. And, Captain Alvarado, on the ship you must pretend that you don't know me. Pretend that you hate me the most. So that you'll always give me things to do. I can't sit still and write at a table any more.—And don't tell the other men about me...that is, about"...

"I hear you went into a burning house, Esteban, and pulled someone out."

"Yes. I didn't get burned or anything. You know," cried Esteban, leaning across the table, "you're not allowed to kill yourself; you know you're not allowed. Everybody knows that. But if you jump into a burning house to save somebody, that wouldn't be killing yourself. And if you became a matador and the bull caught you that wouldn't be killing yourself. Only you mustn't put yourself in the bull's way on purpose. Did you ever notice that animals never kill themselves, even when they're

sure to lose? They never jump into a river or anything, even when they're sure to lose. Some

people say that horses run into bonfires. Is that true?" mid "No, I don't think that's "I don't think it's true. We had a dog once. Well, I mustn't think of that. —Captain Alvarado, do you know

Madre María del Pilar?" "Yes."

"I want to give her a present before I go away. Captain Alvarado, I want you to give me all my wages before I start—I won't need any money anywhere—and I want to buy her a present now. The present isn't from me only. She was .... was ..." Here Esteban wished to say his brother's name, but was unable to. Instead he continued in a lower voice: "She had a kind of a nie. she had a serious loss, once. She said so. I don't know who it was, and I want to give her a present. Women can't bear that kind of a thing like we can." The Captain promised him that they would choose some2 thing in the morning. Esteban talked about it at great length. At last the Captain saw him slip under the table, and 5 himself, rising up, went out into the square before the inn. 'He looked at the line of the Andes and at the streams of stars crowding forever across the sky. And there was that wraith hanging in mid-air and smiling at him, the wraith with the silvery voice that said for the thousandth time: "Don't be gone long. But I'll be a big girl when you get back." Then he went within and carried Esteban to his room and sat looking at him for a long while.

The next morning he was waiting at the bottom of the stairs when Esteban appeared: "We're starting when you're ready," said the Captain- .

The strange glitter had returned to the boy's eyes. He blurted out: "No, I'm not coming. I'm not coming after all".

"! Esteban! But you have promised me that you would come".

"It's impossible. I can't come with you," and he turned back up the stairs.

"Come here a moment, Esteban, just a moment." "I can't come with you. I can't leave Peru".

"I want to tell you something

a better Esteban came down to the foot of the stairs.

"How about that present for Madre María del Pilar?" asked the Captain in a low voice. Esteban was silent, looking over the mountains. "You aren't going to take that present away from her? It might mean a lot to her . . . you know".

"All right," murmured Esteban, as though much impressed.

"Yes. Besides the ocean's better than Peru. You know Lima and Cuzco and the road. You have nothing more to know about them. You see it's the ocean you want. Besides on the boat you'll have something to do every minute. I'll see to that. Go and get your things and we'll start".

Esteban was trying to make a decision. It had always been Manuel who had made the decisions and even Manuel had never been forced to make as great a one as this.

Esteban went slowly upstairs. The Captain waited for him and waited so long that presently he ventured half the way up the stairs and listened. At first there was silence; then a series of noises that his imagination was able to identify at once.

Esteban had scraped away the plaster about a beam and was adjusting a rope about it. The Captain stood on the stairs trembling: "Perhaps it's best," he said to himself.

"Perhaps I should leave him alone. Perhaps it's the only thing possible for him."

Then on hearing another sound he flung himself against the door, fell into the room and caught the boy. "Go away," cried Esteban. "Let me be. Don't come in now".

Esteban fell face downward upon the floor. "I am alone, alone, alone," he cried. The Captain stood above him, his great plain face ridged and gray with pain; it was his

own old hours he was reliving. He was the awkwardest speaker in the world apart from the lore of the sea, but there are times when it requires a high courage to speak the banal. He could not be sure the figure on the floor was listening, but he said, "We do what we can. We push on, Esteban, as best we can. It isn't for long, you know. Time keeps going by. You'll be surprised at the way time passes". They started for Lima. When they reached the bridge of San Luis Rey, the Captain descended to the stream below in order to supervise the passage of some merchandise, but Esteban crossed by the bridge and fell with it.

## PART IV : UNCLE PIO

In one of her letters (the xxixth) the Marquesa de Montemayor tries to describe the impression that Uncle Pio "our aged Harlequin" made upon her: "I have been sitting

dl morning on the green balcony making you a pair of slippers, my soul," she tells her daughter. " As the golden wire did not take up my whole attention I was able to follow the activity of a coterie of ants in the wall beside me. Somewhere behind the partition they were patiently destroying my house. Every three minutes a little workman would appear between two boards and drop a grain of wood upon the floor below. Then he would wave his antennae at me and back busily into his mysterious corridor. In the meantime various brothers and sisters of his were trotting back and forth on a certain highway, stopping to massage one another's heads, or if the messages they bore were of first importance, refusing angrily to massage or to be massaged. And at once I thought of Uncle Pio. Why? Where else but with him had I seen that very gesture with which he arrests a passing abbé or a courtier's valet, and whispers, his lips laid against his victim's ear? And surely enough, before noon I saw him hurry by on one of those mysterious errands of his. As I am the idlest and silliest of women I sent Pepita to get me a piece of nougat which I placed on the ant's highway. Similarly I sent word to the Café Pizarro asking them to send Uncle Pio to see me if he dropped in before sunset. I shall give him that old bent salad fork with the turquoise in it, and he will bring me a copy of the new ballad that everyone is singing about the d-9-a of Oliv-s. My child, you shall have the best of everything, and you shall have it first.".. vol And in the next letter: "My dear, Uncle Pio is the most delightful man in the world, your husband excepted. He is the second most delightful man in the world. His conversation is enchanting. If he weren't so disreputable I should make him my secretary. He could write all my letters for me and generations would rise up and call me witty. Alas, however, he is so moth-eaten by disease and bad company, that I shall have to leave



him to his underworld. He is not only like an ant, he is like a soiled pack of cards. And I doubt whether the whole Pacific could wash him sweet and fragrant again. But what divine Spanish he speaks and what exquisite things he says in it! That's what one gets by hanging around a theatre and hearing nothing but the conversation of Calderón. Alas, what is the matter with this world, my soul, that it should treat such a being so ill! His eyes are as sad as those of a cow that has been separated from its tenth calf." We Seguddiad

from brazendo semio nitiwa benda bed on Borda You should know first that this Uncle Pio was Camila Perichole's maid. He was also her singing-master, her miffleur, her masseur, her reader, her errand-boy, her banker; tumor added: her father. For example, he taught her her parts. There was a whisper around town that Camila could read and write. The compliment was unfounded; Uncle Pio her reading and writing for her. At the height of the season the company put on two or three new plays a week, and as each one contained a long and flowery part for the Penichole the mere task of memorization was not a trifle.

Peru had passed within fifty years from a frontier state to zate in renaissance. Its interest in music and the theatre was zase. Lima celebrated its feast days by hearing a Mass of Tomás Luis da Victoria in the morning and the glittering poetry of Calderón in the evening. It is true that the Limeans were given to interpolating trivial songs into the most exquisite comedies and some lachrymose effects into the austere music; but at least they never submitted to the boredom of a misplaced veneration. If they had disliked heroic comedy the Limeans would not have hesitated to remain at home; and if they had been deaf to polyphony nothing would have prevented their going to an earlier service. When the Archbishop returned from a short trip to Spain, all Lima kept asking: "What has he brought?" The news

finally spread abroad that he had returned with tomes of masses and motets by Palestrina, Morales and Vittoria, as well as thirty-five plays by Tirso de Molina and Ruiz de Alarcon and Moreto. There was a civic fête in his honor. The choirboys' school and the green room of the Comedia were swamped with the gifts of vegetables and wheat. All the world was eager to nourish the interpreters of so much beauty.

This was the theatre in which Camila Perichole gradually made her reputation. So rich was the repertory and so dependable the prompter's box that few plays were given more than four times a season. The manager had the whole flowering of the 17th Century Spanish drama to draw upon, including many that are now lost to us. The Perichole had appeared in a hundred plays of Lope de Vega alone. There were many admirable actresses in Lima during these years, but none better. The citizens were too far away from the theatres of Spain to realize that she was the best in the Spanish world. They kept sighing for a glimpse of the stars of Madrid whom they had never seen and to whom they assigned vague new excellences. Only one person knew for certain that the Perichole was a great performer and that was her tutor Uncle Pio.

Uncle Pio came of a good Castilian house, illegitimately. At the age of ten he ran away to Madrid from his father's hacienda and was pursued without diligence. He lived ever after by his wits. He possessed the six attributes of the adventurer—a memory for names and faces, with the aptitude for altering his own; the gift of tongues; inexhaustible invention; secrecy; the talent for falling into conversation with strangers; and that freedom from conscience that springs from a contempt for the dozing rich he preyed upon. From ten to fifteen he distributed handbills for merchants, held horses, and ran confidential errands. From fifteen to twenty he

trained bears and snakes for travelling circuses; he cooked, and mixed punches; he hung about the entries of the more expensive taverns and whispered informations into the travellers' ears—sometimes nothing more dubious than that a certain noble house was reduced to selling its plate and could thus dispense with the commission of a silversmith. He was attached to all the theatres in town and could applaud like ten. He spread slanders at so much a slander. He sold rumors about crops and about the value of land. From twenty to thirty his services came to be recognized in very high circles he was sent out by the government to inspire some halfhearted rebellions in the mountains, so that the government could presently arrive and whole-heartedly crush them. His discretion was so profound that the French party used him even when they knew that the Austrian party used him also. He had long interviews with the Princesse des Ursins, but he came and went by the back stairs. During this phase he was no longer obliged to arrange gentlemen's pleasures, nor to plant little harvests of calumny.

He never did one thing for more than two weeks at a time even when enormous gains seemed likely to follow upon it. He could have become a circus manager, a theatrical director, a dealer in antiquities, an importer of Italian silks, a secretary in the Palace or the Cathedral, a dealer in provisions for the army, a speculator in houses and farms, a merchant in dissipations and pleasures. But there seemed to have been written into his personality, through some accident or early admiration of his childhood, a reluctance to own anything, to be tied down, to be held to a long engagement. It was this that prevented his thieving, for example. He had stolen several times, but the gains had not been sufficient to offset his dread of being locked up; he had sufficient ingenuity to escape on the field itself all the police in the world, but nothing could protect him against the talebearing of his enemies.

Similarly he had been reduced for a time to making investigations for the Inquisition, but when he had seen several of his victims led off in hoods he felt that he might be involving himself in an institution whose movements were not evenly predictable. As he approached twenty, Uncle Pio came to see quite clearly that his life had three aims. There was first this need of independence, cast into a curious pattern, namely: the desire to be varied, secret and omniscient. He was willing to renounce the dignities of public life, if in secret he might feel that he looked down upon men from a great distance, knowing more about them than they knew themselves; and with a knowledge which occasionally passed into action and rendered him an agent in the affairs of states and persons. In the second place he wanted to be always near beautiful women, of whom he was always in the best and worst sense the worshipper. To be near them was as necessary to him as breathing. His reverence for beauty and charm was there for anyone to see and to laugh at, and the ladies of the theatre and the court and the houses of pleasure loved his connoisseurship. They tormented him and insulted him and asked his advice and were singularly comforted by his absurd devotion. He suffered greatly their rages and their meanness and their confiding tears; all he asked was to be accepted casually, to be trusted, to be allowed like a friendly and slightly foolish dog to come and go in their rooms and to write their letters for them. He was insatiably curious about their minds and their hearts. He never expected to be loved by them (borrowing for a moment another sense of that word); for that, he carried his money to the obscurer parts of the city; he was always desperately unprepossessing, with his whisp of a moustache and his whisp of a beard and his big ridiculous sad eyes. They constituted his parish; it was from them that he acquired the name of Uncle Pio and it was when they were in trouble that he most revealed himself; when they

fell from favour he lent them money, when they were ill he outlasted the flagging devotion of their lovers and the exasperation of their maids; when time or disease robbed them of their beauty, he served them still for their beauty's memory; and when they died his was the honest grief that saw them as far as possible on their journey. Tow to smo 2 In the third place he wanted to be near those that loved Spanish literature and its masterpieces, especially in the theatre. He had discovered all that treasure for himself - borrowing or stealing from the libraries of his patrons. feeding himself upon it in secrecy, -behind the scenes, as i were, of his mad life. He was contemptuous of the greatpersons who for all their education and usage, exhibited no care nor astonishment before the miracles of word order in Calderón and Cervantes. He longed himself to make verses. He never realized that many of the satirical songs he had written for the vaudevilles passed into folk-music and have been borne everywhere along the highroads.

As the result of one of those quarrels that arise so naturally in brothels his life became too complicated and he removed to Peru. Uncle Pio in Peru was even more versatile than Uncle Pio in Europe. Here too he touched upon realestate, circuses, pleasures, insurrections and antiques. A Chinese junk had been blown from Canton to America; he dragged up the beach the bales of deep-red porcelain and sold the bowls to the collectors of virtú. He traced down the sovereign remedies of the Incas and started a smart trade in pills. Within four months he knew practically everyone in Lima. He presently added to this acquaintance the inhabitants of scores of seacoast towns, mining camps and settlements in the interior. His pretensions to omniscience became more and more plausible. The Viceroy discovered Uncle Pio and all this richness of reference; he engaged his services in many affairs. In the decay of his judgment Don Andrés had retained one talent, he was a master of the

technique of handling confidential servants. He treated Uncle Pio with great tact and some deference; he understood which errands the other should not be asked to undertake and he understood his need for variety and intermission. Uncle Pio in turn was perpetually astonished that a prince should make so little use of his position, for power, or for fantasy, or for sheer delight in the manipulation of other men's destinies; but the servant loved the master because he could quote from any of Cervantes' prefaces and because his tongue had a little Castilian salt about it still. Many a morning Uncle Pio entered the Palace through corridors where there was no one to cross but a confessor or a confidential bully and sat with the Viceroy over his morning chocolate. But for all his activity nothing made Uncle Pio rich. One would have said that he abandoned a venture when it threatened to prosper. Although no one knew it, he owned a house. It was full of dogs that could add and multiply and the top floor was reserved for birds. But even in this kingdom he was lonely, and proud in his loneliness, as though there resided a certain superiority in such a solitude. Finally he stumbled upon an adventure that came like some strange gift from the skies and that combined the three great aims of his life: his passion for overseeing the lives of others, his worship of beautiful women, and his admiration for the treasures of Spanish literature. He discovered Camila Perichole. Her real name was Micaela Villegas. She was singing in cafés at the age of twelve and Uncle Pio had always been the very soul of cafés. Now as he sat among the guitarists and watched this awkward girl singing ballads, imitating every inflection of the more experienced singers who had preceded her, the determination entered his mind to play Pygmalion. He bought her. Instead of sleeping locked up in the wine bin, she inherited a cot in his house. He wrote songs for her, he taught her how to listen to the quality of her tone, and bought her a new dress. At first all she noticed was that

it was wonderful not to be whipped, to be offered hot soups, and to be taught something. But it was Uncle Pio who was really dazzled. His rash experiment flourished beyond all b prophecy. The little twelve-year-old, silent and always a little sullen, devoured work. He set her endless exercises in acting and mimicry; he set her problems in conveying the atmosphere of a song; he took her to the theatres and made her notice all the details of a performance. But it was from Camila as a woman that he was to receive his greatest shock. The long arms and legs were finally harmonized into a body 3 of perfect grace. The almost grotesque and hungry face became beautiful. Her whole nature became gentle and 29 mysterious and oddly wise; and it all turned to him. She could ni find no fault in him and she was sturdily loyal. They loved y one another deeply but without passion. He respected the slight nervous shadow that crossed her face when he came too near her. But there arose out of this denial itself the perfume of a tenderness, that ghost of passion which, in the most unexpected relationship, can make even a whole lifetime devoted to irksome duty pass like a gracious dream. They travelled a great deal, seeking new taverns, for the highest attribute of a café singer will always be her novelty. They went to Mexico, their odd clothes wrapped up in the self-same shawl. They slept on beaches, they were whipped at Panama and shipwrecked on some tiny Pacific islands plastered with the droppings of birds. They tramped through jungles delicately picking their way, among snakes and beetles. They sold themselves out as harvesters in a hard season. Nothing in the world was very surprising to them. 202Then began an even harder course of training for the girl, La regimen that resembled more the preparation for an acrobat. The instruction was a little complicated by the fact that her rise to favor was very rapid; and there was some danger that the applause she received would make her content with her work too

soon. Uncle Pio never exactly beat her, but he resorted to a sarcasm that had terrors of its own. 10 At the close of a performance Camila would return to her dressing room to find Uncle Pio whistling nonchalantly in one corner. She would divine his attitude at once and cry angrily:

"Now what is it? Mother of God, Mother of God, what is it now?"

"Nothing, little pearl. My little Camila of Camilas, nothing".

\*\*There was something you didn't like. Ugly fault-finding thing that you are. Come on now, what was it? Look, I'm ready'.

"No, little fish. Adorable morning star, I suppose you did as well as you could".

The suggestion that she was a limited artist and that certain felicities would be forever closed to her never failed to make Camila frantic. She would burst into tears: "I wish I had never known you. You poison my whole life. You just think I did badly. It pleases you to pretend that I was bad. All right then, be quiet".

Brow backed to and garden Uncle Pio went on whistling.

"The fact is I know I was weak to-night, and don't need you to tell me so. So there. Now go away. I don't want to see you around. It's hard enough to play that part without coming back and finding you this way".

Suddenly Uncle Pio would lean forward and ask with angry intensity: "Why did you take that speech to the prisoner so fast"?

More tears from the Perichole: "Oh God, let me die in peace! One day you tell me to go faster and another to go slower. Anyway I shall be crazy in a year or two and then it won't matter".

More whistling.

"Besides the audience applauded as never before. Do you hear me? As never



before. There! Too fast or too slow is nothing to them. They wept. I was divine. That's all I care for. Now be silent. Be silent”.

-“You may comb my hair, but if you say another word I shall never play again. You can find some other girl, that's

all”. Thereupon he would comb her hair soothingly for ten minutes, pretending not to notice the sobs that were shaking her exhausted body. At last she would turn quickly and catching one of his hands would kiss it frantically: “Uncle Pio, was I so bad? Was I a disgrace to you? Was it so awful that you left the theatre”?

After a long pause Uncle Pio would admit judiciously: “You were good in the scene on the ship”.

“But I've been better, Uncle Pio. You remember the night you came back from Cuzco ?” “You were pretty good at the close”.

