South Valley University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English
Fourth Year

The Short Story

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Preface

This course introduces students to the short story in literature. It starts with an introduction to the short story: its emergence, development and characteristics. Then it focuses on representative English short story writers by studying a short story written by each representative writer. The selected texts exemplify the different traditions and schools of short story writing in English. Upon the completion of the course, students will be able to identify the historical, technical, stylistic and thematic aspects of the short story and outline the different and successive phases in the development of the short story. And finally the course teaches students to write topics on short stories.

Best Wishes & Regards

Dr. Nabil Abdel Fattah

The Short Story: Critical Evaluation

The short story is usually concerned with a single effect conveyed in only one or a few significant episodes or scenes. The form encourages economy of setting, concise narrative, and the omission of a complex plot; character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but is seldom fully developed. Despite its relatively limited scope, though, a short story is often judged by its ability to provide a "complete" or satisfying treatment of its characters and subject.

Before the 19th century the short story was not generally regarded as a distinct literary form. But although in this sense it may seem to be a uniquely modern genre, the fact is that short prose fiction is nearly as old as language itself. Throughout history humankind has enjoyed various types of brief narratives: jests, anecdotes, studied digressions, short allegorical romances, moralizing fairy tales, short myths, and abbreviated historical legends. None of these constitutes a short story as it has been defined since the 19th century, but they do make up a large part of the milieu from which the modern short story emerged.

Analysis of the genre

As a genre, the short story received relatively little critical attention through the middle of the 20th century, and the most valuable studies of the form were often limited by region or era. In his *The Lonely Voice* (1963), the Irish short story writer Frank O'Connor attempted to account for the genre by suggesting that stories are a means for "submerged population groups" to address a dominating community.

Most other theoretical discussions, however, were predicated in one way or another on Edgar Allan Poe's thesis that stories must have a compact unified effect.

By far the majority of criticism on the short story focused on techniques of writing. Many, and often the best of the technical works, advise the young reader—alerting the reader to the variety of devices and tactics employed by the skilled writer. On the other hand, many of these works are no more than treatises on "how to write stories" for the young writer rather than serious critical material.

The prevalence in the 19th century of two words, "sketch" and "tale," affords one way of looking at the genre. In the United States alone there were virtually hundreds of books claiming to be collections of sketches (Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book,* William Dean Howells's *Suburban Sketches*) or collections of tales (Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,* Herman Melville's *The Piazza Tales*). These two terms establish the polarities of the milieu out of which the modern short story grew.

The tale is much older than the sketch. Basically, the tale is a manifestation of a culture's unaging desire to name and conceptualize its place in the cosmos. It provides a culture's narrative framework for such things as its vision of itself and its homeland or for expressing its conception of its ancestors and its gods. Usually filled with cryptic and uniquely deployed motifs, personages, and symbols, tales are frequently fully understood only by members of the particular culture to which they belong. Simply, tales are intracultural. Seldom created to address an outside culture, a tale is a medium through which a culture speaks to itself and thus perpetuates its own values and stabilizes its own identity. The old speak to the young through tales.

The sketch, by contrast, is intercultural, depicting some phenomenon of one culture for the benefit or pleasure of a second culture. Factual and journalistic, in essence the sketch is generally more analytic or descriptive and less narrative or dramatic than the tale. Moreover, the sketch by nature is *suggestive*, incomplete; the tale is often *hyperbolic*, overstated.

The primary mode of the sketch is written; that of the tale, spoken. This difference alone accounts for their strikingly different effects. The sketch writer can have, or pretend to have, his eye on his subject. The tale, recounted at court or campfire—or at some place similarly removed in time from the event—is nearly always a re-creation of the past. The tale-teller is an agent of *time*, bringing together a culture's past and its present. The sketch writer is more an agent of *space*, bringing an aspect of one culture to the attention of a second.