“Was I”?

“But my flower, my pearl, what was the matter in the speech to the prisoner.”?

Here the Perichole would fling her face and arms upon the table amid the pomades, caught up into a tremendous fit of weeping. Only perfection would do, only perfection. And that had never come. Then beginning in a low voice Uncle Pio would talk for an hour, analyzing the play, entering into a world of finesse in matters of voice and gesture and tempo, and often until dawn they would remain there declaiming to one another the lordly conversation of Calderón.

Whom were, these two seeking to please? Not the audiences of Lima. They had long since been satisfied. We come from a world where we have known incredible standards of excellence, and we dimly remember beauties which we have not seized again; and we go back to that world. Uncle Pio and Camila Perichole were tormenting themselves in an effort to establish in Peru the standards of the theatres

in some Heaven whither Calderón had preceded them. The public for which masterpieces are intended is not on this earth.

With the passing of time Camila lost some of this absorption in her art. A certain intermittent contempt for acting made her negligent. It was due to the poverty of interest in women's rôles throughout Spanish classical drama. At a time when the playwrights grouped about the courts of England and France (a little later, of Venice) were enriching the parts of women' with studies in wit, charm, passion and hysteria, the dramatists of Spain kept their eyes on their heroes, on

#### THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY

gentlemen torn between the conflicting claims of honour, or, as sinners, returning at the last moment to the cross. For a number of years Uncle Pio spent himself in discovering ways to interest the Perichole in the rôles that fell to her. Upon one occasion he was able to announce to Camila that a granddaughter of Vico de Barrera had arrived in Peru. Uncle Pio had long since communicated to Camila his veneration for great poets and Camila never questioned the view that they were a little above the kings and not below the saints. So it was in great excitement that the two of them chose one of the master's plays to perform before his granddaughter. They rehearsed the poem a hundred times, now in the great joy of invention, now in dejection. On the night of the performance Camila peering out between the folds of the curtain had Uncle Pio point out to her the little middle-aged woman worn with the cares of penury and a large family; but it seemed to Camila that she was looking at all the beauty and dignity in the world. As she waited for the lines that preceded her entrance she clung to Uncle Pio in reverent silence, her heart beating loudly. Between the acts she retired to the dusty corner of the warehouse where no one would find her and sat staring into the corners. At the close of the performance

Uncle Pio brought the granddaughter of Vico de Barrera into Camila's room. Camila stood among the clothes that hung upon the wall, weeping with happiness and shame. Finally she flung herself on her knees and kissed the older woman's hands, and the older woman kissed hers, and while the audience went home and went to bed the visitor remained telling Camila the little stories that had remained in the family, of Vico's work and of his habits.com

Uncle Pio was at his happiest when a new actress entered the company, for the discovery of a new talent at her side never failed to bestir the Perichole. To Uncle Pio (standing at the back of the auditorium, bent double with joy and malice) it seemed that the body of the Perichole had become an alabaster lamp in which a strong light had been placed. Without any resort to tricks or to false emphasis, she set herself to efface the newcomer. If the play were a comedy she became the very abstraction of wit, and (as was more likely) it was a drama of wronged ladies and implacable hates, the stage fairly smouldered with her emotion. Her personality became so electric that if she so much as laid her hand upon that of a fellow actor a sympathetic shudder ran through the audience. But such occasions of excellence became less and less frequent. As her technique became sounder, Camila's sincerity became less necessary. Even when she was absentminded the audience did not notice the difference and only Uncle Pio grieved.

Camila had a very beautiful face, or rather a face beautiful save in repose. In repose one was startled to discover that the nose was long and thin, the mouth tired and little childish, the eyes unsatisfied—a rather pinched peasant girl, dragged from the cafés-chantants and quite incapable of establishing any harmony between the claims of her art, of her appetites, of her dreams, and of her crowded daily routine. Each of

these was a world in itself, and the warfare between them : would soon have reduced to idiocy (or triviality) a less tenacious physique. We have seen that in spite of her discontent with her parts, the Perichole knew very well the joy that might reside in acting and warmed herself from time to time at that flame. But that of love attracted her more often, though with no greater assurance of happiness, until Jupiter himself sent her some pearls. ori Don Andrés de Ribera, the Viceroy of Peru, was the remnant of a delightful man, broken by the table, the alcove, (0 a grandeeship and ten years of exile. As a youth he had 3 accompanied embassies to Versailles and Rome; he had b fought in the wars in Austria; he had been in Jerusalem. He was a widower and childless of an enormous and wealthy - woman; he had collected coins a little, wines, actresses, vl orders and maps. From the table he had received the gout, from the alcove a tendency to convulsions; from the grandes In ship a pride so vast and puerile that he seldom heard of anything that was said to him and talked to the ceiling in a perpetual monologue; from the exile, oceans of boredom, a boredom so persuasive that it was like pain,—he woke up with it and spent the day with it, and it sat by his bed all night watching his sleep. Camila was passing the years in the hard-working routine of the theatre, savoured by a few untidy love-affairs, when this Olympian personage (for he had a face and port fit to play gods and heroes on the scene) suddenly transported her to the most delicious midnight suppers at the Palace. Contrary to all the traditions of the stage and state she adored her elderly admirer; she thought she was going to be happy forever. Don Andrés taught the Perichole a great many things and to her bright eager mind that was one of the sweetest ingredients of love. He taught her a little French; to be neat and clean; the modes of address. Uncle Pio had taught her how great ladies carry themselves on great occasions; he taught her how they relax.

Uncle Pio and Calderón had trained her in beautiful Spanish; Don Andrés furnished her with the smart slang of El Buen Retiro.

Uncle Pio was made anxious by Camila's invitation from the Palace. He would have much preferred that she continue with her little vulgarian love-affairs in the theatrical warehouse. But when he saw that her art was gaining a new finish he was well content. He would sit in the back of the theatre, rolling about in his seat for sheer joy and amusement, watching the Perichole intimate to the audience that she frequented the great world about whom the dramatists wrote. She had a new way of fingering a wine-glass, of exchanging an adieu, a new way of entering a door that told everything. To Uncle Pio nothing else mattered. What was there in the world more lovely than a beautiful woman doing justice to a Spanish masterpiece?-a performance (he asks you), packed with observation, in which the very spacing of the words revealed a comment on life and on the text-delivered by a beautiful voice-illustrated by a faultless carriage, considerable personal beauty and irresistible charm. "We are almost ready to take this marvel to Spain," he would murmur to himself. After the performance he would go around to her dressing-room and say "Very good!" But before taking his leave he would manage to ask her where, in the name of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, she had acquired that affected way of saying Excelencia. mon. After a time the Viceroy asked the Perichole whether it would amuse her to invite a few discreet guests to their midnight suppers, and he asked her whether she would like to meet the Archbishop. Camila was delighted. The Archbishop was delighted. On the eve of their first meeting he sent the actress an emerald pendant as big as a playing-card. # There was something in Lima that was wrapped up in yards of violet satin from which protruded a great dropsical head and two fat pearly hands; and that was its arch

bishop. Between the rolls of flesh that surrounded them looked out two black eyes speaking discomfort, kindness and wit. A curious and eager soul was imprisoned in all this lard, but by dint of never refusing himself a pheasant or a goose or his daily procession of Roman wines, he was his own bitter jailer. He loved his cathedral; he loved his duties; he was very devout. Some days he regarded his bulk ruefully; but the distress of remorse was less poignant than the distress of fasting and he was presently found deliberating over the secret messages that a certain roast sends to the certain salad that will follow it. And to punish himself he led an exemplary life in every other respect.

He had read all the literature of antiquity and forgotten all about it except a general aroma of charm and disillusion. He had been learned in the Fathers and the Councils and forgotten all about them save a floating impression of dissensions that had no application to Peru. He had read all the libertine masterpieces of Italy and France and reread them annually; even in the torments of the stone (happily dissolved by drinking the water from the springs of Santa María de Cluxambuqua), he could find nothing more nourishing than the anecdotes of Brantôme and the divine Aretino. The Archbishop knew that most of the priests of Peru were scoundrels. It required all his delicate Epicurean education to prevent his doing something about it; he had to repeat over to himself his favourite notions: that the injustice and unhappiness in the world is a constant; that the theory of progress is a delusion; that the poor, never having known happiness, are insensible to misfortune. Like all the rich he could not bring himself to believe that the poor (look at their houses, look at their clothes) could really suffer. Like all the cultivated he believed that only the widely-read could be said to know that they were unhappy. On one occasion, the iniquities in his see having been called to his notice, he almost did

something about it. He had just heard that it was becoming a rule in Peru for priests to exact two measures of meal for a fairly good absolution, and five measures, for a really effective one. He trembled with indignation; he roared to his secretary and bidding him bring up his writing materials, announced that he was going to dictate an overwhelming message to his shepherds. But there was no ink left in the inkwell; there was no ink left in the next room; there was no ink to be found in the whole palace. This state of things in his household so upset the good man that he fell ill of the combined rages and learned to guard himself against indignations.

The addition of the Archbishop to the suppers was so successful that Don Andrés began to think of new names. He had grown increasingly dependent upon Uncle Pio, but waited until Camila should propose his inclusion of her own accord. And in due time Uncle Pio brought with him that courser of the seas, the Captain Alvarado. Generally the reunion had been several hours under way before Camila was able to join them after her performance at the theatre. She would arrive towards one o'clock, radiant and bejewelled and very tired. The four men received her as they would a great queen. For an hour or so she would carry the conversation, but gradually reclining more and more against Don Andrés' shoulder she would follow the talk as it fitted from one humorous lined face to the other. All night they talked, secretly comforting their hearts that longed always for Spain and telling themselves that such a symposium was after the manner of the high Spanish soul. They talked about ghosts and second-sight, and about the earth before man appeared upon it and about the possibility of the planets striking against one another; about whether the soul can be seen, like a dove, fluttering away at the moment of death; they wondered whether at the second coming of Christ to Jerusalem, Peru would be long in receiving the news. They talked until the sun rose, about wars and kings, about

poets and scholars, and about strange countries. Each one poured into the conversation his store of wise sad anecdotes and his dry regret about the race of men. The flood of golden light struck across the Andes and entering the great window fell upon the piles of fruit, the stained brocade upon the table, and the sweet

thoughtful forehead of the Perichole as she lay sleeping against the sleeve of her protector. There would ensue a long pause, no one wishing to make the first move to go, and the glances of them all would rest upon this strange beautiful bird who lived among them. But Uncle Pio's glance had been upon her all night, a quick glance from his black eyes, full of tenderness and anxiety, resting on the great secret and reason of his life.

But Uncle Pio never ceased watching Camila. He divided the inhabitants of this world into two groups, into those who had loved and those who had not. It was a horrible aristocracy, apparently, for those who had no capacity for love (or rather for suffering in love) could not be said to be alive and certainly would not live again after their death. They were a kind of straw population, filling the world with their meaningless laughter and tears and chatter and disappearing still lovable and vain into thin air. For this distinction he cultivated his own definition of love that was like no other and that had gathered all its bitterness and pride from his odd life. He regarded love as a sort of cruel malady through which the elect are required to pass in their late youth and from which they emerge, pale and wrung, but ready for the business of living. There was (he believed) a great repertory of errors mercifully impossible to human beings who had recovered from this illness. Unfortunately there remained to them a host of failings, but at least (from among many illustrations) they never mistook a protracted amiability for the whole conduct of



life, they never again regarded any human being, from a prince to a servant, as a mechanical object. Uncle Pio never ceased watching Camila because it seemed to him that she had never undergone this initiation. In the months that followed her introduction to the Viceroy he held his breath and waited. He held his breath for years. 1 Camila bore the Viceroy three children, yet remained the i same. He knew that the first sign of her entrance into the true possession of the world would be the mastery of certain effects in her acting. There were certain passages in the plays that she would compass some day, simply, easily, and with secret joy, because they alluded to the new rich wisdom of her heart; but her treatment of such passages became more and more cursory, not to say embarrassed. He presently saw that she had tired of Don Andrés and had returned to a series of furtive love-affairs with the actors and matadors and merchants of the town. N 18 She became more and more impatient of acting and an other parasite found its way into her mind. She wanted to be in a lady. She slowly contracted a greed for respectability and 2 began to refer to her acting as a pastime. She acquired a duenna and some footmen and went to church at the fashionable hours. She attended the prize days at the University and appeared among the donors of the great charities. She even (learned to read and write a little. Any faint discrimination against her as a bohemian she challenged with fury. She led the Viceroy a horrible life with her passion for concessions and her gradual usurpation of privileges. The new vice displaced the old and she became noisily virtuous. She invented some parents and produced some cousins. She obtained an undocumented legitimatization of her children. In society she cultivated a delicate and languid magdelinism, as a great lady might, and she carried a candle in the penitential parades, side by side with ladies who had nothing to regret but an outburst of temper and a furtive glance into Descartes. Her sin had been acting and

everyone knows that there were even saints who had been actors, there was Saint Gelasius and Saint Genesius and Saint Margaret of Antioch and Saint Pelagia. de done to antiago d e 1901 PER There was a fashionable watering place in the hills not far from Santa María de Cluxambuqua. Don Andrés had travbelled in France and had thought to build himself a little mock Vichy; there was a pagoda, some drawing-rooms, a theatre, a little arena for bull-fights and some French gardens. Camila's health had never known a shadow, but she built herself a villa in the vicinity and sipped the hateful • waters at eleven o'clock. The Marquesa de Montemayor has - left a brilliant picture of this opéra bouffe paradise with the reigning divinity parading her fierce sensitiveness along the avenues of powdered shell and receiving the homage of all those who could not afford to offend the Viceroy. Doña María draws a portrait of this ruler, stately and weary, gambling all through the night in sums that would have raised another Escorial. And beside him she sets the portrait of his son, Camila's little Don Jaime. Don Jaime, at seven years, was a rachitic little body who seemed to have inherited not only his mother's forehead and eyes, but his father's liability to convulsions. He bore his pain with the silent bewilderment of an animal, and like an animal he was mortally ashamed when any evidences of it occurred in public. He was so beautiful that the more trivial forms of pity were hushed in his presence and his long thoughts about his difficulties had given his face a patient and startling dignity. His mother dressed him in garnet velvet, and when he was able he followed her about at a distance of several yards, extricating himself gravely from the ladies who tried to detain him in conversation. Camila was never cross to Don Jaime and she was never demonstrative. When the sun was shining the two could be seen walking along

those artificial terraces in silence, Camila wondering when the felicity would begin that she had always associated with social position, Don Jaime' rejoicing merely in the sunlight and anxiously estimating the approach of a cloud. They looked like figures that had strayed there from some remote country, or out of an old ballad, that had not yet learned the new language and had not yet found any friends..

Camila was about thirty when she left the stage and it required five years for her to achieve her place in society. She gradually became almost stout, though her head seemed to grow more beautiful every year. She took to overdressing and the floors of the drawing-rooms reflected a veritable tower of jewels and scarves and plumes. Her face and hands were covered with a bluish powder against which she drew an irritable mouth in scarlet and orange. The almost distraught fury of her temper was varied by the unnatural sweetness of her address in the company of the dowagers. In the earliest stages of her progress upward she had intimated to Uncle Pio that he was not to be seen with her in public, but finally she became impatient even of his discreeter visits. She conducted the interviews with formality and evasion. Her eyes never crossed his and she angled for pretexts to quarrel with him. Still he ventured out once a month to try her patience and when the call had become impossible he would climb the stairs and finish the hour among her children.

One day he arrived at her villa in the hills and, through her maid, begged for an opportunity to talk with her. He was told that she would see him in the French gardens a little before sunset. He had come up from Lima on a strange sentimental impulse. Like all solitary persons he had invested friendship with a divine glamour: he imagined that the people he passed on the street, laughing together and embracing when they parted, the people who dined together with so many smiles, you will scarcely believe me, but he imagined that they were

extracting from all that congeniality great store of satisfaction. So that suddenly he was filled with the excitement of seeing her again, of being called "Uncle Pio," and of reviving for a moment the trust and humour of their long vagabondage. The ichtore and The French gardens were at the southern end of the town. Behind them rose the higher Andes and before them there was a parapet overlooking a deep valley and overlooking wave after wave of hills that stretched toward the Pacific. It was the hour when bats fly low and the smaller animals play recklessly underfoot. A few solitaires lingered about the gardens, gazing dreamily into the sky that was being gradually emptied of its colour, or leaned upon the balustrade and looked down into the valley, noting in which village a dog was barking. It was the hour when the father returns home from the fields and plays for a moment in the yard with the dog that jumps upon him, holding his muzzle closed or throwing him upon his back. The young girls look about for the first star to fix a wish upon it, and the boys grow restless for supper. Even the busiest mother stands for a moment idle-handed, smiling at her dear and exasperating family.

Uncle Pio stood against one of the chipped marble benches and watched Camila coming towards him:

"I am late," she said. "I am sorry. What is it you wish to say to me?" "Camila," he began. "My name is Doña Micaela."

"I do not wish to offend you, Doña Micaela, but when you let me call you Camila for twenty years, I should think " "Oh, do as you like. Do as you like.", "Camila, promise me that you will listen to me. Promise me that you will not run away at my first sentence".

At once she burst out with unexpected passion: "Uncle Pio, listen to me. You are mad if you think you can make me return to the theatre. I look back at the theatre

with horror. Understand that. The theatre! The theatre, indeed! The daily payment of insults in that filthy place. Understand that you are wasting your time." - bas aberta par He answered gently: "I would not have you come back if you are happy with these new friends." "You don't like my new friends, then?" she answered

quickly. "Whom do you offer me in their po "Camila, I only remember ..." ad the stene "I will not be criticized. I don't want any advice. It will be

UNCLE PIO

cold in a moment, I must go back to my house. Just give me up, that's all. Just put me out of your mind." zabao 10 "Dear Camila, don't be angry. Let me talk to you. Just

suffer me for ten minutes." FOR He did not understand why she was weeping. He did not know what to say. He talked at random: "You never even come to see the theatre, and they all notice it. The audiences are falling away now, too. They only put on the Old Comedy twice a week; all the other nights there are these new farces in prose. All is dull and childish and indecent. No one can speak Spanish any more. No one can even walk correctly any more. On Corpus Christi Day they gave Belshazzar's Feast where you were so wonderful. Now it was shameful".

There was a pause. A beautiful procession of clouds, like a flock of sheep, was straying up from the sea, slipping up the valleys between the hills. Camila suddenly touched his knee, and her face was like her face twenty years before: "Forgive me, Uncle Pio, for being so bad. Jaime was ill this afternoon. There's nothing one can do. He lies there, so white and ... so surprised. One must just think of other things. Uncle Pio, it would be no good if I went back to the theatre. The audiences come for the prose farces. We were foolish to try and keep alive the Old Comedy. Let

people read the old plays in books if they choose to. It is not worth while fighting with the crowd

"Wonderful Camila, I was not just to you when you were on the stage. It was some foolish pride in me. I grudged you the praise that you deserved. Forgive me. You have always been a very great artist. If you come to see that you are not happy among these people you might think about going to Madrid. You would have a great triumph there. You are still young and beautiful. There will be time later to be called Doña Micaela. We shall be old soon. We shall be dead soon."

"No, I shall never see Spain. All the world is alike, Madrid or Lima."

"Oh, if we could go away to some island where the people would know you for yourself. And love you." 75W91 di "You are fifty years old and you are still dreaming of such

islands, Uncle Pio." He bent his head and mumbled: "Of course I love you, Camila, as I always must and more than I can say. To have known you is enough for my whole life. You are a great lady now. And you are rich. There is no longer any way that I can

help you. But I am always ready." "How absurd you are," she said smiling. "You said that as boys say it. You don't seem to learn as you grow older, Uncle Pio. There is no such thing as that kind of love and that kind of island. It's in the theatre you find such things." He looked shamefaced, but unconvinced.

At last she rose and said sadly: "What are we talking about! It is growing cold. I must be going in. You must be resigned. I have no heart for the theatre." There was a pause. "And for the rest? ... Oh, I do not understand. It is just circumstance. I must be what I must. Do not try to understand either. Don't think about me, Uncle Pio.

Just forgive, that's all. Just try to forgive”.

She stood still a moment, searching for something deeply felt to say to him. The first cloud reached the terrace; it was dark; the last stragglers were leaving the gardens. She was thinking of Don Jaime, and of Don Andrés and of himself. She could not find the words. Suddenly she bent down and kissed his fingers and went quickly away. But he sat for a long time in the gathering clouds trembling with happiness and trying to penetrate into the meaning of these things.

Suddenly the news was all over Lima. Doña Micaela Villegas, the lady that used to be Camila the Perichole, had the small-pox. Several hundred other persons had the smallpox also, but popular interest and malignity were concentrated upon the actress. A wild hope ran about the town that the beauty would be impaired that had enabled her to despise the class from which she sprang. The news escaped from the sick-room that Camila had become ludicrous in homeliness and the cup of the envious overflowed. As soon as she was able she had herself carried from the city to her villa in the hills; she ordered the sale of her elegant little palace. She returned her jewels to their givers and she sold her fine clothes. The Viceroy, the Archbishop, and the few men at court who had been her sincerest admirers besieged her door still with messages and gifts; the messages were ignored and the gifts were returned without comment. No one but her nurse and maids had been permitted to see her since the commencement of her illness. As an answer to his repeated attempts Don Andrés received a large sum of money from her with a letter compounded of all that is possible in bitterness and pride.

Like all beautiful women who have been brought up amid continual tributes to her beauty she assumed without cynicism that it must necessarily be the basis of anyone's attachment to herself; henceforth any attention paid to her must spring

from a pity full of condescension and faintly perfumed with satisfaction at so complete a reversal. This assumption that she need look for no more devotion now that her beauty had passed proceeded from the fact that she had never realized any love save love as passion. Such love, though it expends itself in generosity and thoughtfulness, though it give birth to visions and to great poetry, remains among the sharpest expressions of self-interest. Not until it has passed through a long servitude, through its own self-hatred, through mockery, through great doubts, can it take its place among the loyalties. Many who have spent a lifetime in it can tell us less of love than the child that lost a dog yesterday. As her friends continued in their efforts to draw her again into society she grew more and more angry and dispatched insulting messages to the city. It was said for a time that she was retiring into religion. But new rumours that all was fury and despair on the little farm contradicted the old. For those near to her the despair was fearful to behold. She was convinced that her life was over, her life and children's. In her hysterical pride she had given back more than she owed and the approach of poverty was added to the loneliness and the gloom of her future. There was nothing left for her to do but to draw out her days in jealous solitude in the center of the little farm that was falling into decay. She brooded for hours upon the joy of her enemies and could be heard striding about her room with strange cries.

9102 Uncle Pio did not allow himself to be discouraged. By dint of making himself useful to the children, by taking a hand in the management of the farm and by discreetly lending her some money he obtained his entrance into the house and even into the presence of its veiled mistress. But even then Camila, convinced in her pride that he pitied her, lashed him with the blade of her tongue and derived some strange comfort from heaping him with sneers. He loved her the more,



understanding better than she did herself all the stages in the convalescence of her humiliated spirit. But one day an accident befell that lost him his share in her progress. He pushed open a door. She thought she had locked it. For just one hour a foolish secret hope had come to her; she wondered whether she could make a paste of chalk and cream to spread upon her face. She who had sneered so often at the befloured grandmothers of the court wondered for a few moments whether she had learned anything on the stage that would aid her now. She thought she had locked the door and with hurried hands and beating heart she laid on the coat, the grotesque pallor, and as she gazed into the mirror and recognized the futility of her attempt she caught the image of Uncle Pio standing in the door amazed. She rose from the chair with a cry and covered her face with her hands.

"Go away. Go away out of my house forever," she screamed. "I never want to see you again." In her shame she drove him out with blasphemy and hatred, she pursued him down the corridor and hurled objects down the stairs. She gave her farmer orders that Uncle Pio was forbidden to come into the grounds. But he continued for a week trying to see her again. At last he went back to Lima; he filled in the time as best he could, but he longed to be by her as a boy of eighteen would long. At last he devised a stratagem and returned up into the hills to put it into effect.

One morning before dawn he arose and lay on the ground below her window. He imitated in the darkness the sound of weeping, and, as nearly as he could, of a young girl's weeping. He continued in this for the whole quarter of an hour. He did not let his voice rise above that degree of loudness which Italian musicians would represent by the direction piano, but he frequently intermitted the sound trusting that if she were asleep it would insinuate itself into her mind as well by duration as by degree. The air was cool and agreeable. The first faint streak of sapphire was

appearing behind the peaks and in the east the star of morning was pulsating every moment with a more tender intention. A profound silence wrapped all the farm buildings, only an occasional breeze set all the grasses sighing. Suddenly a lamp was lit in her room and a moment later the shutter was thrown back and a head wrapped in veils leaned far

"Who is there?" asked the beautiful voice. Uncle Pio remained silent. de Camila said again in a tone edged with impatience: W

"Who is there? Who is there weeping?". "Doña Micaela, my lady, I beg of you to come here to me."

"Who are you and what do you want?" or

"I am a poor girl. I am Estrella. I beg of you to come and help me. Do not call your maid. I pray you, Doña Micaela, to come yourself." A short to encasa in

Camila was silent a moment, then said abruptly: "Very well," and closed the shutter. Presently she appeared around the corner of the house. She wore a thick cloak that dragged in the dew. She stood at a distance and said: "Come over here to where I am standing,—Who are you"?

Uncle Pio rose up. "Camila, it is I,—Uncle Pio. Forgive me, but I must speak to you". Mother of God, when shall I be free of this dreadful person! Understand: I want to see no one. I don't want to speak to a soul. My life is over. That is all." I slegter on

"Camila, by our long life together, I beg of you to grant me one thing. I shall go away and never trouble you again".

"I grant you nothing, nothing. Stay away from me." plunge

"I promise you I shall never trouble you again if you listen to me this once." She was hurrying around to the door on the other side of the house and Uncle Pio was

obliged to run beside her to make sure that she heard what he was saying. She stopped:

"What is it then? Hurry. It is cold. I am not well. I must go back to my room".

"Camila, let me take Don Jaime for a year to live with me in Lima. Let me be his teacher. Let me teach him the Castilian. Here he is left among the servants. He is learning nothing." "No".

Tabiat "Camila, what will become of him? He has a good mind and he wants to learn" "He is sick. He is delicate. Your house is a sty. Only the country is good for him."

"But he has been much better these last few months. I promise you I shall clean out my house. I shall apply to Madre María del Pilar for a housekeeper. Here he is in your stables all day. I shall teach him all that a gentleman should know,—fencing and Latin and music. We shall read all. .."OV 10 oled sed 790 Ta aise sorg Å

"A mother cannot be separated from her child like that. It is impossible. You are crazy to have thought of it. Give up thinking of me and of everything about me. I no longer exist. I and my children will get on as best we can. Do not try to disturb me again. I do not want to see any human being".

Now it was that Uncle Pio felt obliged to use a hard measure. "Then pay me the money that you owe me," he said. Camila stood still, confounded. To herself she said: "Life is too fearful to bear. When may I die?" After a moment she answered him, in a hoarse voice: "I have very little money. I will pay you what I can. I will pay you now. I have a few jewels here. Then we need never see one another again." She was ashamed of her poverty. She took a few steps, then turned and said: "Now I see that you are a very hard man. But it is right that I pay you what I owe you. 25

"No, Camila, I only said that to enforce my request. I shall take no money from you.

But lend me Don Jaime for one year. I shall love him and take every care of him.

Did I harm you? Was I a bad teacher to you in those other years"?

"It is cruel of you to keep urging gratitude, gratitude, gratitude. I was grateful, - good, good! but now that I am no longer the same woman there remains nothing to be grateful for." There was a silence. Her eyes were resting on the star that seemed to be leading forth the whole sky in its wonder. A great pain lay at her heart, the pain of a world that was meaningless. Then she said: "If Jaime wishes to go with you, very well. I shall talk to him in the morning. If he wishes to go with you, you will find him at the Inn about noon. Good night. Go with God".

des no "Go with God".

She returned to the house. The next day the grave little boy appeared at the Inn. His fine clothes were torn and stained now and he carried a small bundle for change. His mother had given him a gold piece for spending-money and a little stone that shone in the dark to look at in his sleepless nights. They set off together in a cart, but soon Uncle Pio became aware that the jolting was not good for the boy. He carried him on his shoulder. As they drew near to the bridge of San Luis Rey, Jaime tried to conceal his shame for he knew that one of those moments was coming that separated him from other people. He was especially ashamed because Uncle Pio had just overtaken a friend of his, a sea captain. And just as . they got to the bridge he spoke to an old lady who was travelling with a little girl. Uncle Pio said that when they had crossed the bridge they would sit down and rest, but it turned out not to be necessary.



# **PART V : PERHAPS AN INTENTION**

A new bridge of stone has been built in the place of the old, but the event has not been forgotten. It has passed into proverbial expressions. "I may see you Tuesday,"

says a Limean, "unless the bridge falls." "My cousin lives by the bridge of San Luis Rey," says another, and a smile goes around the company, for that also means: under the sword of Damocles. There are some poems about the accident, classics to be found in every Peruvian anthology, but the real literary monument is Brother Juniper's book.

There are a hundred ways of wondering at circumstance.

Brother Juniper would never have arrived at his method had it not been for his friendship with a certain master in the University of San Martín. This student's wife had stolen away one morning on a boat for Spain, following a soldier, and had left him the care of two daughters in their cradle. He was possessed of all the bitterness that Brother Juniper lacked and derived a sort of joy from the conviction that all was wrong in the world. He whispered into the Franciscan's ear such thoughts and anecdotes as belied the notion of a guided world. For a moment a look of distress, almost of defeat, would come into the Brother's eyes; then he would begin patiently explaining why such stories held no difficulty for a believer. "There was a queen of Naples and Sicily," the student would say, "who discovered that she was carrying an angry tumor in her side. In great dismay she commanded her subjects to fall to their prayers and ordered that all the garments in Sicily and Naples be sewn with votive crosses. She was well loved by her people and all their prayers and embroideries were sincere, but ineffectual. Now she lies in the splendor of Monreale, and a few inches above her heart may be read the words: I shall fear no evil."

It was by dint of hearing a great many such sneers at faith that Brother Juniper became convinced that the world's time had come for proof, tabulated proof, of the conviction that was so bright and exciting within him. When the pestilence

visited his dear village of Puerto and carried off a large number of peasants, he secretly drew up a diagram of the characteristics of fifteen victims and fifteen survivors, the statistics of their value sub specie aeternitatis. Each soul was rated upon a basis of ten as regards its goodness, its diligence in religious observance, and its importance to its family. group. Here is a fragment of this ambitious chart

	GOODNESS	PIETY	USEFULNESS
Alfonso G	4	4	10
Nina	2	5	10
Manuel B.	10	10	0
Alfonso V.	-8	-10	10
Vera N.	0	10	10

The thing was more difficult than he had foreseen. Almost every soul in a difficult frontier community turned out to be indispensable economically, and the third column was all but useless. The examiner was driven to the use of minus terms when he confronted the personal character of Alfonso V., who was not, like Vera N., merely bad: he was a propagandist for badness and not merely avoided church but led others to avoid it. Vera N. was indeed bad, but she was a model worshipper and the mainstay of a full hut. From all this saddening data Brother Juniper contrived an index for each peasant. He added up the total for victims and compared it with the total for survivors, to discover that the dead were five times more worth saving. It almost looked as though the pestilence had been directed against the really valuable people in the village of Puerto. And on that afternoon Brother Juniper took a walk along the edge of the Pacific. He tore up his findings and cast them into the waves; he gazed for an hour upon the great clouds of pearl that hang forever upon the horizon of that sea, and extracted from their beauty a resignation



that he did not permit his reason to examine. The discrepancy between faith and the facts is greater than is generally assumed.

But there was another story of the master of San Martín (not so subversive, this one) that probably gave to Brother Juniper the hint for his procedure after the fall of the bridge of San Luis Rey.

This master was one day walking through the Cathedral of Lima and stopped to read the epitaph of a lady. He read with an increasingly prominent lower lip that she had been for twenty years the centre and joy of her home, that she had been the delight of her friends, that all who met her went away in astonishment at her goodness and beauty, and that there she lay awaiting the return of her Lord. Now on the day that he read these words, the master of San Martín had had much to fret him, and raising his eyes from the tablet he spoke aloud in his rage: "The shame of it, the persecution of it! Everyone knows that in the world we do nothing but feed our wills. Why perpetuate this legend of selflessness? Why keep this thing alive, this rumour of disinterestedness:"?

And so saying he resolved to expose this conspiracy of the stone-cutters. The lady had been dead only twelve years. He sought out her servants, her children and her friends. And everywhere he went, like a perfume, her dear traits had survived her and wherever she was mentioned there arose a suffering smile and the protest that words could not describe the gracious ways of her. Even the eager youth of her grandchildren, who had never seen her, was made more difficult by the news that it was possible to be as good as that. And the man stood amazed; only at last he muttered: "Nevertheless, what I said was true. This woman was an exception, perhaps an exception."

In compiling his book about these people Brother Juniper seemed to be pursued by

the fear that in omitting the slightest detail he might lose some guiding hint. The longer he worked the more he felt that he was stumbling about among great dim intimations. He was forever being cheated by details that looked as though they were significant if only he could find their setting. So he put everything down on the notion perhaps that if he (or a keener head) reread the book twenty times, the countless facts would suddenly start to move, to assemble, and to betray their secret. The Marquesa de Montemayor's cook told him that she lived almost entirely on rice, fish and a little fruit and Brother Juniper put it down on the chance that it would some day reveal a spiritual trait. Don Rubío said of her that she used to appear at his receptions without invitation in order to steal the spoons. A midwife on the edge of the town declared that Doña María called upon her with morbid questions until she had been obliged to order her away from the door like a beggar. The bookseller of the town reported that she was one of the three most cultivated persons in Lima. Her farmer's wife declared that she was absent-minded, but compact of goodness. The art of biography is more difficult than is generally supposed.

Brother Juniper found that there was least to be learned from those who had been most closely associated with the subjects of his inquiry. Madre María del Pilar talked to him at length about Pepita, but she did not tell him of her own ambitions for her. The Perichole was at first difficult of approach, but presently even liked the Franciscan. Her characterization of Uncle Pio flatly contradicted the stores of unsavory testimonies that he had acquired elsewhere. Her allusions to her son were few and conceded with pain. They closed the interview abruptly. The Captain Alvarado told what he could of Esteban and of Uncle Pio. Those who know most in this realm, venture least.

I shall spare you Brother Juniper's generalizations. They are always with us. He

thought he saw in the same accident the wicked visited by destruction and the good called early to Heaven. He thought he saw pride and wealth confounded as an object lesson to the world, and he thought he saw humility crowned and rewarded for the edification of the city. But Brother Juniper was not satisfied with his reasons. It was just possible that the Marquesa de Montemayor was not a monster of avarice, and Uncle Pio of self-indulgence.

The book being done fell under the eyes of some judges and was suddenly pronounced heretical. It was ordered to be burned in the Square with its author. Brother Juniper submitted to the decision that the devil had made use of him to effect a brilliant campaign in Peru. He sat in his cell that last night trying to seek in his own life the pattern that had escaped him in five others. He was not rebellious. He was willing to lay down his life for the purity of the church, but he longed for one voice somewhere to testify for him that his intention, at least, had been for faith; he thought there was no one in the world who believed him. But the next morning in all that crowd and sunlight there were many who believed, for he was much loved.