It is only a slight oversimplification to suggest that the tale was the only kind of short fiction until the 16th century, when a rising middle class interest in social realism on the one hand and in exotic lands on the other put a premium on sketches of subcultures and foreign regions. In the 19th century certain writers—those one might call the "fathers" of the modern story: Nikolay Gogol, Hawthorne, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Heinrich von Kleist, Prosper Mérimée, Poe—combined elements of the tale with elements of the sketch. Each writer worked in his own way, but the general effect was to mitigate some of the fantasy and stultifying conventionality of the tale and, at the same time, to liberate the sketch from its bondage to strict factuality. The modern short story, then, ranges between the highly imaginative tale and the photographic sketch and in some ways draws on both.

The short stories of Ernest Hemingway, for example, may often gain their force from an exploitation of traditional mythic symbols (water, fish, groin wounds), but they are more closely related to the sketch than to the tale. Indeed, Hemingway was able at times to submit his apparently factual stories as newspaper copy. In contrast, the stories of Hemingway's contemporary William Faulkner more closely resemble the tale. Faulkner seldom seems to understate, and his stories carry a heavy flavour of the past. Both his language and his subject matter are rich in traditional material. A Southerner might well suspect that only a reader steeped in sympathetic knowledge of the traditional South could fully understand Faulkner. Faulkner may seem, at times, to be a Southerner speaking to and for Southerners. But, as, by virtue of their imaginative and symbolic qualities, Hemingway's narratives are more than journalistic sketches, so, by virtue of their explorative and analytic qualities, Faulkner's narratives are more than Southern tales.

Origins

The evolution of the short story first began before humans could write. To aid in constructing and memorizing tales, the early storyteller often relied on stock phrases, fixed rhythms, and rhyme. Consequently, many of the oldest narratives in the world, such as the ancient Babylonian tale the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, are in verse. Indeed, most major stories from the ancient Middle East were in verse: "The War of the Gods," "The Story of Adapa" (both Babylonian), "The Heavenly Bow," and "The King Who Forgot" (both Canaanite). Those tales were inscribed in cuneiform on clay during the 2nd millennium bce.

General characteristics:

- **limited number of characters:** often only one main character/protagonist and little/no character development
  (cf. novels e.g. by Charles Dickens with over 20 main characters)
- **limited time span**: only a few hours, days or weeks
  (cf. novels that cover a whole lifetime or even several generations)
- **a single theme/plot**
  (cf. novels that can deal with several/many themes and can have various sub-plots)

Typical structure of the plot:

- **exposition**: introduction of main character(s) and setting (place, time, general social background), hints at theme and/or atmosphere; often no or very short exposition: story begins "in medias res", e.g. in the middle of a dialogue
- **rising action**: development of the conflict
- **climax**: conflict reaches its highest point
- [turning point: a change in the conflict]
- [falling action: reduction of suspense]
- **ending**
  – **denouement**: conflict is resolved
  – **open ending**: conflict is *not* resolved, reader wonders what might happen next
  – **surprise ending**: reader's expectations are not fulfilled

- Characteristics of The Short Story

Setting

The time and location in which a story takes place is called the setting. For some

stories the setting is very important, while for others it is not. There are several aspects of a story's setting to consider when examining how setting contributes to a story (some, or all, may be present in a story):

- **Place** – geographical location. Where is the action of the story taking place?
- **Time** – When is the story taking place? (historical period, time of day, year, etc)
- **Weather conditions** – Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, etc?
- **Social conditions** – What is the daily life of the characters like? Does the story contain local colour (writing that focuses on the speech, dress, mannerisms, customs, etc. of a particular place)?
- **Mood or atmosphere** – What feeling is created at the beginning of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

Plot

The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea; It is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one sitting. There are five essential parts of plot:

- **Introduction /Orientation**– The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed.
- **Rising Action** – This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).

- **Climax** – This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?
- **Falling action** – The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement).
- **Resolution / Denouement** – This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

Generally, it is helpful to consider the climax as a three-fold phenomenon:

- the main character receives new information
- accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it)
- acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).

Conflict— Conflict is also essential to the plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is not merely limited to open arguments, rather it is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones.