There was a little delegation from the village of Puerto, and Nina (Goodness 2, Piety 5, Usefulness 10) and others stood with drawn puzzled faces while their little friar was given to the congenial flames. Even then, even then, there remained in his heart an obstinate nerve insisting that at least St. Francis would not utterly have condemned him, and (not daring to call upon a greater name, since he seemed so open to error in these matters) he called twice upon St. Francis and leaning upon a flame he smiled and died. The day of the service was clear and warm. The Limeans, their black eyes wide with awe, poured through the streets into their Cathedral and stood gazing at the mound of black velvet and silver. The Archbishop enclosed in

his wonderful and almost wooden vestments perspired upon his throne, lending from time to time a connoisseur's ear to the felicities of Vittoria's counterpoint. The choir had restudied the pages that, as his farewell to music, Tomás Luis had composed for his friend and patron, the Empress of Austria, and all that grief and sweetness, all that Spanish realism filtering through an Italian mode, rose and fell above the sea of mantillas. Don Andrés, under the colours and feathered hangings of his office, knelt, ill and troubled. He knew that the crowd was furtively glancing at him, expecting him to play the father who has lost his only son. He wondered whether the Perichole was present. He had never been obliged to go so long without smoking. The Captain Alvarado pushed in from the sunny square for a moment. He looked across the fields of black hair and face at the trooping of the candles and the ropes of incense. "How false, how unreal," he said and pushed his way out. He descended to the sea and sat on the edge of his boat, gazing down into the clear water. "Happy are the drowned, Esteban," he said. Behind the screen the Abbess sat among her girls. The night before she had torn an idol from her heart and the experience had left her pale but firm. She had accepted the fact that it was of no importance whether her work went on or not; it was enough to work. She was the nurse who tends the sick who never recover; she was the priest who perpetually renews the office before an altar to which no worshippers come. There would be no Pepita to enlarge her work; it would relapse into the indolence and the indifference of her colleagues. It seemed to be sufficient for Heaven that for a while in Peru a disinterested love had flowered and faded. She leaned her forehead upon her hand, following the long tender curve that the soprano lifts in the Kyrie. "My affection should have had more of that colour, Pepita. My whole life should have had more of that quality. I have been too busy," she added

ruefully and her mind drifted into prayer. Camila had started from the farm to attend the service. Her heart was filled with consternation and amazement. Here was another comment from the skies; that was the third time she had been spoken to. Her small-pox, Jaime's illness, and now the fall of the bridge, -oh, these were not accidents. She was as ashamed as though letters had appeared on her forehead. An order from the Palace announced that the Viceroy was sending her two daughters to a convent-school in Spain. That was right. She was alone. She gathered a few things together mechanically and started to the city for the Service. But she fell to thinking of the crowds gaping over her Uncle Pio and over her son; she thought of the vast ritual of the church, like a chasm into which the beloved falls, and of the storm of the dies irae where the individual is lost among the millions of the dead, features grow dim and traits fade. At a little more than half the journey, at the mud church of San Luis Rey she slipped in and knelt against a pillar to rest. She wandered through her memory, searching for the faces of her two. She waited for some emotion to appear. "But I feel nothing," she whispered to herself. "I have no heart. I am a poor meaningless woman, that's all. I am shut out. I have no heart. Look, I won't try and think of anything; let me just rest here." And scarcely had she paused when again that terrible incommunicable pain swept through her, the pain that could not speak once to Uncle Pio and tell him of her love and just once offer her courage to Jaime lead stew his sufferings. She started up wildly: "I fail everybody," she cried. "They love me and I fail them." She returned to the farm and carried for a year the mood of her self-despair. One day she heard by accident that the wonderful Abbess had lost two persons whom she loved in the same accident. Her sewing fell from her hand: then she would know, she would explain. "But no, what would she say to me! She would not believe that such a person as I could love or could lose." Camila

decided to go to Lima and look at the Abbess from a distance. "If her face tells me that she would not despise me, I will speak to her," she said. - Camila lurked about the convent church and fell humbly in love with the homely old face, though it frightened her a little. At last she called upon her. So "Mother," she said" .

"Do I know you, my daughter?" "I was the actress, I was the Perichole".

"Oh, yes. Oh, I have wished to know you for a long while, but they told me you did not wish to be seen. You too, I know, lost in the fall of the bridge of San"... .

Camila rose and swayed. There again that access of pain, the hands of the dead she could not reach. Her lips were white. Her head brushed the Abbess's knee: "Mother, what shall I do? I am all alone. I have nothing in the world. I love them. What shall I do?"

The Abbess looked at her closely. "My daughter, it is warm here. Let us go into the garden. You can rest there." She made a sign to a girl in the cloister to bring some water. She continued talking mechanically to Camila. "I have wished to know you for a long while, señora. Even before the accident I had wished much to know you. They told me that in the autos sacramentales you were a very great and beautiful actress, in Belshazzar's Feast." LLL "Oh, Mother, you must not say that. I am a sinner. You must not say that".

"Here, drink this, my child. We have a beautiful garden, do you not think so? You will come and see us often and some day you will meet Sister Juana who is our gardener-in chief Before she entered religion she had almost never seen a garden, for she worked in the mines high up in the mountains. Now everything grows under her hand.-A year has gone by, señora, since our accident. I lost two who had been children in my orphanage, but you lost a real child of your own'?

"Yes, Mother." de Jeszenie "And a great friend?" neg

Mother." of Pentito bilan blood tad "Tell me"... .

And then the whole tide of Camila's long despair, her lonely obstinate despair since her girlhood, found its rest on

that dusty friendly lap among Sister Juana's fountains and roses.

But where are sufficient books to contain the events that would not have been the same without the fall of the bridge? From such a number I choose one more.

"The Condesa d'Abuirre wishes to see you," said a laysister at the door of the Abbess's office. 33. "Well," said the Abbess, laying down her pen, "who is she?"

"She has just come from Spain. I don't know".

"Oh, it is some money, Inez, some money for my house for the blind. Quick, bid her come in".

The tall, rather languorous beauty entered the room. Doña Clara, who was generally so adequate, seemed constrained for once. "Are you busy, dear Mother, may I talk to you for a

while?" "I am quite free, my daughter. You will excuse an old

woman's memory; have I known you before?" e "My mother was the Marquesa de Montemayor".... .

Doña Clara suspected that the Abbess had not admired her mother and would not let the older woman speak until she

herself had made a long passionate defense of Doña María. I The languor fell away

in her self-reproach. At last the Abbess told her of Pepita and Esteban, and of

Camila's visit. "All, all of us have failed. One wishes to be punished. One is willing

to assume all kinds of penance, but do you know, my daughter, that in love—I

scarcely dare say it—but in love our very mistakes don't seem to be able to last

long?"

The Condesa showed the Abbess Doña María's last letter. Madre María dared not say aloud how great her astonishment was that such words (words that since then the whole world has murmured over with joy) could spring in the heart of Pepita's mistress. "Now learn," she commanded herself, "learn at last that anywhere you may expect grace." And she was filled with happiness like a girl at this new proof that the traits she lived for were everywhere, that the world was ready. "Will you do me a kindness, my daughter? Will you let me show you my work"?

The sun had gone down, but the Abbess led the way with a lantern down corridor after corridor. Doña Clara saw the old and the young, the sick and the blind, but most of all she saw the tired, bright old woman who was leading her. The Abbess would stop in a passageway and say suddenly: "I can't help thinking that something could be done for the deaf-and-dumb. It seems to me that some patient person could, ... could study out a language for them. You know there are hundreds and hundreds in Peru. Do you remember whether anyone in Spain has found a way for them? Well,

some day they will." Or a little later: "Do you know, I keep thinking that something can be done for the insane. I am old, you know, and I cannot go where these things are talked about, but I watch them sometimes and it seems to me... In Spain, now, they are gentle with them? It seems to me that there is a secret about it, just hidden from us, just around the corners. Some day back in Spain, if you hear of anything that would help us, you will write me a letter ... if you are not too busy?" or At last after Doña Clara had seen even the kitchens, the Abbess said: "Now will you excuse me, for I must go into the room of the very sick and say a few words for them to think about when they cannot sleep. I will not ask you to come with me there, for you are not accustomed to suchto such sounds and things. And besides I only talk to



them as one talks to children.” She looked up at her with her modest rueful smile. Suddenly she disappeared a moment to return with one of her helpers, one who had likewise been involved in the affair of the bridge and who had formerly been an actress. "She is leaving me," said the Abbess, "for some work across the city and when I have spoken here I must leave you both, for the flour-broker will not wait for me any longer, and our argument will take a long time”.

But Doña Clara stood in the door as the Abbess talked to them, the lamp placed on the floor beside her. Madre María stood with her back against a post; the sick lay in rows gazing at the ceiling and trying to hold their breaths. She talked that night of all those out in the dark (she was thinking of Esteban alone, she was thinking of Pepita alone) who had no one to turn to, for whom the world perhaps was more than difficult, without meaning. And those who lay in their beds there felt that they were within a wall that the Abbess had built for them; within all was light and warmth, and without was the darkness they would not exchange even for a relief from pain and from dying. But even while she was talking, other thoughts were passing in the back of her mind. "Even now," she thought, "almost no one remembers Esteban and Pepita, but myself. Camila alone remembers her Uncle Pio and her son; this woman, her mother. But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning

# The Critical Analysis of The Bridge San Luis Rey

· A dominant feature of modern civilization is its orientation to materialism. Man's quest for materialism has led to a detachment from spiritual values, as

suggested by Wilder and discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. If the remedy of modern life lies, from Wilder's point of view, in a return to religious faith value, then there remains another intrinsic spiritual value to sustain it--the value of love. E. K. Brown speaks to this: "For in Mr. Wilder's view the morally perfect person, the person who has at the point where he has no more to do on earth, is the person who loves rightly" (362).

Wilder maintains in his fiction that love is required to enable us to face the Materialism of the modern civilization which is lacking in this quality. It is true that faith generates love, but also love is born before faith. A person can feel and touch love before faith in his earlier childhood from his mother as well as from the people around him. Without love, faith cannot continue, and its decline is inevitable. At the same time love without faith cannot remain since it will change into a fixation on temporal things, not eternal. When love is missing, life is unbearable. When this intrinsic value disappears, man's life is endangered by physical and spiritual dangers. M. C. Kuner states: "How deep this longing is in the human race may be seen today: despite its distortion, confusion, debasement, the cry to "make love, not war," the "love-ins" of the flower children, the renunciation of possessions, of "things," are a pathetic echo, a shadow of the substance that people seek, even if unknowingly" (77)

Wilder's constant preoccupation with this theme is due to his strong conviction that the world needs love and that life without it is painful and unbearable. As a religious writer, Wilder, thus, feels the importance of this value in our life. Wilder himself expresses frankly the importance of this value: "A Christian writer should display in every part of his work the spirit of divine love" (qtd. in Bryer 60). Joseph J. Firbaugh adds: "Of its worth he is convinced; but as to the reasons for its worth,

he cannot make absolute commitments. His method, therefore, is often of irony. But it is a tender irony, for Mr. Wilder always respects the human beings who are struggling with this most difficult of life's problems" (428). The same idea is also expressed by Robert W. Corrigan:

Wilder has always been on the side of life and life is seen to be most directly affirmed through love. Love then, is his most persistent theme and it has been for him an inexhaustible subject. Of its worth he is convinced, but it is interesting to note the reasons of its worth. Wilder can deal with life and love directly and concretely; but when he moves to the edges of life, the focus becomes less sharp. (168)

If the religious faith issue preoccupies Wilder first, this issue of love, because of its importance, makes him parallel it with the faith issue. Wilder makes it clear that the journeys of faith both in The Cabala and Heaven's My Destination end in love. When love unites with faith, miracles are realized as discussed in The Cabala and Heaven's My Destination. The Cardinal and Astree-Luce in The Cabala and George Brush in Heaven's My Destination lose their faith but regain it through the efficacy of faith and the power of love. Again Wilder comes back to and discusses, in detail, the theme of love in his novels The Bridge of San Luis Rey and The Woman of Andros, but in these two novels love enjoys greater prominence and centrality.

The attainment of human love, in The Bridge of San Luis Rey, is Wilder's main goal, as David Castronovo maintains: "His book is firmly in the soil of emotional futility; it miraculously--almost too miraculously--rises to an affirmation about 'impulses of human love'" (15). Lee Wilson Dodd affirms: "This book is a poem, if you will, a romantic poem—for Its true matter is human love" (371). Unlike other

writers, Wilder deals with this theme of love but not in characteristically romantic fashion. Richard H. Goldstone remarks: "Wilder's new novel with an eighteenth-century Peruvian setting-[is] all about love but without a love story" (3). The love which preoccupies him is the eternal not the temporal, and thus, as with Wilder's treatment of faith, the discussion and depiction of love is taken into the area of religion. That is, love in Wilder is not romantically but religiously depicted. For this reason Hermine I. Popper concludes that Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is a "novel of God and love, life and death in eighteenth-century Peru" (74). Dayton Kohler, continuing in the same vein, asserts that "The novel is as humble and simple as a pious legend for the devout" (8).

Human love is exhibited in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* through three separate episodes and five characters. E. K. Brown induces that the novel: "In essence... is an inquiry into the varied forms of love" (362). These five characters, who face the same destiny on the same bridge when it collapses, are tied together through the theme of love. Paul Friedman explains: "In a wicked world, five good people have died and will be forgotten, but the love that was in them will suffice to give meaning to their lives and to S can confute the nihilistic suspicion that life has no meaning, that their lives and loves were in vain. Such is the ostensible (though not entirely explicit) burden of the book" (71.) Malcolm Goldstein probes this insight even more deeply by informing us that the victims of the bridge include: "an old woman whose daughter spurns her affection, an adolescent girl who lives only for the affection of an older woman, a young man whose sole object of love is dead, an old man whose sole object of love has rejected him, and a child whose mother is too self-involved to give him the affection he requires" (60). Elizabeth Barron

McCasland points out that “Love was the magic current running through the victims of the five--Uncle Pio, Jaime, the Marquesa, Pepita, and Esteban--all of whom lost their lives with the falling of the Bridge. This love made their loss endurable to those loved ones left behind” (47). Finally, Kuner categorizes the types of love evident in the novel: “Every type of love is scrutinized in this novel: primitive sexual love, exaggerated fraternal love, one-sided mother. All are, in one way or another, impure. But all pass through a kind of filter that drains off the dross, and what is left is the Christian agape--people loving each other in the same way God loves them” (77).

The first type of love is between the mother, The Marquesa, and her daughter, Dona Clara. The mother exaggerates her love for her daughter, since in the end her love deviates from the right course to be devalued; her love becomes blind and self-interested love. Wilder enables the reader to see that her love is tyrannically self-serving: “she loved her daughter not for her daughter's sake, but for her own. ... She wanted her daughter for herself; she wanted to hear her say: 'You are the best of all possible mothers'; she longed to hear her whisper: 'Forgive me” [The Bridge of San Luis Rey 20]. Malcolm Goldstein offers further insight into their relationship: “the first of the central chapters probes the troubles of a rich old woman nearly maddened by maternal love, and of a young girl caught up in the frenzy of the old woman's life .... Her life is utterly at the disposal of her daughter; ugly, slovenly, and unloved, she cares for nobody else in the world” (53,54). Thus, love for the daughter is denied and she lives with the pain of rejection. The daughter's reaction to her mother's domineering love results in a distant marriage in an attempt to escape her mother's prison: “From the offers of marriage that fell to her, Dona Clara

deliberately chose the one that required her removal to Spain. So to Spain she went, to that land from which it takes six months to receive an answer to one's letter" (15). Helmut Papajewski criticizes the type of love, or lack thereof, which the mother shows to the daughter: "The love of the mother for her daughter remains one-sided. It is a passive love on the part of the older woman" (25). Goldstein blames both the mother and the daughter: "Dona Clara is unnatural in her contempt for her mother, but Dona Maria is equally at fault for neglecting body and soul out of blind love" (54-55).

Wilder seems to suggest that this type of love is destructive, especially when it is coupled with selfish passion. This destructive side is reflected in the negligent appearance which becomes very noticeable:

Left alone in Lima the Marquesa's life grew more and more inward. She Dancow became increasingly negligent in her dress and like all lonely people she talked audibly. . . . On the street you beheld an old woman, her red wig fallen a little over one ear, her left cheek angry with a leprous affection, her right with a complementary adjustment of rouge. Her chin was never dry; best her lips were never still. (15).

The ill effect of selfish love witnesses another manifestation in the Marquesa: not only is physical appearance affected but spiritual and religious beliefs are also. Wilder refers to her loss of faith: "Her religious beliefs went first, for all she could ask of a god, or of immortality, was the gift of a place where daughters love their mothers; the other attributes of Heaven you could have for a song" (19). Rex Burbank, noting that her spirituality is no longer aimed at God, asserts that "The

Marquesa de Montemayor has fixed her whole spiritual being upon her daughter" (48). This loss of faith in God extends, however, to her general loss of faith in people, too. Possessed of an egocentric selfish nature, the Marquesa is strongly convinced that all people possess the same character:

Next she lost her belief in the sincerity of those about her. She secretly else refused to believe that anyone (herself excepted) loved anyone. All families lived in a wasteful atmosphere of custom and kissed one another with secret difference. She saw that the people of this world moved about in an armor be of egotism, drunk with self-gazing, athirst for compliments, hearing little of what was said to them.(19).

Mary Ellen Williams analyzes the reasons which lead her to adopt this strange behavior against people: "her despair at the knowledge that her love will never be returned causes her to doubt the sincerity of all the demonstrations of love she sees between other people" (32). Her loss of faith and her unbelief in people convince her that life has no longer any love. McCasland speaks to this issue: "The Marquesa realizes that she would never be really loved by her daughter, so her whole life became changed. Her religious beliefs went first.... When she lost her belief in the sincerity of those around her, she began to believe that there was no love in the world" (35).

In an attempt to offer background justification for the Marquesa's possessive and Selfish love, Wilder throws light on the Marquesa's suffering which began in her childhood: "Her childhood was unhappy: she was ugly; she stuttered; her mother persecuted her with sarcasm in an effort to arouse some social charms and forced her to go about the town in a veritable harness of jewels. She lived alone and she



thought alone .There were hysterical scenes with her mother, recriminations, screams and slamming of doors” (14). The Marquesa's life has continued a series of conflicts and tensions even after her marriage: "At last at twenty-six she found herself penned into marriage with a supercilious and ruined nobleman . . . . Still she lived alone, and when an exquisite daughter was born to her she fastened upon her an idolatrous love. But little Clara took after her father, she was cold and intellectual" (14). Linda Simon comments on the Marquesa's past and present life: Dona Maria ... rebels against marriage. She is forced into a mismatched union by her mother and eventually has a daughter, the haughty Dona Clara. Dona Maria suffers unrequited love for her daughter, and her suffering gives her insight into the isolation of other humans. . . . Yet she too, becomes blind to love and fails to appreciate the singular spirit of her maid, Pepita, who despite her unhappiness serves her mistress in good faith. (50)

The Bridge of San Luis Rey is not Wilder's first novel which deals with the problem of one-sided love. Wilder had started the theme of one-sided love in his first novel, The Cabala, and continued it in his second one, The Bridge of San Luis Rey; thus, one can trace visible similarities between the two novels, Burbank states: “Cold and intellectual like her father and like Blair in The Cabala ), Dona Clara is the opposite of the Marquesa, whose love for her daughter is the chief factor in her life” (48). The problem of one sided-love between the mother, the Marquesa De Montemayor and her daughter Dona Clara, is depicted in The Cabala through the relationship between Alix, the Cabalist, and the American Puritan scholar James Blair. Like the Marquesa, Alix,also looking for love, is involved in circumstances similar to the Marquesa's where she leads a failed marriage with a cold and

passionless husband, so when she meets James Blair she falls in love with him. Alix's problem is the only love problem which meets Samuele the narrator in Rome since the other problems involve only faith. Simon throws light on the spiritual conflict which finds its root in the one-sided love in Wilder's first novel: In the next episode, the lovely Alix becomes infatuated with James Blair, is spurned .... Alix is charming and endearing, but deeply vulnerable. She wants to protect Blair, to watch over him. He wants only his independence . : .After a tempestuous period of trying to cope with her despair, Alix returns bontotos to the Cabala, where she is evolved and sustained. (44)

Alix's innocence leads her to think, wrongly, that Blair will be the man who can substitute the love for which she is looking, but she remains unaware that Blair cannot provide it. There is a contrast between Alix who is looking for love and Blair who is coming to Rome to gain knowledge for his work. Williams discusses this point: "The attempts of both Alix and James Blair to give meaning to their lives are in part commendable. Alix seeks meaning in love, but while she loves selflessly, she loves compulsively. James Blair seeks meaning in scholarship and learning, but while doing so he rejects all human emotions" (23) Kuner sees in the treatment of love a similarity between the two novels: "Dona Clara, like James Blair in *The Cabala*, is a frigid young person with no love to give; she despises her mother's excessive demonstrations of affection. As quickly as she can, she marries a Spanish grandee and returns with him to his home in Spain leaving her mother in Peru" (71). A similarity, thus, exists between the Marquesa's situation and Alix's, but there remains a clear difference between them as well-- the Marquesa is selfish while Alix is not.

The theme of spiritual conflict arising from the one-sided love begins in *The Cabala* and continues in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* because Wilder apparently feels that such an important motif requires fuller and more probing analyses. He tackles the same theme again, but in a different form, because here he presents a solution by making the Marquesa understand the real meaning of love through her discovery of all her shortcomings and faults. Wilder's Marquesa comes to the terrible revelation about herself and her selfish love for her daughter which clearly contrasts to divine love. He presents a divine love that is purified from all the Marquesa's faults and misconceptions about her daughter, other people and her Creator. This divine love is demonstrated by her poor servant, Pepita, a twelve-year-old orphan girl who was adopted by and loves the Abbess. It is the Abbess who has sent her to the Marquesa to serve her. Despite her sincere devotion to the Marquesa, Pepita is persecuted by the Marquesa. Consequently, Pepita tries to escape the Marquesa's tyrannical world. Insulted and abused by this lady, Pepita writes a letter to the Abbess asking permission to return to the convent. Pepita's conscience prevents her from doing such a deed since she does not feel that there is any courage in this letter. Fortunately, the Marquesa's coming upon this important letter changes her whole life. As noted by MaCasland: "Thus after a long lifetime, the love of an ignorant little maid servant changed the life of the great Marquessa of Montemayor" (37).

The theme of disinterested and sacrificial love is also clear in *Heaven's My Destination* as McCasland states: "Many people ... were influenced by the power of love: Queenie, who found a substitute family in her roomers; little Elizabeth, whose quasi-father, Herb, left her to a foster father who truly loved her, and to a more

satisfactory home with Roberta and Lottie than she had ever known" (82). Thus, Pepita's style of disinterested and sacrificial love has been clearly revealed in the invisible relationship in the novel's conclusion between George Brush and Father Pavziewski who love each other despite the fact that they never met each other. It is Father Pavziewski's love, represented in the silver spoon which he sends to Brush, that saves Brush's faith and enables him to regain his faith. Alexander Cowie affirms: "Possibly the reader is expected to take some comfort in the thought of the indestructibility of a moral idea and in the presence of disinterested human love symbolized by a silver spoon sent to the ailing Brush by a Catholic priest who had never met him" [ qtd. in Gohdes 316]. In the same way that Brush is saved by the priest's silver spoon, the Marquesa is saved by Pepita's letter.

Pepita's letter is the transforming point in the Marquesa's life. Reading the letter, she comes to realize how wrong she was and how selfish her love had been. E. Borish thinks that "The letter awakens in the Marquesa the realization of her selfishness in demanding love from her daughter. Determined to mend her ways, she and Pepita leave for home" (154). The Marquesa feels that her love is imperfect, unsound and self aggrandizing: "she knew that she too sinned and that though her love for her daughter was vast enough to include all the colors of love, it was not without a shade of tyranny" The letter makes her contemplate and think over her past which represents a bad side of her history since she had never brought courage to either life or love" (48). She begins to consider her faults: "She thought of the amulets and of her beads, her drunkenness . . . . She thought of her daughter. She remembered the long relationship, crowded with the wreckage of exhumed conversations, of forced slights, of inopportune confidences, of charges of neglect

and exclusion" (48). Pipita's letter makes her realize that her love for her daughter had been inadequate: "She remembered with shame that in the previous one [letter] she had piteously asked her daughter how much she loved her, and had greedily quoted the few and hesitant endearments that Dona Clara had lately ventured to her" (48). Wilder makes her also come to the realization that she is not completely responsible for what has happened either to her or her daughter since circumstances have intervened as well: "But it's not my fault that was so. It was circumstance. It was the way I was brought up" (48).

Wilder's theme remains the same: real love is not indigenous to certain persons, certain classes, certain educated people, or certain age groups. Rather, love is a gift, and understanding its real essence is a gift also. The novel clarifies this very well because the mistress learns the divine meaning of love from her humble and single maid. The Marquesa learns of her misunderstanding and misinterpretation of love from her servant, Pepita. Wilder's point could not be more clear: only humble people love; proud people are too self-obsessed to break out of the walls of self to serve and love others. Firebaugh touches this point: "There is Pepita, a twelve-year-old servant girl, who, in her devotion to the competent Abbess who has reared her, gives the Marquesa her first glimpse of courage in love" (428). Simon addresses the impact of Pepita's love upon Dona Maria :Indeed, it is Pepita who ultimately shows Dona Maria that her life spent in pursuit of her daughter's affections has been wasted; Dona Maria realizes that she was a coward in both living and loving and resolves to start anew" (51). Pepita's love letter prompts the Marquesa to produce an excellent letter which expresses real love: "It is the famous letter LVI, known to the Encyclopedists as her Second Corinthians because

of its immortal paragraph about love: 'Of the thousands of persons we meet in a lifetime, my child. ..' and so on" (48). After finishing the letter, she goes to Pepita's room where she sleeps and pushes back the damp hair from the girl's face, asking: "let me live now, she whispered. Let me begin again" (49). These words indicate that the Marquesa deeply understands the essence and meaning of divine love. The Marquesa wants to live in such a way that she can correct the misconception of love which she has for a long time :Most of all she longed to be back in this simplicity of love, to throw off the burden of pride and vanity that hers had always carried" (45).

Love asserts itself in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* in other ways as well. The chapter entitled "Esteban" centers around another spiritual conflict which also demonstrates the value of love. Wilder transfers from the Marquesa's relationship with both her daughter and maid to a new relationship between the twin brothers: Esteban and Manuel. Their life is molded by unusual brotherly and limitless love. So unique is their love for each other that they cannot detach since they rely so heavily on each other: "All the world was remote and strange and hostile except one's brother" (57). The twin brothers share the same circumstances because they are orphans and raised by the Abbess, like the orphan Pepita: "Because they had no family, because they were twins, and because they were brought up by women, they were silent. There was in them a curious shame in regard to their resemblance" (55). It is love that enables them to survive their environment.

Love also expresses itself in the form of language, the language of love which can be understood only by those people who are practicing and feeling love. The twin brothers invent a special language between themselves. Simon observes: "Esteban

and Manuel are so close in spirit . . . [that] they invent their own language and find that telepathy often occurs between them” (51). Wilder explains: "From the years when they first learned to speak they invented a secret language for themselves, one that was scarcely dependent on the Spanish for its vocabulary, or even its syntax. They resorted to it only when they were alone, or at great intervals in moments of stress whispered it in the presence of others” (55). Wilder is aware of the importance of this invented private language in both Esteban and Emanuel's life since it indicates love as well as identity: "The language was the symbol of their profound identity with one another" (56)

Love is, inevitably, subjected to gale winds that are enough to destroy or at least severely shake it. But if this love is based on a divine foundation, these winds cannot affect it, on the contrary the winds of adversity merely strengthen it. Manuel and Esteban's unique love is threatened by a third person who enters their life and changes it--Camila or the Perichole, a beautiful actress. Wilder uncovers the dangerous results of this unsound relationship: "Now was beginning that crazy loss of one's self, that neglect of everything but one's dramatic thoughts about the beloved, that feverish inner life all turning upon the Perichole" (59). Simon comments on the appearance of the Perichole in the life of these twins: But their bond is broken when Manuel becomes infatuated with a beautiful a od actress, known as the Perichole. His brother feels estranged and once threatens to leave. There is a crisis, however: Manuel cuts his knee and is badly wounded. Esteban nurses him, but the infection worsens and his brother becomes delirious. Suddenly he begins to curse Esteban for coming between him and the actress. For several nights Esteban suffers under his brother's raving. (52).

Kuner holds a comparison between the relationship between the Marquesa and her daughter on one hand, and the orphaned twins Esteban and Manuel on the other : Between them there exists the bond that is lacking between the Marquesa to you and her daughter. But while the Marquesa is gradually moving in the direction of unselfish love, the love between the brothers, already too Lokavextreme, is tarnished by the intrusion of La Perichole, who arouses the passions of both brothers and for the first time awakens jealousy in their breasts. (73)

Manuel falls in love with this actress, and it is this love which is the wind that violently shakes the two brothers' love for each other: "He worshipped her. He murmured to himself over and over again that he worshipped her, making of the sound a sort of incantation and an obstacle to thought" (65). Gilbert A. Harrison views that "the idea of love, usually unrequited love, is a recurrent note in . . . The Bridge. When love descends from the heights of disinterestedness, when spirit becomes body, all is changed. When Manuel. . . falls in love with the actress, he loses that privilege of simple nature, the disassociation of love and pleasure" (172-73). Goldstein notes the change in the twins' life: "In the second episode she unwittingly comes between the two brothers as the object of Manuel's adoration. When Esteban sees this new direction in his brother's life, he is precipitated into despair" (57).

The reader may think that it is the first time for Manuel to experience love. Wilder clarifies this issue: "It was not the first time that Manuel had been fascinated by a woman. . . . Both brothers had possessed women, and often, especially during their years at the waterfront; but simply" (58). This love for La Perichole is different



from the other passing encounters: "It was the first time that his will and imagination had been thus overwhelmed. He had lost that privilege of simple nature, the dissociation of love and pleasure. Pleasure was no longer as simple as eating; it was complicated by love" (58,59). Burbank concludes that this experience, despite its ill effect, has the good effect of making Manuel possess a high view of love:

His love for Camila, however, represents a departure from purely physical The pleasure.... That is, he rose for the first time to a human level in love and above the more prompting of nature. . . . Love is as natural to him as pleasure, but more intense, and in it one undergoes "a crazy loss of one's self." He represents an affirmation that love may spring from a higher source than sexual desire. (50)

Manuel's love for the actress does not, however, last long. His understanding of love is not like hers. Unlike her, Manuel's love for the actress is not physical but spiritual. This difference in their views creates in him a kind of disgust instead of appreciation. It creates also a kind of suffering because of his feeling of its absurdity. Her love is meaningless since it has no spiritual dimension. Bernard Grebanier affirms this point: "Camila [is] a promiscuous but brilliant actress, who understands love only as an emotion to be projected from the stage. . . . Manuel falls in love with her and begins to suffer deeply because of the futility of that love." (17).

Manuel's illumination about the futility of his relationship with Camila, as well as his brother's misery concerning this relationship, lead to his decision to desert the lady and pay attention to his brother's suffering: "Look. Esteban, I swear to you there's nothing left to all that. I don't love her. I only did for a time." (68). Giving

up Camila and renewing his love for his twin Esteban prove that he is a mature person since he is able to benefit from experiences and arrive at a wholesome view of love- giving to and serving his brother sacrificially instead of receiving sexual favors or brief emotional affirmations from a woman. Burbank states: " He shows an even higher type of love than this love for Camila in giving up for the sake of Esteban. . . . He intuitively feels the isolation of Esteban ; and, while his attachment to him is not so complete as Esteban's for him, it is strong enough to make Manuel willing to sacrifice to save his brother from misery" (50).

Undoubtedly, Manuel is sincere in his feelings towards his brother, yet Esteban is much more concerned with Manuel.

Esteban is aware of his brother's love for him, so when Manuel dies he is plagued by even more suffering, Esteban's excessive suffering suggests that if Manuel is like Esteban in everything yet there remains one thing which must be the point of difference between them, the degree of love, as Wilder emphasizes: "There may be two equally good, equally gifted, equally beautiful, but there may never be two that love one another equally well" (60). Papajewski maintains that "The actual final separation dilisrismi in excited through death puts him into a kind of delirium. He tells the Abbess that he is Manuel. treamy state in We see in this disturbance that the living wants to be the dead, wants to be with his brother, wants the identity of the twins to be restored" (30) Esteban's deep sadness over his twin brother leads him to think of committing suicide, for life has become meaningless but he is saved because he has to face his destiny on the bridge. Simon offers further insight into Esteban's life after his brother's death:

*Esteban's grief causes near-madness. At first he pretends to be Manuel, and*

*no one is the wiser. But he meets a sagacious sea captain, Alvarado, to whom he tells the truth, and his confession seems to relieve him somewhat.*

*Alvarado invites him to join his crew. Esteban agrees, provided he can take on the hardest work. He knows suicide is proscribed, he tells Alvarado, but clearly he is seeking death in life. (52).*

Esteban's despair reaches its climax before crossing the bridge when he falls face downward upon the floor crying: "I am alone, alone, alone" (84). Burbank concludes that "the levels of love are worked out in a somewhat broader fashion in the Esteban chapter and represent Wilder's humanistic answer to the contention that love is a purely human contrivance" (50). Love cannot be merely human, for that type of love fails; only divine love can survive the killing winds of adversity.

The third episode of the novel demonstrates yet another kind of love. This love is revealed through the relationship between Uncle Pio and Camila Perichole whom he leads to artistic fame after his adoption of her, much as Pygmalion did. It is Uncle Pio who discovers her as a waif of twelve earning her living from singing in cafes. He buys her and introduces her to the world of art and makes her into a great actress. He has only "three great aims of his life: his passion for overseeing the lives of others, his worship of beautiful women, and his admiration for the treasures of Spanish literature" (98) . One may mistakenly think that Uncle Pio is fastened to Camila by a sexual tie, but this is not correct. Uncle Pio's loneliness may be the strong motive which makes him take Camila under his wing. Simon explains: "Though Uncle Pio's attachment to the Perchole transcends a mentor-student or a father-daughter relationship, it never implies sexuality"( 52). Ka Naa Subramanyam

corroborates Simon's point: "She who had made sex a living acquires a taste for virtue after having been the viceroy's mistress for a time and bearing three sons to him. La Perichole who has known no love in her life spurns the love of Uncle Pio" (177). Her rejection of Uncle Pio proves that their friendship is not physical but spiritual. Commenting on Uncle Pio's satisfaction with her and his distaste of her passion, Grebanier notes that: "They have a loyal friendship, though they have no need of each other physically, and between them they attempt to establish in Peru the standards of the theaters in some Heaven whither Calderon had preceded them.' Critical of her every nuance upon the stage, he is undisturbed by her cheap liaisons" (18).

Uncle Pio's relationship with this actress shows another kind of love unlike the above-mentioned ones. The love of Esteban for Manuel is brotherly, and the Marquesa for her daughter is motherly, but no blood-relationship exists between Uncle Pio and the actress; thus, the reader is curious to know what kind of love exists between the two. Papajewski states that Pio's interest in Camila is a proof that he loves her but that his love is sexless: "He loves her, but without profound passion, and he respects her demand that there be distance between them" (31). Pio's main goal is to see the highest artistic perfection of Camila so he loves her art not her beauty. His love is not self centered but other-centered.

Wilder is careful to introduce his reader to the way Pio understands and appreciates love. Pio's conception of people is based on love: "He divided the inhabitants of this world into two groups, into those who had loved and those who he had not (112) He is disgusted with the aristocratic people for their failure to understand the meaning of love: "It was a horrible aristocracy, apparently, for those

who had no capacity for love (or rather for suffering in love) could not be said to be alive and certainly would not live again after their death. They were a kind of straw population, filling the world with their meaningless laughter and tears and chatter and disappearing still lovable and vain into thin air" (112). Those people who are not able to provide love lead meaningless lives, ostensibly alive but essentially dead. These people will be forgotten as soon as they die unlike those who understand and appreciate love-- they, their goodness, and their loving arts will live on even if they have been the victims of bridge accident in Peru.

Uncle Pio's theory of love is that "love [is a] sort of cruel malady through which the elect are required to pass in their late youth and from which they emerge, pale and wrung, but ready for the business of living" (112). Pio's definition of love asserts that it was like no other" (112) because he "had gathered all its bitterness and pride from his odd life" (112). He believes that there was: "a great repertory of errors mercifully impossible to human beings who had recovered from their illness. Unfortunately, there remained to them a host of failings, but at least ... they never mistook a protracted amiability for the whole conduct of life, they never again regarded any human being, from a prince to a servant, as a mechanical object" (112-13). Uncle Pio's love is clearly expressed when the actress retires. Her retirement confirms that she had been clinging to the physical side rather than the spiritual side of love. La Perichole had made a fatal mistake when she linked her fame and relationships with people on her beauty, so when smallpox attacks and robs her of her beauty her life and attitudes change. Grebanier states: "Suddenly Camila's beauty is ravaged by smallpox. Familiar with passion but not with love. ... she feels her life is over" (19). (Camila's strong attachment to physical beauty had made her

neglect or ignore the spiritual value of love: “ Like all beautiful women who have been brought up amid tributes to her beauty she assumed without cynicism that it must necessarily be the basis of anyone's attachment to herself, henceforth any attention paid to her must spring from a pity full of condescension and faintly perfumed with satisfaction at so complete a reversal” (122). Camila's plight, clinging to her beauty, uncovers her misconception of love which asserts that she knows only one type of love--that is the passionate one : "just her beauty ... proceeded from the fact that she had never realized any love save love as passion. Such love, though it expends itself in generosity and thoughtfulness, though it gives birth to visions and to great poetry, remains among the sharpest expressions of self interest" (122).