Did you know that there are two types of conflict? They are …

1) **External** – A struggle with a force outside one's self.

2) **Internal** – A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision,

overcome pain,

quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

Conflict can also occur in the following situations:

- **Man vs. Man** (physical) – The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.
- **Man vs. Circumstances** (classical) – The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.
- **Man vs. Society** (social) – The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.
- **Man vs. Himself/Herself** (psychological) – The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.

Characters

Character — There are two meanings for the word character:

- The person in a work of fiction.
- The characteristics of a person.

Persons in a work of fiction – Antagonist and Protagonist

Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character – he/she is the

PROTAGONIST. The opposer of the main character is called the ANTAGONIST.

The Characteristics of a Person – In order for a story to seem real to the reader its characters must seem real. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. Characters are convincing if they are: consistent, motivated, and life-like (resemble real people)

Can you guess how does the author reveal a character? Well, it is done in several ways through:

a) his/her physical appearance
b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
c) what he/she does or does not do
d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

Characters can be …

1. **Individual** – round, many sided and complex personalities.
2. **Developing** – dynamic, many sided personalities that change, for better or worse, by the end of the story.
3. **Static** – Stereotype, have one or two characteristics that never change and are emphasized e.g. brilliant detective, drunk, scrooge, cruel stepmother, etc.

Point of view, or p.o.v., is defined as the angle from which the story is told.

- **Innocent Eye** – The story is told through the eyes of a child (his/her judgment being different from that of an adult) .

- **Stream of Consciousness** – The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.
- **First Person** – The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc). The reader sees the story through this person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels.
- **Omniscient**– The author can narrate the story using the omniscient point of view. He can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of his characters and he introduces information where and when he chooses. There are two main types of omniscient point of view:

a) **Omniscient Limited** – The author tells the story in third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc). We know only what the character knows and what the author allows him/her to tell us. We can see the thoughts and feelings of characters if the author chooses to reveal them to us.

b) **Omniscient Objective** – The author tells the story in the third person. It appears as though a camera is following the characters, going anywhere, and recording only what is seen and heard. There is no comment on the characters or their thoughts. No interpretations are offered. The reader is placed in the position of spectator without the author there to explain. The reader has to interpret events on his own.

Theme

Theme — The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

Things are not always as they appear to be.
Love is blind.
Believe in yourself.
People are afraid of change.
Don't judge a book by its cover.

A LONG WALK HOME

by Jason Bocarro

I grew up in the south of Spain in a little community called Estepona. I was 16 when one morning, my father told me I could drive him in remote village-called Mijas, about 18 miles away, on the condition that I take the car in to be serviced at a nearby garage. Having just learned to drive and hardly ever having the opportunity to use the car I readily accepted. I drove Dad into Mijas and promised to pick him up at 4p.m., then drove to a nearby garage and dropped off the car Because I had a few hours to spare, I decided to catch a couple of movies at a theater near the garage. However, I became so immersed in the films that I completely lost track of time. When the last movie had finished, I looked down at my watch. It was six o'clock. I was two hours late!

I knew Dad would be angry if he found out I'd been watching movies. He'd never let me drive again. I decided to tell him that the car needed some repairs and that they had taken longer than had been expected. I drove up to the place where we had planned to meet and saw Dad waiting patiently on the corner. I apologized for being late and told him that I'd come as quickly as I could, but the car had needed some major repairs. I'll never forget the look he gave me.

"I'm disappointed that you feel you have to lie to me, Jason."

"What do you mean? I'm telling the truth".

Dad looked at me again. "When you did not show up, I called the garage to ask if there were any problems, and they told me that you had not yet picked up the car. So you see, I know there were no problems with the car." A rush of guilt ran through me as I feebly confessed to my trip to the movie theater and the real reason

for my tardiness. Dad listened intently as a sadness passed through him.

"I'm angry, not with you but with myself. You see, I realize that I have failed as a father if after all these years you feel that you have to lie to me. I have failed because I have brought up a son who cannot even tell the truth to his own father. I'm going to walk home now and contemplate where I have gone wrong all these years".