Unlike her, Pio admires and appreciates beauty, but he is far wiser because he knows that spiritual love is more important than mere physical beauty. He never approves of Camila's building relationships on sexuality and passion. For him these physical considerations are mortal; only spiritually-based love is eternal. Because of these principles and the selflessness of his love, he pursues her in an attempt to return her to her artistic life, but she refuses all his attempts: “Go away. Go away out of my house forever. ... I never want to see you again” (124). More importantly, she gives her orders that Uncle Pio is forbidden to come again. Her lack of spiritual love eventually leads her to despair, especially after she loses her beauty. Goldstein believes that this spiritual love is displayed between them through Camila's extreme despair as well as Uncle Pio's concomitant love and hope: "To remove all traces of the past, she casts off Uncle Pio and advises him not to appear in her presence .... Again Uncle Pio steps in, and again she rebuffs him. He is the least amorous of Pygmalion; the love he gives, like the love of each of the group of

victims, is never consciously erotic” (59). Nevertheless, he cannot bear her remoteness. Ultimately his love inspires him to think of taking her son, Don Jaime, for a long time instead of just one year to educate him, as he did his mother, so Uncle Pio promises to leave Camila forever if she will grant him permission to take the little boy to Lima. Goldstein believes that Pio's insistence in taking Camila's son is another proof of his love for her: “Obviously, he has the thought of keeping a tie with Camila by performing a service for her son which is beyond her power” (59). Of course, Camila does not view the situation in this light. To her, Pio insists on taking her son in order to achieve his artistic successes, but she cannot perceive that this is also a way of keeping his strong ties with her. Also, her giving him consent to take her son is due to her financial indebtedness to him, a point Grebanier develops: "Pio, still · loyal to her, manages a final interview with her and begs her to allow him to take Jaime for a year and train him for the stage. When she refuses, he forces her, because of her financial indebtedness to him, to agree, provided the boy is willing” (19). Again, Uncle Pio wishes to play with the son the same role which he had played with Camila to affirm that his love for her is persistent and other-centered. In the words of Brown: "Ultimately, however, Uncle Pio found in himself the fortitude to transfer his devotion from La Perichole to her epileptic child, to repeat on him--with genuine selflessness--the efforts he had expended on his mother" (364.)

By discussing Uncle Pio's love for Camila and her son, Wilder completes the biography of love of the victims on the bridge. Bertram Lippman finds a relationship between these victims:

*The Marquesa, Esteban, and Uncle Pio share two patterns of love; each*

*suffers from unrequited love, and each has his life changed when a third person is admitted into the love circle. ... The second pattern of love shared by the three main characters is their admittance of a third person into their circle of love, resulting in a second beginning for each of them. ... The three main characters justify their somewhat unusual lives by the very fact of loving. They are more or less scorned by their beloveds and then made to live apart from them. Yet they continue to love; it is what makes living for them. (52,53)*

Wilder's highest and last treatment of the value of love in the novel comes to surface in his conclusion where the main goal is achieved. Owing to the dramatic impact and the power of the conclusion, many critics focus all their critical comments on it. The collapse of the bridge leads to the awareness that the victims led lives full of love which is not temporary but eternal because their love is so divine, so perfect, and so other centered that the survivors mention it. Their death is inevitable since they had DOS accomplished their goal in life and since they had learned to love in a divine fashion, Wilder's message appears to be that there are no higher lessons to be learned or taught in life. Having gained the mastery of divine love, they are ready for a better, eternal life. It SER is time to move on. In order to be brought to the light and in order to show their great love one last time, however, the victims had to face their destiny on this bridge. Their death generates love among the other survivors. Borish affirms: "The book inquires into the varied forms of love. Wilder seems to say that love is the controlling factor in the human experience . . . . Each victim had achieved a moral perfection in his passage from an inadequate to a right kind of love. Therefore, that was the best time to die" (155)



The victims achieve moral perfection before their deaths by showing a supreme love that the survivors lack, as Papajweski asserts: "For Wilder, the self-perfecting of selfless love is the sole purpose that gives life meaning. In this sense the lives of the persons who fell with the bridge seem largely fulfilled" (33). For this reason Goldstein sympathizes with their tragic end not because of their end but because of their not having enjoyed this high love during their lives, but he sees that their reward will be found in the heaven not on earth:

*For, far from ecommending a narcotic contemplation of the afterlife, Wilder speaks out for the vigorous pursuit of purely human relationships. If the five characters are tragic, they are so not because they die suddenly, or simply because they die, but because they have not truly lived, and at no point are we led to think that they win the reward of an eventual reunion in heaven words Sichest bido with the recipients of the love that for so many years enchained them. (61)*

But their deaths prompt the survivors to love in the same selfless way. Their achievement of this love is first noted in their awareness of the divine love which the victims had enjoyed during their life. And if the survivors--namely, the Marquesa's daughter, Camila, and the Abbess-- have failed to love as the victims did, undoubtedly they are positioned to give it now because they understand it and its wisdom, and have seen it beautifully molded by others. Martin Gardner remarks: "Although the lives of the five were complex, interwoven, and difficult to evaluate, yet the destruction of one bridge restored a second, the bridge of love. For living individuals now have a love which they did not previously realize" (85). The conclusion indicates that the survivors will attain the highest moral perfection of

love and appreciate it at last for they now, for the first time, will come to understand it. Wilder's thought is expressed through the Abbess's speech to the survivors:

*But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning. (148).*

Ward B. Lewis sees in the collapse of the bridge a strong symbolic tie: The bridge is the love, the quality lacking between victims and survivors: "A link between the quick and the dead is suggested by the fact that the lives of the survivors are changed by the disaster at San Luis Rey. The initial image is transformed as it assumes a transcendental role in the final line" (114). Edmund Fuller suggests that "It is the love of God toward man that the Abbess speaks, saying to herself, 'Now learn, learn at last that anywhere you may expect grace'" (213).

The Abbess's remarkable understanding of the meaning of love which has its influences upon both the living and the dead characters in the novel led Wilson Dodd to include her among the victims of the bridge who could understand the sublime meaning of love: "As for the persons so dealt with, you will not easily find a more memorable group; and I particularly commend to you the Marquesa, Pepita, the Abbess, Uncle Pio, and Esteban" (37). More significantly, for Burbank, the Abbess and Pepita stand on the top among the characters who represent love since

their actions and behaviors towards others reflect the highest type of love: "the moral imperative of love is clear enough; and the highest love is the kind of disinterested love shown by Pipita and by the Abbess, whose love is devoted to the care of suffering" (50).

Nearly all critics agree that the collapse of the bridge indicates a symbol of love, for it makes the survivors confess their misunderstanding of love before their relatives die on the bridge, but only Friedman, apparently, holds a pessimistic viewpoint concerning the collapse of the bridge:

*Love had failed the lovers because it was inherently incapable of giving or Tot receiving satisfaction. Of the five who die in the collapse of the bridge, the receiving satisfaction three principal characters were guilty of love arrested and excessive, immature and incestuous: the love of a mother for her daughter, of a brother for his twin, and of an old man for his portage. The other two victims were for his twin, abandoned, involved children. That the theme is not the miracle of love, but its failure, is apparent in the final scene.(117).*

One cannot agree with Friedman's point of view since it seems superficial and unconvincing. The mythic power of love is very clear in Wilder's novel, and its effective influence is obvious, for love changes anyone and everything. Without its influence the Marquesa's daughter, Dona Clara, and the actress Camila would remain blind to love, but in the end they are able to love and be loved. Robert Ulich is strongly convinced that the magic power of love creates miracles when "it crosses the boundaries of races and nations, even if they are enemies" (160). Jr. Paul Fussell adds: "Again, in the melioristic suggestions at the end of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, in the implication that all fatal and shameful disaster.' work out somehow for

the best, in the emphasis on a vague, unfocused' love' as the best solution to the most embarrassing metaphysical and theological problems” (395). Wilder's love is divine, other-centered, unconditional, and Christ-like. It looks on tempests and is not shaken. It transcends time and place. It transforms people from beasts to angels, and it alone enables people to escape the prisonhouse of self. The success of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* prompted Wilder to tackle the theme of love again in his third novel, *The Woman of Andros* (1930), though the novel did not achieve the success as did his second one. Firebaugh notes: "Love is the subject also of *The Woman of Andros*” (429). Many critics attacked it and considered it a failure. For example, Oscar Cargill says: "The *Woman of Andros* is Wilder's weakest novel: its reworking of the theme of the *Andria* of Terence reminds one of the kind of digests that are prepared for readers who want a short-cut to the World's Great literature” (535). On the other hand there is Grebanier, who has a favorable view, and wonders why it failed: "Though the variety of Wilder's gifts was further manifested by the publication of *The Woman of Andros* (1930), a gem of a novel (in my judgement) his most exquisite creation, the book failed of achieving popular sources” (20). But whether the critics consider it successful or not, in one view, the novel is important since it adds a new dimension of the theme. Kohler maintains that “The *Woman of Andros* is another search after the hidden meaning of life” (8).

Wilder's strong conviction is that the theme of love is very intrinsic in man's life as well as basic to ancient ages. It was found since God created the earth. So Wilder's third novel asserts that love was present even before Christianity. Donald Haberman states: "In this novel, Wilder deliberately chose a pre-Christian era” (34). Amos Niven Wilder agrees with Haberman: “I recognized that in his novel The

Woman of Andros.

# **Part II**

## **American Drama**

# Death of a Salesman

By

Arthur Miller

## Arthur Miller Biography

### Synopsis

Born in Harlem, New York in 1915, Arthur Miller attended the University of Michigan before moving back east to produce plays for the stage. His first critical and popular success was *Death of a Salesman*, which opened on Broadway in 1949. His very colorful public life was painted in part by his rocky marriage to Marilyn Monroe, and his unwavering refusal to cooperate with the House of Un-American Activities Committee. He was married three times and died in 2005, at the age of 89.

### Early Life

Born in Harlem, New York on October 17, 1915, Arthur Miller was raised in a moderately affluent household until his family lost almost everything in the Wall Street Crash of 1929. They subsequently fired the chauffeur and moved from the Upper East Side in Manhattan to Gravesend, Brooklyn. After graduating high school, Miller worked a few odd jobs to save enough money to attend the University of Michigan. While in college, he wrote for the student paper and complete his first play, *No Villain*. He also took courses with the much-loved playwright professor Kenneth Rowe, a man who taught his students how to construct a play in order to achieve an intended effect. Inspired by Rowe's approach, Miller moved back east to begin his career.

### Playwriting Career

Things started out a bit rocky: His 1940 play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, garnered precisely the antithesis of its title, closing after just four performances and a stack of woeful reviews. Six years later, however, *All My Sons* achieved success on Broadway, and earned him his first Tony Award (best author). Working in the small studio that he built in Roxbury, Connecticut, Miller wrote the first act of *Death of Salesman* in less than a day. It opened on February 10, 1949 at the Morosco Theatre, and was adored by nearly everyone. *Salesman* won him the triple crown of theatrical artistry: the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and a Tony.

In 1956, Miller left his first wife, Mary Slattery. Shortly thereafter, he married famed actress Marilyn Monroe. Later that year, the House of Un-American Activities Committee refused to renew Miller's passport, and called him in to appear before the committee—his play, *The Crucible*, a dramatization of the Salem witch trials of 1692 and an allegory of McCarthyism, was the foremost reason for their strong-armed summons. However, Miller refused to comply with the committee's demands to "out" people who had been active in certain political activities.

In 1961, Monroe starred in *The Misfits*, a film for which Miller supplied the screenplay. Around the same time, Monroe and Miller divorced.

Within several months, Miller married Austrian-born photographer Inge Morath. The couple had two children, Rebecca and Daniel. Miller insisted that their son, Daniel, who was born with down syndrome, be completely excluded from the family's personal life. Miller's son-in-law, actor Daniel Day-Lewis, visited his wife's brother frequently, and eventually persuaded Miller to reunite with his adult son.

## **Final Years**

In his final years, Miller's work continued to grapple with the weightiest of societal



and personal matters. His last play of note was *The Price* (1968), a piece about family dynamics. In 2002, Miller's third wife, Inges, died. The famed playwright promptly became engaged to 34-year-old minimalist painter Agnes Barley. However, before the couple could walk down the aisle, on February 10, 2005 (the 56th anniversary of *Death of a Salesman's* Broadway debut), Arthur Miller, surrounded by Barley, family and friends, died of heart failure. He was 89 years old.

## Act I

Opening scene to Willy's first daydream

### Summary

The play begins on a Monday evening at the Loman family home in Brooklyn. After some light changes on stage and ambient flute music (the first instance of a motif connected to Willy Loman's faint memory of his father, who was once a flute-maker and salesman), Willy, a sixty-three-year-old traveling salesman, returns home early from a trip, apparently exhausted. His wife, Linda, gets out of bed to greet him. She asks if he had an automobile accident, since he once drove off a bridge into a river. Irritated, he replies that nothing happened. Willy explains that he kept falling into a trance while driving—he reveals later that he almost hit a boy. Linda urges him to ask his employer, Howard Wagner, for a non-traveling job in New York City. Willy's two adult sons, Biff and Happy, are visiting. Before he left that morning, Willy criticized Biff for working at manual labor on farms and horse ranches in the West. The argument that ensued was left unresolved. Willy says that his thirty-four-year-old son is a lazy bum. Shortly thereafter, he declares that Biff is anything but lazy. Willy's habit of contradicting himself becomes quickly apparent in his conversation with Linda.

Willy's loud rambling wakes his sons. They speculate that he had another accident. Linda returns to bed while Willy goes to the kitchen to get something to eat. Happy and Biff reminisce about the good old days when they were young. Although Happy, thirty-two, is younger than Biff, he is more confident and more successful worn, apprehensive, and confused. Happy is worried about Willy's habit of talking to himself. Most of the time, Happy observes, Willy talks to the absent Biff about his disappointment in Biff's unsteadiness. Biff hopped from job to job after high school and is concerned that he has "waste[d] his life." He is disappointed in himself and in the disparity between his life and the notions of value and success with which Willy indoctrinated him as a boy. Happy has a steady job in New York, but the rat race does not satisfy him. He and Biff fantasize briefly about going out west together. However, Happy still longs to become an important executive. He sleeps with the girlfriends and fiancées of his superiors and often takes bribes in an attempt to climb the corporate ladder from his position as an assistant to the assistant buyer in a department store.

Biff plans to ask Bill Oliver, an old employer, for a loan to buy a ranch. He remembers that Oliver thought highly of him and offered to help him anytime. Happy wonders if Oliver still thinks that he stole a carton of basketballs while he was working at his store. Happy encourages his brother, commenting that Biff is "well liked"-a sure predictor of success in the Loman household. The boys are disgusted to hear Willy talking to himself downstairs. They try to go to sleep.

### **Analysis**

It is important to note that much of the play's action takes place in Willy's home. In the past, the Brooklyn neighborhood in which the Lomans live was nicely removed from the bustle of New York City. There was space within the neighborhood for

expansion and for a garden. When Willy and Linda purchased it, it represented the ultimate expression of Willy's hopes for the future. Now, however, the house is hemmed in by apartment buildings on all sides, and sunlight barely reaches their yard. Their abode has come to represent the reduction of Willy's hopes, even though, ironically, his mortgage payments are almost complete. Just as the house is besieged by apartment buildings, Willy's ego is besieged by doubts and mounting evidence that he will never experience the fame and fortune promised by the American Dream.

Willy's reality profoundly conflicts with his hopes. Throughout his life, he has constructed elaborate fantasies to deny the mounting evidence of his failure to fulfill his desires and expectations. By the time the play opens, Willy suffers from crippling self-delusion. His consciousness is so fractured that he cannot even maintain a consistent fantasy. In one moment, he calls Biff a lazy bum. In the next, he says that Biff is anything but lazy. His later assessment of the family car is similarly contradictory—one moment he calls it a piece of trash, the next "the finest car ever built." Labeling Biff a lazy bum allows Willy to deflect Linda's criticism of his harangue against Biff's lack of material success, ambition, and focus. Denying Biff's laziness enables Willy to hold onto the hope that Biff will someday, in some capacity, fulfill his expectations of him. Willy changes his interpretation of reality according to his psychological needs at the moment. He is likewise able to reimagine decisive moments in his past in his later daydreams. Ironically, he asks Linda angrily why he is "always being contradicted," when it is usually he who contradicts himself from moment to moment.

The opening pages of the play introduce the strangely affected and stilted tone of the dialogue, which transcends the 1950s idiom of nonspecific pet names (an

ungendered "pal" or "kid" for adult and child alike) and dated metaphors, vocabulary, and slang. Some critics cite the driving, emphatic, repetitive diction ("Maybe it's your glasses, You never went for your new glasses"; "I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England") and persistent vexed questioning ("Why do you get American when I like Swiss?" "How can they whip cheese?") as a particularly Jewish-American idiom, but the stylization of the speech serves a much more immediate end than stereotype or bigotry. Miller intended the singsong melodies of his often miserable and conflicted characters to parallel the complex struggle of a family with a skewed version of the American Dream trying to support itself. The dialogue's crooked, blunt lyricism of stuttering diction occasionally rises even to the level of the grotesque and inarticulate, as do the characters themselves. Miller himself claims in his autobiography that the characters in *Death of a Salesman* speak in a stylized manner "to lift the experience into emergency speech of an unabashedly open kind rather than to proceed by the crabbed dramatic hints and pretexts of the 'natural'".

Act I (continued)

Willy's first daydream to the first appearance of The Woman

### **Summary**

Willy is lost in his memories. Suddenly, the memories of his sons' childhood come alive. Young Biff and Happy wash and wax their father's car after he has just returned from a sales trip. Biff informs Willy that he "borrowed" a football from the locker room to practice. Willy laughs knowingly. Happy tries to get his father's attention, but Willy's preference for Biff is obvious. Willy whispers that he will soon open a bigger business than his successful neighbor Uncle Charley because Charley is not as "well liked" as he is. Charley's son, Bernard, arrives to beg Biff to

study math with him. Biff is close to failing math, which would prevent him from graduating. Willy orders Biff to study. Biff distracts him by showing him that he printed the insignia of the University of Virginia on his sneakers, impressing Willy. Bernard states that the sneakers do not mean Biff will graduate. After Bernard leaves, Willy asks if Bernard is liked. The boys reply that he is liked but not "well liked." Willy tells them that Bernard may make good grades, but Happy and Biff will be more successful in business because they are "well liked".