"But Dad, it's 18 miles to home. It's dark. You can't walk home".

My protests, my apologies and the rest of my utterances were useless. I had let my father down, and I was about to learn one of the most painful lessons of my life. Dad began walking along the dusty roads. I quickly jumped in the car and followed behind, hoping he would relent. I pleaded all the way, telling him how sorry I was, but he simply ignored me, continuing on silently, thoughtfully and painfully. For 18 miles I drove behind him, averaging about five miles per hour.

Seeing my father in so much physical and emotional pain was the most distressing and painful experience that I have ever faced. However, it was also the most successful lesson. I have never lied to him since.

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1. **on the condition that I take:** if I took
2 **to be serviced:** to be checked for problems and repaired if necessary
3 **had a few hours to spare:** had a few free hours
4 **immersed**: interested in, fascinated by
5 **lost track of time:** didn't pay attention to the time
6 **the look he gave me:** the way he looked at me
7 **confessed to:** told the truth
8 **contemplate**: think seriously about

9 **let my father down:** disappointed my father

10 **relent**: do what he said he wouldn't do i.e., ride home in the car)

After You Read

Understanding the Text

A. Events in the Story

1. Order the events. Number the events in the story "A Long Walk Home" from the first (1) to the last (10)

..... He apologized to his father for being late

..... He went to a movie theater.

..... He dropped the car off at a garage to be serviced.

..... He realized his father knew he was lying.

..... He realized it was six o'clock and his father was waiting for him.

..... He followed his father the whole 18 miles home.

..... He picked up the car at the garage and then went to pick up his father.

..... He told his father a lie.

..... Jason drove his father into town and dropped him off.

..... He tried to persuade his father to get into the car.

2.In your own words, retell the story "A Long Walk Home".

B**. Consider the issues**. Work with a partner to answer the questions below.

1. What do you think Jason said when he apologized to his father for being late?

2. What is your opinion of the way Jason's father responded to his son's lie?

3. Jason said that he learned something from this experience. Besides learning not to lie, what do you think he learned?

Using context

When you read, you can use context (the surrounding words and ideas) to guess the meaning of many unfamiliar words.

A. In the sentences below, use context to guess the meaning of the italicized words. Circle the letter of your answer.

1. I was 16 when one morning, my father told me I could drive him into a remote village called Mijas, about 18 miles away, on the condition that I take the car in to be serviced at a nearby garage.

a. building b. restaurant c. repair shop

2. Having just learned to drive, and hardly ever having the opportunity to use the car, I readily accepted.

a. quickly b. quietly c. sadly

3. Because I had a few hours to spare, I decided to catch a couple of movies at a theater near the garage.

a. find b .watch c. ignore

4.My protests, my apologies, and the rest of my utterances were useless.

a. friends b. clothes c. words

B. See how much information you can get from context. Use the words and ideas in the rest of the sentence to guess the missing word(s). There are many possible answers.

1. When I **got** to the garage to pick up the car, they said it wasn't ready yet.

2. I went to a nearby..... to watch a couple of movies

3.When I..... . at my watch, I saw that it was already six o'clock.

4.I..... the movie theater as soon as the movie had finished.

Building Vocabulary

Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs have two or three parts: a verb and one or two other words like *down, up, off, or out*. Many phrasal verbs are difficult to understand because the two or three words together have a special meaning.

I *grew up* in the south of Spain.

I *let* my father *down* when I lied to him.

A. Underline the phrasal verbs in the sentences below. Then use context to guess the meaning of each verb. Share your answers with a partner

1. When Jason's father found out that his son had been watching movies, he was very upset.
2. Jason didn't pick the car up until after six o'clock.
3. Jason didn't show up at four o'clock to get his father because he was at the movie theater watching a film.
4. After Jason dropped the car off at the garage, he went to the movies.
5. Parents are responsible for bringing up their children,

B. Use a phrasal verb from the reading to answer each question below.

1. What did Jason do before he went to the theater?

.....

2. Why did Jason's father call the garage?

.....

3.Why did Jason's father feel like a failure?

.....

Language Focus

Past perfect

Form: had + past participle

Meaning: The past perfect is used to show that one thing happened before another in the past.

I drove up to the place where we had planned to meet.

Dad found out that I had gone to the movies.

A. Complete the sentences below with the past perfect form of the verb in parentheses.

1. I knew Dad would be angry if he found out that I .....(go) to the movies . 2. I told my father that it .....(take) a lot longer to fix the car than we.....(expect).

3. My father knew I was lying because he..... already.....(call) the garage to find out if there was a problem.

4. My father felt that he ..... (fail) as a father.

5. I lied to my father when he asked me where I ..... (be).

B. Simple past or past perfect? Underline the correct verb form in parentheses. Compare your answers with a partner's.

1. When I (arrived/had arrived) at our meeting place, I saw my father waiting patiently.

2. Jason picked up the car from the garage after he (saw/had seen) a couple of movies

3. Dad walked down the dusty road and I (followed/had followed) behind him.

4. Dad knew I was lying because he (called/had called) the garage two hours before.

5. My father (believed/had believed) that he had failed as a father.

Cat in the Rain

By

Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (born July 21, 1899, Cicero [now in Oak Park], Illinois, U.S.—died July 2, 1961, Ketchum, Idaho) was an American novelist and short-story writer, awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. He was noted both for the intense masculinity of his writing and for his adventurous and widely publicized life. His succinct and lucid prose style exerted a powerful influence on American and British fiction in the 20th century.

Young Hemingway

The first son of Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, a doctor, and Grace Hall Hemingway, Ernest Miller Hemingway was born in a suburb of Chicago. He was educated in the public schools and began to write in high school, where he was active and outstanding, but the parts of his boyhood that mattered most were summers spent with his family on Walloon Lake in upper Michigan. On graduation from high school in 1917, impatient for a less-sheltered environment, he did not enter college but went to Kansas City, where he was employed as a reporter for the *Star*.

Hemingway was repeatedly rejected for military service because of a defective eye, but he managed to enter World War I as an ambulance driver for the American Red Cross. On July 8, 1918, not yet 19 years old, he was injured on the Austro-Italian

front at Fossalta di Piave. Decorated for heroism and hospitalized in Milan, he fell in love with a Red Cross nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky, who declined to marry him. These were experiences he was never to forget.

After recuperating at home, Hemingway renewed his efforts at writing, for a while worked at odd jobs in Chicago, and sailed for France as a foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Star*. Advised and encouraged by other American writers in Paris—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound—he began to see his nonjournalistic work appear in print there, and in 1925 his first important book, a collection of stories called *In Our Time*, was published in New York City; it was originally released in Paris in 1924.

The making of a writer

In 1926 he published *The Sun Also Rises*, a novel with which he scored his first solid success. A pessimistic but sparkling book, it deals with a group of aimless expatriates in France and Spain—members of the postwar Lost Generation, a phrase that Hemingway scorned while making it famous. This work also introduced him to the limelight, which he both craved and resented for the rest of his life. Hemingway's *The Torrents of Spring*, a parody of the American writer Sherwood Anderson's book *Dark Laughter*, also appeared in 1926.

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Cat in the Rain

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. The motor cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square.

The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.

"I'm going down and get that kitty," the American wife said.

"I'll do it," her husband offered from the bed.

“No, I’ll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table.”

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.

“Don’t get wet,” he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.

“Il piove,” the wife said. She liked the hotel-keeper.

“Si, si, Signora, brutto tempo. It is very bad weather.”

He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.

Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

“You must not get wet,” she smiled, speaking Italian. Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her.

With the maid holding the umbrella over her, she walked along the gravel path until

she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her.

“Ha perduto qualque cosa, Signora?”

“There was a cat,” said the American girl.

“A cat?”

“Si, il gatto.”

“A cat?” the maid laughed. “A cat in the rain?”

“Yes,” she said, “under the table.” Then, “Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty.”

When she talked English the maid’s face tightened.