Still in his daydream of fifteen years ago, Willy brags to Linda that he made \$1200 in sales that week. Linda quickly figures his commission at over \$200. Willy then hedges his estimation. Under questioning, he admits that he grossed only \$200. The \$70 commission is barely adequate to cover the family's expenses. In a rare moment of lucidity and self-criticism, Willy moans that he cannot move ahead because people do not seem to like him. Linda tells him that he is successful enough. Willy complains that he talks and jokes too much. He explains that Charley earns respect because he is a man of few words. His jealousy of his neighbor becomes painfully clear. Willy laugh at him for being too fat; he once punched a man for joking about his "walrus" physique. As Linda assures him that he is the handsomest man ever, Willy replies that she is his best friend in the world. Just as he tells her that he misses her terribly when he is on the road, The Woman's laughter sounds from the darkness.

### **Analysis**

One of the most interesting aspects of *Death of a Salesman* is its fluid treatment of time: past and present flow into one another seamlessly and simultaneously as various stimuli induce in Willy a rambling stream-of-consciousness. It is important to remember that the idyllic past that Willy recalls is one that he reinvents; one

should not, therefore, take these seeming flashbacks entirely as truth. The idyllic past functions as an escape from the present reality or a retrospective reconstruction of past events and blunders. Even when he retreats to this idyllic past, however, Willy cannot completely deny his real situation. He retreats into his daydreams not only to escape the present but also to examine the past. He searches for the mistake that he made that frustrated his hopes for fame and fortune and destroyed his relationship with Biff. Willy's treatment of his life as a story to be edited and rewritten enables him to avoid confronting its depressing reality.

It is important to examine the evolution of Willy's relationship with his family, as the solid family is one of the most prominent elements of the American Dream. In the present, Willy's relationship with his family is fraught with tension. In his memories, on the other hand, Willy sees his family as happy and secure. But even Willy's conception of the past is not as idyllic as it seems on the surface, as his split consciousness, the profound rift in his psyche, shows through. No matter how much he wants to remember his past as all-American and blissful, Willy cannot completely erase the evidence to the contrary. He wants to remember Biff as the bright hope for the future. In the midst of his memories, however, we find that Willy does nothing to discourage Biff's compulsive thieving habit. In fact, he subtly encourages it by laughing at Biff's theft of the football.

As an adult, Biff has never held a steady job, and his habitual stealing from employers seems largely to be the reason for this failing. Over the years, Biff and Willy have come to a mutual antagonism. Willy is unable to let go of his commitment to the American Dream, and he places tremendous pressure on Biff to fulfill it for him. Biff feels a deep sense of inadequacy because Willy wants him to pursue a career that conflicts with his natural inclinations and instincts. He would

rather work in the open air on a ranch than enter business and make a fortune, and he believes that Willy's natural inclination is the same, like his father's before him. Willy's relationship with Happy is also less than perfect in Willy's reconstruction of the past, and it is clear that he favors Biff. Happy tries several times to gain Willy's attention and approval but fails. The course of Happy's adult life clearly bears the marks of this favoritism. Happy doesn't express resentment toward Biff; rather, he emulates the behavior of the high-school-aged Biff. In the past, Willy expressed admiration for Biff's success with the girls and his ability to get away with theft. As an adult, Happy competes with more successful men by sleeping with their women he thus performs a sort of theft and achieves sexual prowess.

Act I (continued)

After The Woman's laughter through Ben's first appearance in Willy's daydream

## **Summary**

The Woman is Willy's mistress and a secretary for one of his buyers. In Willy's daydream, they sit in a hotel room. She tells him that she picked him because he is so funny and sweet. Willy loves the praise. She thanks Willy for giving her stockings and promises to put him right through to the buyers when she sees him next. The Woman fades into the darkness as Willy returns to his conversation with Linda in the present. He notices Linda mending stockings and angrily demands that she throw them out—he is too proud to let his wife wear an old pair (Biff later discovers that Willy has been buying new stockings for The Woman instead of for Linda). Bernard returns to the Loman house to beg Biff to study math. Willy orders him to give Biff the answers. Bernard replies that he cannot do so during a state

exam. Bernard insists that Biff return the football. Linda comments that some mothers fear that Biff is "too rough" with their daughters. Willy, enraged by the unglamorous truth of his son's behavior, plunges into a state of distraction and shouts at them to shut up. Bernard leaves the house, and Linda leaves the room, holding back tears.

The memory fades. Willy laments to himself and Happy that he did not go to Alaska with his brother, Ben, who acquired a fortune at the age of twenty-one upon discovering an African diamond mine. Charley, having heard the shouts, visits to check on Willy. They play cards. Charley, concerned about Willy, offers him a job, but Willy is insulted by the offer. He asks Charley if he saw the ceiling he put in his living room, but he becomes surly when Charley expresses interest, insisting that Charley's lack of skill with tools proves his lack of masculinity. Ben appears on the emi-daydream. He cuts a dignified, utterly confident figure. Willy tells Charley that Ben's wife wrote from Africa to tell them Ben had died. He alternates between conversing with Charley and his dead brother. Willy gets angry when Charley wins a hand, so Charley takes his cards and leaves. He is disturbed that Willy is so disoriented that he talks to a dead brother as if he were present. Willy immerses himself in the memory of a visit from his brother. Ben and Willy's father abandoned the family when Willy was three or four years old and Ben was seventeen. Ben left home to look for their father in Alaska but never found him. At Willy's request, Ben tells young Biff and Happy about their grandfather. Among an assortment of other jobs, Willy and Ben's father made flutes and sold them as a traveling sale following a gold rush to Alaska. Ben proceeds to wrestle the young Biff to the ground in a demonstration of unbridled machismo, wielding his umbrella threateningly over Biff's eye. Willy begs Ben to stay longer, but Ben hurries to catch his train.



## **Analysis**

Just as the product that Willy sells is never specified, so too does The Woman, with whom Willy commits adultery, remain nameless. Miller offers no description of her looks or character because such details are irrelevant; The Woman merely represents Willy's discontent in life. Indeed, she is more a symbol than an actual human being: she regards herself as a means for Willy to get to the buyers more efficiently, and Willy uses her as a tool to feel well liked. Biff sees her as a sign that Willy and his ambitions are not as great as Willy claims.

Willy's compulsive need to be "well liked" contributes to his descent into self delusion. Whereas Linda loves Willy despite his considerable imperfections, Willy's mistress, on the other hand, merely likes him. She buys his sales pitch, which boosts his ego, but does not care for him deeply the way Linda does. Linda regards Willy's job merely as a source of income; she draws a clear line between Willy as a salesman and Willy as her husband. Willy is unable to do so and thus fails to accept the love that Linda and his sons offer him.

Willy was first abandoned by his father and later by his older brother, Ben. Willy's father was a salesman as well, but he actually produced what he sold and was successful, according to Ben, at least. Ben presents their father as both an independent thinker and a masculine man skilled with his hands. In a sense, Willy's father, not Willy himself, represents the male ideal to Biff, a pioneer spirit and rugged individualist. Unlike his father, Willy does not attain personal satisfaction from the things that he sells because they are not the products of his personal efforts—what he sells is himself, and he is severely damaged and psychically ruptured. His professional persona is the only thing that he has produced himself. In a roundabout manner, Willy seeks approval from his professional contacts by trying

to be "well liked"—a coping strategy to deal with his abandonment by the two most important male figures in his life.

Willy's efforts to create the perfect family of the American Dream seem to constitute an attempt to rebuild the pieces of the broken family of his childhood. One can interpret his decision to become a salesman as the manifestation of his desperate desire to be the good father and provider that his own salesman father failed to be. Willy despairs about leaving his sons nothing in the form of a material inheritance, acutely aware that his own father abandoned him and left him with nothing. Willy's obsession with being well liked seems to be rooted in his reaction to his father's and brother's abandoning of him—he takes their rejection of him as a sign of their not liking him enough. Willy's memory of Ben's visit to his home is saturated with fears of abandonment and a need for approval. When Ben declares that he must leave soon in order to catch his train, Willy desperately tries to find some way to make him stay a little longer. He proudly shows his sons to Ben, practically begging for a word of approval. Additionally, he pleads with Ben to tell Biff and Happy about their grandfather, as he realizes that he has no significant family history to give to his sons as an inheritance; the ability to pass such a chronicle on to one's offspring is an important part of the American Dream that Willy so highly esteems.

Act I (continued)

### **Summary**

Willy's shouts wake Linda and Biff, who find Willy outside in his slippers. Biff asks Linda how long he has been talking to himself, and Happy joins them outside. Linda explains that Willy's mental unbalance results from his having lost his sa (he works only on commission). Linda knows that Willy borrows fifty dollars a week

from Charley and pretends it is his salary. Linda claims that Biff and Happy are ungrateful. She calls Happy a "philandering bum." Angry and guilt-ridden, Biff offers to stay home and get a job to help with expenses. Linda says that he cannot fight with Willy all the time. She explains that all of his automobile accidents are actually failed suicide attempts. She adds that she found a rubber hose behind the fuse box and a new nipple on the water heater's gas pipe—a sign that Willy attempted to asphyxiate himself. Willy overhears Biff, Happy, and Linda arguing about him. When Biff jokes with his father to snap him out of his trance, Willy misunderstands and thinks that Biff is calling him crazy. They argue, and Willy maintains that he is a "big shot" in the sales world. Happy mentions that Biff plans to ask Bill Oliver for a business loan. Willy brightens immediately. Happy outlines a publicity campaign to sell sporting goods; the business proposal, which revolves around the brothers using their natural physical abilities to lead publicity displays of sporting events, is thenceforth referred to as the "Florida idea." Everyone loves the idea of Happy and Biff going into business together. Willy begins offering dubious and somewhat unhelpful advice for Biff's loan interview. One moment, he tells Biff not to crack any jokes; the next, he tells him to lighten things up with a couple of funny stories. Linda tries to offer support, but Willy tells her several times to be quiet. He orders Biff not to pick up anything that falls off Oliver's desk because doing so is an office boy's job. Before they fall asleep, Linda again begs Willy to ask his boss for a non-traveling job. Biff removes the rubber hose from behind the fuse box before he retires to bed.

## Analysis

One reason for Willy's reluctance to criticize Biff for his youthful thefts and his careless attitude toward his classes seems to be that he fears doing damage to Biff's ego. Thus, he offers endless praise, hoping that Biff will fulfill the promise of that praise in his adulthood. It is also likely that Willy refuses to criticize the young Biff because he fears that, if he does so, Biff will not like him. This disapproval represents the ultimate personal and professional (the two spheres are conflated in Willy's mind) insult and failure. Because Willy's consciousness is split between despair and hope, it is probable that both considerations are behind Willy's decision not to criticize Biff's youthful indiscretions. In any case, his relationship with Biff is fraught, on Willy's side, with the childhood emotional trauma of abandonment and, on Biff's side, the struggle between fulfilling societal expectations and personal expectations. The myth of the American Dream has its strongest pull on the individuals who do not enjoy the happiness and prosperity that it promises. Willy pursues the fruits of that dream as a panacea for the disappointments and the hurts of his own youth. He is a true believer in the myth that any "well liked" young man possessing a certain degree of physical faculty and personal attractiveness" can achieve the Dream if he journeys forth in the world with a can-do attitude of confidence. The men who should have offered him the affirmation that he needed to build a healthy concept of self-worth his father and Ben left him. Therefore, Willy tries to measure his self-worth by the standards of an American myth that hardly corresponds to reality, while ignoring the more important foundations of family love, unconditional support, and the freedom of choice inherent to the American Dream. Unfortunately, Willy has a corrupted interpretation of the American Dream that clashes with that set forth by the country's founding fathers; he is preoccupied with the material

facets of American success and national identity.

In his obsession with being "well liked," Willy ignores the love that his family can offer him. Linda is far more realistic and grounded than Willy, and she is satisfied with what he can give her. She sees through his facade and still loves and accepts the man behind the facade. She likewise loves her adult sons, and she recognizes their bluster as transparent as well. She knows in her heart that Biff is irresponsible and that Happy is a "philandering bum," but she loves them without always having to like or condone their behavior. The emotional core of the family, Linda demands their full cooperation in dealing with Willy's mental decline. If Willy were content finally to relinquish the gnarled and grotesquely caricatured American tragic myth that he has fed with his fear, insecurity, and profound anxiety and that has possessed his soul, he could be more content. Instead, he continues to chase the fame and fortune that outruns him. He has built his concept of himself not on human relationships that fulfill human needs but on the unrealistic myth of the American hero. That myth has preyed on his all-too-common male weaknesses, until the fantasy that he has constructed about his life becomes intolerable to Biff. Willy's diseased mind is almost ready to explode by the end of Act I. The false hope offered by the "Florida idea" is a placebo, and the empty confidence it instills in Willy makes his final fall all the more

## **Death of a Salesman**

### **Arthur Miller**

#### **Act II**

##### **Opening scene in Howard's office**

When Willy awakes the next morning, Biff and Happy have already left, Biff to see Bill Oliver and Happy to mull over the "Florida idea" and go to work. Willy, in

high spirits with the prospect of the "Florida idea," mentions that he would like to get some seeds and plant a small garden in the yard. Linda, pleased with her husband's hopeful mood, points out that there is not enough sun. Willy replies that they will have to get a house in the country. Linda reminds Willy to ask his boss, Howard, for a nontraveling job as well as an advance to pay the insurance premium. They have one last payment on both the refrigerator and the house, and they have just finished paying for the car. Linda informs Willy that Biff and Happy want to take him to dinner at Frank's Chop House at six o'clock. As Willy departs, moved and excited by his sons' dinner invitation, he notices a stocking that Linda is mending and, guilt-ridden with the latent memory of his adultery with The Woman, admonishes her to throw the stocking away.

Willy timidly enters Howard's office. Howard is playing with a wire recorder he has just purchased for dictation. He plays the recorded voices of his family: his cloyingly enthusiastic children (a whistling daughter and a son who recites the state capitals in alphabetical order) and his shy wife. As Willy tries to express admiration, Howard repeatedly shushes him. Willy asks for a non-traveling job at \$65 a week. Howard replies that there is no opening available. He looks for his lighter. Willy finds it and hands it to him, unconsciously ignoring, in his nervous and pathetically humble distraction, his own advice never to handle or tend to objects in a superior's office, since that is the responsibility of "office boys." Willy keeps lowering his salary request, explaining his financial situation in unusually candid detail, but Howard remains resistant. Howard keeps calling him "kid" and assumes a condescending tone despite his younger age and Willy's reminders that he helped Howard's father name him. I realized that selling was the greatest career a man

could want

.See Important Quotations Explained(

Desperate, Willy tries to relate an anecdote about Dave Singleman, an eighty-four-year-old salesman who phoned his buyers and made his sales without ever leaving his hotel room. After he died the noble "death of a salesman" that eludes Willy, hundreds of salesmen and buyers attended his funeral. Willy reveals that his acquaintance with this venerable paragon of salesmanship convinced him to become a salesman himself rather than join his brother, Ben, on his newly purchased plot of timberland in Alaska. Singleman's dignified success and graceful, respected position as an older man deluded Willy into believing that "selling was the greatest career a man could want" because of its limitless potential and its honorable nature. Willy laments the loss of friendship and personality in the business, and he complains that no one knows him anymore. An uninterested Howard leaves the office to attend to other people, and he returns when Willy begins shouting frantically after accidentally switching on the wire recorder. Eventually, Willy becomes so distraught that Howard informs him that he does not want Willy to represent his company anymore. Howard essentially fires Willy, with the vague implication of reemployment after a period of "rest." He suggests that Willy turn to his sons (who he understandably assumes are successful given Willy's loud bragging) for financial support, but Willy is horrified at the thought of depending on his children and reversing the expected familial roles. He is far too proud to admit defeat, and Howard must insist repeatedly on the cessation of Willy's employment before it sinks in.

### **Analysis**

Biff's decision to seek a business loan raises Willy's spirits, and the way in which

Willy expresses his optimism is quite revealing. The first thing Willy thinks about is planting a garden in his yard; he then muses to Linda that they should buy a house in the country, so that he could build guesthouses for Biff and Happy when they have families of their own. These hopeful plans seem to illustrate how ill-suited Willy is to his profession, as it stifles his natural inclinations. Indeed, the competitive, hyper capitalist world of sales seems no more appropriate for Willy than for Biff. Willy seems happiest when he dreams of building things with his own hands, and when his instincts in this direction surface, he seems whole again, able to see a glimmer of true in himself and his abilities.

Willy's wistful fantasy of living in the forests of Alaska strengthens the implication that he chose the wrong profession. He does not seem to like living in an urban setting. However, his fascination with the frontier is also intimately connected to his obsession with the American Dream. In nineteenth-century America, the concept of the intrepid explorer entering the unknown, uncharted wilderness and striking gold was deeply imbedded in the national consciousness. With the postwar surge of consumerism in America, this "wilderness" became the bustling market of consumer goods, and the capitalist replaced the pioneer as the American hero. These new intrepid explorers plunged into the jungle of business transactions in order to find a niche to exploit. Ben, whose success involved a literal jungle in Africa, represents one version of the frontier narrative. Dave Singleman represents another. Willy chose to follow Singleman's path, convinced that it was the modern version and future of the American Dream of success through hard work.

While Willy's dissatisfaction with his life seems due in part to choosing a profession that conflicts with his interests, it seems also due in part to comparing all aspects, professional and private alike, of his own life to those of a mythic standard. He fails



to realize that Ben's wealth is the result of a blind stroke of luck rather than a longdeserved reward for hard work and personal merit. Similarly, Willy misses the tragicn's story of success—that Singleman was still working at the age of eighty-four and died on the job. Mourning for him was limited to the sphere of salesmen and train passengers who happened to be there at his death—the ephemeral world of transience, travel, and money, as opposed to the meaningful realm of loved ones.

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Act II (continued)

Willy's daydream involving Ben through Willy's conversation with Charley in his office

### **Summary**

After Howard leaves, Willy immerses himself in memories of a visit from Ben. Ben asks Willy to go to Alaska and manage a tract of timberland he has purchased. Linda, slightly afraid of Ben, says that Willy already has a nice job. Ben departs as Willy tries desperately to gain a word of approval from him, comparing the intangible success of the honorable Dave Singleman to the concrete possibilities of timber. Bernard arrives to accompany the Lomans to the big football game at Ebbets Field. He begs Biff to allow him to carry his helmet. Happy snaps and insists on carrying it. Biff generously allows Bernard to carry his shoulder pads. Charley ambles over to tease Willy a little about the immature importance he is placing on the football game, and Willy grows furious.