“Come, Signora,” she said. “We must get back inside. You will be wet.”

“I suppose so,” said the American girl.

They went back along the gravel path and passed in the door. The maid stayed outside to close the umbrella. As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, reading.

“Did you get the cat?” he asked, putting the book down.

“It was gone.”

“Wonder where it went to,” he said, resting his eyes from reading.

She sat down on the bed.

“I wanted it so much,” she said. “I don’t know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn’t any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain.”

George was reading again.

She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing table looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck.

“Don’t you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?” she asked, looking at her profile again.

George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy’s.

“I like it the way it is.”

“I get so tired of it,” she said. “I get so tired of looking like a boy.”

George shifted his position in the bed. He hadn’t looked away from her since she started to speak.

“You look pretty darn nice,” he said.

She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

“I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,” she said. “I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.”

“Yeah?” George said from the bed.

“And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.”

“Oh, shut up and get something to read,” George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

“Anyway, I want a cat,” she said, “I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can’t have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.”

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square.

Someone knocked at the door.

“Avanti,” George said. He looked up from his book.

In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoise-shell cat pressed tight against

her and swung down against her body.

“Excuse me,” she said, “the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora.”

From *In Our Time* (1925).
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A Critical Analysis

Ernest Hemingway’s story “Cat in the Rain” is a short story which depicts the relationship between an American couple which was affected by the consequences of the war period and they continued their existence facing the problem of misunderstanding and loneliness in a marriage. The writer focused his attention on the loneliness of the wife’s heart because of the indifference of her husband, but on the other hand he underlined indirectly that many men came there to see the bronze war monument. So the writer described how that monument looked like, but in fact he might have described the monument with the aim of pointing the reader’s attention to the fact that there was a war and the human continued to live but they did not forget about the tragic event.
“Cat in the Rain” was written in the 20th century and during that period many of the writers based theirs works on the consequence of the war describing the result of that tragic period upon the man’s life and man’s feelings. That’s why in this very story the reader might find out that there was a lack of communication between those two married people. The wife and her husband George were so distanced that they even had no idea what one wanted and what was in their mind. One of them, namely George, was passionately reading his books (“…The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed. “) while his wife was longing for having someone to take care of (“I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her..”).
The author began with depicting the characters of the story: the American couple. Then he described that they stood at a hotel near which was a war monument. The wife was looking through the window and she saw a cat which was in the rain. The wife wanted to take the cat, that’s why she left the room. As she went downstairs, she had met the house-keeper. She liked him. When she went out she understood that the cat wasn’t already there. Thus she returned to the hotel. She had a conversation with George, her husband. But George was not listening. At

the end of the story, the maid of the hotel brought a big cat to the wife from the part of the house-keeper.
The title of the story is a suggestive and a symbolic one. As we know, it is in the nature of the cats to dislike the rain at all. If it begins to rain, they hide where it is a warm place not to get wet. But in this case, the cat is "in the rain". The writer could emphasize the faintness of this cat to overcome the situation, the rain. It is unclear why the writer chose the cat. His choice might be commented that possibly he could compare the cat with the baby for whom the wife may want to devote her time and attention. The "cat" might have been the symbol of the wife's loneliness caused by the fact that her husband was incapable to understand her feelings. In other words, she probably needed more attention and compassion from the part of her husband.
The story has a precise setting and namely in a hotel ("There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel."). The action took place in Italy because the stuff of the hotel (the hotel-keeper, the maid) spoke Italian language. Because the room was situated on the second floor the couple had the opportunity to have a good panorama from their room. There was a public garden near the hotel and the war monument. The garden comprised big palm trees which beatify the garden. It was a rainy day and the square was empty. No one was outside except a waiter who stood in the café which was placed across the square. The writer pointed these settings directly, however he mentioned more than two times the war monument. In this way, the writer drove the attention, in an indirectly way, to the fact that the action took place after the war.
As the story has narrative elements, it is not so difficult to determine its structure. Thus the story opened with an exposition where the author depicts the two main characters of the story, the setting ("There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel.[…] " and then he moved slowly to the conflict of rising action ("The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on."). As the story developed, the author revealed the conflict ("I'm going down and get that kitty,' the American wife said. 'I'll do it,' her husband offered from the bed. 'No, I'll get it"). When the climax was announced ("And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes."), the reader could understand that the wife wanted a change and she was longing for the life that was before the war. She announced her wish to have a cat ("If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat."). That was the moment when came the dénouement (the outcome of the conflict). The narrator