In the present, the grown-up Bernard is sitting in his father's reception room when his father's secretary, Jenny, enters to beg him to deal with Willy. Outside, Willy, still immersed in his memory, argues with an invisible Charley from the past about Biff's football game. Bernard converses with Willy and mentions that he has a ca in

Washington, D.C. Willy replies that Biff is working on a very big deal in town. Willy breaks down and asks Bernard why Biff's life seemed to end after his big football game. Bernard mentions that Biff failed math but was determined to go to summer school and pass. He adds that Biff went to see Willy in Boston, but after he came back, he burned his sneakers with the University of Virginia's insignia. Attempting a candid conversation with the wounded Willy, Bernard asks him what happened in Boston that changed Biff's intentions and drained his motivation. Willy becomes angry and resentful and demands to know if Bernard blames him for Biff's failure. Charley exits his office to say goodbye to Bernard. He mentions that Bernard is arguing a case before the Supreme Court. Willy, simultaneously jealous and proud of Bernard, is astounded that Bernard did not mention it. In his office, Charley counts out fifty dollars. With difficulty, Willy asks for over a hundred this time to pay his insurance fees. After a moment, Charley states that he has offered Willy a non-traveling job with a weekly salary of fifty dollars and scolds Willy for insulting him. Willy refuses the job again, insisting that he already has one, despite Charley's reminder that Willy earns no money at his job. Broken, he admits that Howard fired him. Outraged and incredulous, he again mentions that he chose Howard's name when he was born. Charley replies that Willy cannot sell that sort of thing. Willy retorts that he has always thought the key to success was being well liked. Exasperated, Charley asks who liked J. P. Morgan. He angrily gives Willy the money for his insurance. Willy shuffles out of the office in tears.

### **Analysis**

Willy's conversation with Bernard revives Willy's attempt to understand why Biff never made a material success of his life despite his bright and promising youth. He wants to understand why the "well liked" teenage football player became an

insecure man unable to hold a steady job. He assumes there is some secret to success that is not readily apparent. If he were not wearing the rose-colored glasses of the myth of the American Dream, he would see that Charley and his son are successful because of lifelong hard work and not because of the illusions of social popularity and physical appearances.

Biff's failure in math is symbolic of his failure to live up to his father's calculated plan for him. Willy believes so blindly in his interpretation of the American Dream that he has constructed a veritable formula by which he expects Biff to achieve success. The unshakeable strength of Willy's belief in this blueprint for success is evidenced later when he attempts to plant the vegetable seeds. Reading the instructions on the seed packets, Willy mutters, as he measures out the garden plot, "carrots ... quarter-inch apart. Rows ... one-foot rows." He has applied the same regimented approach to the cultivation of his sons. Biff struggles with this formula in the same way that he struggles with the formulas in his textbook.

Charley tries to bring Willy down to earth by explaining that Willy's fantasies about the way the business world functions conflict with the reality of a consumer economy. Charley refuses to relate to Willy through blustering fantasy; instead, he makes a point. He states that the bottom line of business is selling and buying, not being liked. Ironically, Charley is the only person to offer Willy a business opportunity on the strength of a personal bond; Howard, in contrast, fires Willy despite the strong friendship that Willy shared with Howard's father. However, the relationship between Willy and Charley is shaped by an ongoing competition between their respective families, at least from Willy's point of view. Willy's rejection of Charley's job offer stems partly from jealousy of Charley's success. Additionally, Willy knows that Charley does not like him much—his offer of a job

thus fails to conform to Willy's idealistic notions about business relationships. Willy chooses to reject a well-paying, secure job rather than let go of the myth of the American business world and its ever-receding possibilities for success and redemption. For Willy, the American Dream has become a kind of Holy Grail—his childish longing for acceptance and material proof of success in an attempt to align his life with a mythic standard has assumed the dimensions of a religious crusade. He places his faith in the elusive American Dream because he seeks salvation, and he blindly expects to achieve material, emotional, and even spiritual satisfaction through "personal attractiveness" and being "well liked." Willy forces Biff and Happy into the framework of this mythic quest for secular salvation—he even calls them "Adonis" and "Hercules," envisioning them as legendary figures whose greatness has destined them to succeed in according to the American Dream.

Act II (continued)

→ )The scene in Frank's Chop House

### **Summary**

Happy banter with the waiter, Stanley. Happy is flirting with a pretty girl named Miss Forsythe when Biff arrives to join him. After she responds to his pick-up line by claiming that she is, in fact, a cover girl, Happy tells her that he is a successful champagne salesman and that Biff is a famous football player. Judging from Happy's repeated comments on her moral character and his description of her as "on call," Miss Forsythe is probably a prostitute. Happy invites her to join them. She exits to make a phone call to cancel her previous plans and to invite a girlfriend to join them. Biff explains to Happy that he waited six hours to see Oliver, only to have Oliver not even remember him. Biff asks where he got the idea that he was a salesman for Oliver. He had actually been only a lowly shipping clerk, but

somehow Willy's exaggerations and lies had transformed him into a salesman in the Loman family's collective memory. After Oliver and the secretary left, Biff recounts, he ran into Oliver's office and stole his fountain pen. Be Happy advises Biff to tell Willy that Oliver is thinking over his business proposition, claiming that eventually the whole situation will fade away from their father's memory. When Willy arrives, he reveals that he has been fired and states that he wants some good news to tell Linda. Despite this pressure, Biff attempts to tell the truth. Disoriented, Willy shouts that Biff cannot blame everything on him because Biff is the one who failed math after all. Confused at his father's crazed emphasis on his high school math failure, Biff steels himself to forge ahead with the truth, but the situation reaches crisis proportions when Willy absolutely refuses to listen to Biff's story. In a frenzy as the perilous truth closes in on him, Willy enters a semi-daydream state, reliving Biff's discovery of him and The Woman in their Boston hotel room. A desperate Biff backs down and begins to lie to assuage his frantic father. Miss Forsythe returns with her friend, Letta. Willy, insulted at Biff's "spite," furiously lashes out at his son's attempts to explain himself and the impossibility of returning to Oliver. Willy wanders into the restroom, talking to himself, and an embarrassed Happy informs the women that he is not, in fact, their father. Biff angrily tells Happy to help Willy, accusing him of not caring about their father. He hurries out of the restaurant in a vortex of guilt and anguish. Happy frantically asks Stanley for the bill; when the waiter doesn't respond immediately, Happy rushes after Biff, pushing Miss Forsythe and Letta along in front of him and leaving Willy babbling alone in the restroom.

### **Analysis**

Willy's encounters with Howard, Bernard, and Charley constitute serious blows to

the fantasy through which he views his life; his constructed reality is falling apart. Biff has also experienced a moment of truth, but he regards his epiphany as a liberating experience from a lifetime of stifling and distorting lies. He wishes to leave behind the facade of the Loman family tradition so that he and his father can begin to relate to one another honestly. Willy, on the other hand, wants his sons to aid him in rebuilding the elaborate fantasies that deny his reality as a defeated man. Willy drives Biff to produce a falsely positive report of his interview with Oliver, and Happy is all too willing to comply. When Biff fails to produce the expected glowing report, Happy, who has not had the same revelation as Biff, chimes in with false information about the interview.

Willy's greatest fear is realized during his ill-fated dinner with Biff and Happy. In his moment of weakness and defeat, he asks for their help in rebuilding his shattered concept of his life; he is not very likable, and he is well aware of it. Biff and Happy's neglect of him fits into a pattern of abandonment. Like Willy's father, then Ben, then Howard, Biff and Happy erode Willy's fantasy world. The scene in Frank's Chop House is pivotal to Willy's unraveling and to Biff's disillusionment. Biff's epiphany in Oliver's office regarding Willy's exaggeration of Biff's position at Oliver's store puts him on a quest to break through the thick cloud of lies surrounding his father at any cost. Just as Willy refuses to hear what he doesn't want to accept, Biff refuses to subject himself further to his father's delusions.

Willy's pseudo-religious quest for success is founded on a complex, multilayered delusion, and Biff believes that for his father to die well in the medieval, Christian sense of the word (much of the play smacks of the anachronistic absurdity of the medieval values of chivalry and blind faith), he must break through the heavy sediment of lies to the truth of his personal degradation. Both Willy and Biff are

conscious of the disparity between Dave Singleman's mythic "death of a salesman" and the pathetic nature of Willy's impending death. Willy clings to the hope that the "death of a salesman" is necessarily noble by the very nature of the profession, whereas Biff understands that behind the veneer of the American Dream's empty promises lies a devastatingly lonely death diametrically opposed to the one that Singleman represents and that the Dream itself posits. Happy and Linda wish to allow Willy to die covered by the diminishing comfort of his delusions, but Biff feels a moral responsibility to try to reveal the truth.

Act II (continued)

Boston hotel room daydream through Willy's departure from Frank's Chop House

### **Summary**

Upon his sons' departure from Frank's Chop House, Willy is immersed in the memory of the teenage Biff's visit to see him in Boston. In his daydream it is night and he is in a hotel room with his mistress, while in the present he is presumably still in the restroom of Frank's Chop House. Biff is outside knocking on the hotel room door, after telephoning the room repeatedly with no result. The Woman, who is dressing, pesters Willy to answer the door. She flirtatiously describes how he has "ruined" her, and she offers to send him straight through to the buyers whom she represents the next time he visits Boston on business. Willy, who is clearly nervous about his surprise visitor, finally consents to her appeals to answer the door. He orders her to stay in the bathroom and be quiet, believing it may be a nosy hotel clerk investigating their affair.

Willy answers the door, and Biff reports that he failed math. He asks Willy to persuade the teacher, Mr. Birnbaum, to pass him. Willy tries to get Biff out of the room quickly with promises of a malted drink and a rapid trip home to talk to the

math teacher. When Biff mockingly imitates his teacher's lisp, The Woman laughs from the bathroom. She exits the bathroom, wearing only a negligee, and Willy pushes her out into the hallway. He tries to pass her off as a buyer staying in the room next door who needed to shower in Willy's bathroom because her room was being painted. Biff sits on his suitcase, crying silently, not buying his father's lies. Willy promises to talk to the math teacher, but Biff tells him to forget it because no one will listen to a phony liar. He resolves not to make up the math test and not to attend college, effectively negating his contracted role in Willy's inflated version of the American Dream. He deals the most serious blow by accusing Willy of giving Linda's stockings away to his mistress. Biff leaves, with Willy kneeling and yelling after him. Stanley pulls Willy out of his daydream. Willy is on his knees in the restaurant ordering the teenage Biff to come back. Stanley explains his sons' absence, and Willy attempts to tip him, but Stanley stealthily slips the dollar bill back into Willy's coat as he turns. Willy asks him to direct him to a seed store, and he rushes out, frantically explaining that he must plant immediately, as he does not "have a thing in the ground".

Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground.

(See Important Quotations Explained)

### **Analysis**

Willy settles on Biff's discovery of his adultery as the reason for Biff's failure to fulfill Willy's ambitions for him. Before he discovers the affair, Biff believes in Willy's meticulously constructed persona. Afterward, he calls Willy out as a "phony little fake." He sees beneath Willy's facade and rejects the man behind it; to be exposed in this way as a charlatan is the salesman's worst nightmare. Assuming a characteristically simplistic cause-and-effect relationship, Willy decides that Biff's



failure to succeed is a direct result of the disillusionment that he experiences as a result of Willy's infidelity. Despising Willy for his affair, Biff must also have come to despise Willy's ambitions for him.

In this reckoning, Willy again conflates the personal with the professional. His understanding of the American material gain precludes the idea that one can derive happiness without these things. Ironically, in Willy's daydream this desired tangible proof of success is acquired by means of the immaterial and ephemeral concepts of "personal attractiveness" and being "well liked." Willy believes that Biff, no longer able to respect him as a father or a person, automatically gave up all hopes for achieving the American Dream, since he could not separate Willy's expectations of him from his damaged emotional state. In a sense, Willy is right this time—Biff's knowledge of Willy's adultery tarnishes the package deal of the total Dream, and Biff rejects the flawed product that Willy is so desperately trying to sell him.

Willy's earlier preoccupation with the state of Linda's stockings and her mending them foreshadows the exposure and fall that the Boston incident represents. Until the climactic scene in the restaurant, when Biff first attempts to dispel the myths and lies sinking the Loman household, the only subconscious trace of Willy's adultery is his insistence that Linda throw her old stockings out. The stockings' power as a symbol of his betrayal overcomes Willy when Biff's assault on his increasingly delicate shield of lies forces him to confront his guilt about his affair with The Woman. When Biff, the incarnation of Willy's ambition, rejects the delusion that Willy offers, Willy's faith in the American Dream, which he vested in his son, begins to dissolve as well.

Willy's delirious interest in a seed shop reveals his insecurity about his legacy. Poor and now unemployed, Willy has no means to pass anything on to his sons. Indeed,

he has just given Stanley a dollar in a feeble attempt to prove to himself, by being able to give, that he does indeed possess something. The act of giving also requires someone to whom to give, and Stanley becomes, momentarily, a surrogate son to Willy, since Biff and Happy have abandoned him. Similarly, in desperately seeking to grow vegetables, Willy desires tangible proof of the value of his labor, and hence, life. Additionally, the successful growth of vegetables would redeem Willy's failure to cultivate Biff properly. In declaring "Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground," Willy acknowledges that Biff has broken free from the roots of the longstanding Loman delusion. Finally, Willy's use of gardening as a metaphor for success and failure indicates that he subconsciously acknowledges that, given his natural inclinations toward working with his hands and creating, going into sales was a poor career choice.

Act II (continued)

The boys' confrontation with Linda, Biff's final confrontation with Willy, and Willy's decision to take a late-night drive

### **Summary**

Biff and Happy return home later that night with a bouquet of roses for Linda. She knocks the roses to the ground and shouts at them to pack and never come back. Happy claims that Willy had a great time at dinner. Linda calls her sons a variety of names and accuses them of abandoning their sick father in a restaurant bathroom. Happy, incredulous and defensive, denies everything, but Biff accepts the judgment and wholeheartedly endorses his own degradation and status as "scum of the earth." After searching the house for Willy, Biff hears him outside, and Linda explains that he is maniacally planting a garden regardless of the darkness. Outside, Willy discusses a guaranteed \$20,000 proposition with Ben. Ben warns that the insurance

company might not honor the policy. Willy retorts that since he has always paid the premium, the company cannot refuse. He says that Biff will realize how important he is once he sees the number of people who attend his funeral. Ben warns that Biff will call him a coward and hate him. Willy is, of course, contemplating suicide, which would allow his family to cash in on his life insurance policy why am I trying to become what I don't want to be .

Biff tells Willy that he is leaving for good and that he will not keep in touch. Biff wants Willy to forget him. Willy curses his son and declares that Biff is throwing his life away and blaming his failures on him out of spite. Biff confronts Willy with the rubber hose. Biff states that he has stolen himself out of every job since high school and that during the three-month period when he was completely out of touch with his family he was, in fact, in prison for stealing a suit. He reproaches Willy for having filled him with so much hot air about how important he, Biff, was that he was unable to take orders from anyone. Further, he accuses the family of never telling the truth "for ten minutes in this house." He exposes Happy's exaggeration of his position Happy is not the assistant buyer, as he claims, but rather one of two assistants to the assistant buyer—and he says that he does not want to do anything but work in the open air. Biff is determined to know who he is and for his father to know likewise who he is. He urges Willy to accept their own commonness—they are both "a dime a dozen," not destined for leadership or worthy of prizes. Crying and exhausted, Biff trudges upstairs to bed. Suddenly happy, Willy mutters that Biff must like him because he cried, and his own delusions of his son's success are restored in light of this meager proof. Linda and Happy tell him that Biff has always loved him, and even Happy seems genuinely moved by the encounter. Everyone retires to bed, except Willy. He urges Linda to sleep and promises that he will join

her soon. Willy converses with Ben, predicting that Biff will go far with \$20,000 in his pocket. Suddenly, Willy realizes he is alone; Ben has disappeared. Linda calls from upstairs for him to come to bed, but he does not. Happy and Biff listen. They hear the car start and speed away. Willy's final confrontation with Biff exposes the essential gridlock of their relationship. Biff wants Willy to forget him as a useless bum. Once Willy finally lets go of him, Biff can be free to be himself and lead his life without having to carry the weight of his father's dreams. But Willy cannot let go of the myth around which he has built his life. He has no hopes of achieving the American Dream himself, so he has transferred his hopes to Biff. Fulfilling Biff's request would involve discarding his dreams and ambitions forever and admitting that he has long believed in the American Dream for naught. Each man is struggling with the other in a desperate battle for his own identity.

During the confrontation, Biff makes no attempt to blame anyone for the course that his life has taken. He doesn't even mention the affair with The Woman, which Willy imagines as the sole reason for his son's lack of material success. A year ago, Biff doesn't consider his disillusionment a function of either Willy's adultery or the inherent foolishness of Willy's ambitions. Ironically, Biff blames Willy's fantastic success in selling him on the American Dream of easy success as the reason for his failure to hold a steady job. Biff's faith in Willy's dreams is the real reason that he could not advance in the business world. He could not start from the bottom and work his way up because he believed that success would magically descend upon him at any moment, regardless of his own efforts or ambitions.

Willy's happy reaction to Biff's frustrated tears demonstrates that Willy has again missed an opportunity to take refuge in the love of his family. He responds to Biff's tears as material evidence that Biff "likes" him. Linda corrects him with the words

"loves you." Willy's failure to recognize the anguished love offered to him by his family is crucial to the climax of his tortured day. Because Willy has long conflated successful salesmanship with being well liked, one can even argue that Willy's imagining that Biff likes him boosts his confidence in his ability to sell and thus perversely enables his final sale—his life.

In Willy's mind, his imminent suicide takes on epic proportions. Not only does it validate his salesmanship, as argued above, but it also renders him a martyr, since he believes that the insurance money from his sacrifice will allow Biff to fulfill the dream. Ben's final mantra of "The jungle is dark, but full of diamonds" turns Willy's suicide into a metaphorical moral struggle. Suicide, for Willy, constitutes both a final ambition to realize the Dream and the ultimate selfless act of giving to his sons. According to Ben, the noble death that Willy seeks is "not like an appointment at all" but like a "diamond ... rough and hard to the touch." In the absence of any true self-knowledge, Willy is able, at least, to achieve a tangible result with his suicide. In this way, Willy does experience a sort of revelation: he finally understands that the product he sells is himself and that his final sale is his own life. Through the imaginary advice of Ben, Willy ultimately believes his earlier assertion to Charley that "after all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive".

In an analysis of Willy's obsession with the American Dream as a religious crusade, his suicide represents the ultimate apotheosis into the Dream itself, the final expiation for the sins of conflated professional and personal failure. A kind of perverse, American working-class Christ-figure, Willy dies not only for his own sins but also for the sins of his sons, who have failed to achieve their potential within the American Dream.



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