went on saying that George was not listening and he was still reading his book when the maid brought “a big tortoiseshell cat” which the house-keeper sent to the wife. The author put an emphasis on the “tortoiseshell cat” which could represent the wife’s hope that there would come a change in their life.
Actually there are two main characters in the story (the American couple), and two minor characters (the house-keeper and the maid). Throughout the story it is evident that the cat was also present directly or indirectly in all the scenes, for example at the beginning of the story the wife saw the cat outside; then the woman talked at first with her husband about the cat, then with the house-keeper and finally the maid brought a cat. As a consequence we can consider the cat as a minor character of the story.
The story is based on depicting the relationship of the American couple. It is very interesting that the wife had no name, but the author gave to her husband a name: George. This means that the husband was superior in that family. At the beginning of the story he was rather polite and he held a dialogue with his wife (“I’m going down and get that kitty,’ the American wife said. ‘I’ll do it,’ her husband offered from the bed.”). Later on, he disguised himself and became more indifferent and rude toward his wife (“Oh, shut up and get something to read,”). While her husband was nonchalant, the wife had a lot of wishes for their future and she wanted some changes in order to have their own home with all the necessary things (“I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. […]”).
As the wife liked the house-keeper’s seriousness, politeness and dignity (The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints […]”) it becomes evident that she needed someone to talked to. The house-keeper was gentle and because of that he sent her a cat at the end of the story.
To conclude, Hemingway’s story “Cat in the Rain” deals with the most important problem of the humans that of the relationship in a couple. In fact, it is a story which highlights that there could not be a good relationship where the loneliness, the misunderstanding, selfishness and solitude exist. This story is suggestive even nowadays and it can serve as an example of how people shouldn’t behave with the person’s they love.
The cringing kitty under the table in the rain is the ultimate image of isolation in "Cat in the Rain." Not only is it alone; it's also trapped. Like the cat, the American wife and her husband are both isolated from each other, which is made all the more palpable since they're living in such close quarters. Their isolation from everyone else as the only Americans in the hotel also reinforces the strangeness

and discomfort of their feelings towards each other. The isolation between them is something you read in their lack of real communication, in the way they barely seem to hear or respond to one another. This gap between them is indeed wider and more difficult and hostile than any language barrier. This was definitely not a match made in heaven. The wife's restlessness is a mounting force in this story. She's unable to say what exactly is making her dissatisfied in her life; instead, she harps on a multitude of small things. Her dissatisfaction with the life she leads with her husband is particularly problematic because, like the cat trapped under the table in the rain, there's not really any way to escape—or so we think.
The wife in this story is almost constantly in motion, but her husband is the complete opposite of this. He's perfectly content with his reading. He even suggests that his wife does the same after throwing a cranky "shut up" in her direction.
George is the most inactive figure in the story. His eyes look up from the book now and then, he "shifts" at one point, but the guy never actually leaves the bed. George's sense of stability and satisfaction is in the life of books, you might say, rather than in his own life—the one that he shares with his wife, and it's clear in this story that she's starting to feel and voice dissatisfaction.
In a way, George's character represents everything the wife wants to escape. Her wish list is full of material goods, which can be seen as at odds with her husband's fondness of intellectual fulfillment. George might sense her dissatisfaction with him, which would explain the slightly touchy "shut-up." Then again, he's just trying to read his darn book

https://un.uobasrah.edu.iq/lectures/6726.pdf

Cat in the Rain Themes

Longing and Disappointment

In Ernest Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain," a woman's yearning to bring a cat indoors becomes an embodiment of all her longing and desire. On a rainy day in Italy, the unnamed protagonist of the story, an American wife, spots a cat from the

window of the hotel room she shares with her husband, George. Her sudden impulse to save the cat from the rain, however, is frustrated when she descends to the street only to discover that the cat has disappeared. Through this simple incident, the story delves into the discontent and disillusion that often haunt people's ordinary lives. The world is indifferent to people's whims, the story suggests, and thus even as longing and desire are fundamental human impulses, they inevitably end in frustration and disappointment.

At first, the woman's desire seems simple and easy enough to fulfill. Upon seeing a cat taking shelter from the rain beneath a café table, the woman informs her husband that she will go downstairs to bring it indoors from the bad weather. In noting to her husband how "the poor kitty" is "out trying to keep dry under a table," the protagonist seems to recognize the cat's own frustrated desire to find shelter. It is significant that the cat's predicament triggers the wife's empathy, as this suggests that there is something about the animal's plight with which she identifies.

When she goes out in the rain only to find that the cat has disappeared, however, the woman is "disappointed." Instead of being glad that the cat has perhaps found a better shelter elsewhere, she is frustrated, telling the hotel maid who has followed her out with an umbrella that "she wanted [the cat] so much." This moment reveals that, despite her feeling of kinship, the animal—perhaps representative of the larger world itself—is indifferent to her desire. In expecting to find the cat easily, the woman is left longing for something she can't have.

The woman's desire for the cat is, of course, about much more than the cat. Indeed, her disappointment over the disappeared animal awakens a whole host of other

frustrated longings. After returning upstairs to the hotel room where her husband continues to read the paper, she examines herself in the mirror, and tells him that she wants to grow out her short hair. Her desire to transform her appearance is implicitly linked to a latent desire to transform her life; she not only wants a cat, she wants to change the way she looks, and she also adds that she wants her own silver. She even wishes it were spring—something decidedly out of her control. On the surface, the desires that the woman expresses are mundane, but they point to a deeper striving for radical and transformative change, which seems to be beyond reach.

At the end of the story, the woman does indeed get a cat. The attentive hotel-keeper, who had found out about her search earlier, sends up the hotel maid with a cat to give to her. This ending, however, is ambiguous. On the one hand, the woman's longing for a cat seems to be on the brink of fulfillment: standing in front of her is the maid with an animal in her hands. On the other hand, it is not clear whether the cat that the maid presents is the same one that the woman had sought earlier. The reader is never given a description of the cat that the woman sees from the hotel window, while the cat that is brought up by the maid at the end of the story is described as a "big tortoise-shell cat."

At the end of the story, the narrator doesn't describe the woman as recognizing the cat—in fact, the story ends before the reader is given the woman's reaction to the animal at all. Thus, there is the strong possibility that the hotel owner has simply found another cat to give to the woman. In this way, the story leaves the reader in the dark about whether the woman's desire is in fact fulfilled or not. The woman gets a cat, but is it the cat she wants? By leaving open the possibility that it is not,

the story reinforces the idea that, even in their fulfillment, people's wishes may be frustrated. Whether the woman chooses to settle for this replacement animal—in a way, to accept her reality—remains left unsaid. The story also leaves open-ended the question of whether it is wiser to anticipate disillusionment, or to forever seek a (perhaps foolish) sense of personal fulfillment in an indifferent world. Either way, the woman's frustrated desire for the cat in this story reflects the longing that all people experience at one point or another—a longing for more, and for better.

Loneliness and Isolation

Set on a rainy day in Italy, "Cat in the Rain" has an atmosphere of isolation and loneliness. The unnamed American wife is unable to find the companionship and emotional closeness she seeks from those around her—including from her husband George, despite that they are living in the same hotel room. To assuage her feelings of loneliness, she becomes fixated on getting a cat. Hemingway's brief tale implicitly argues for the importance of connection through its exploration of the pain and desperation of isolation—which, it further suggests, can develop regardless of one's physical proximity to another person.

The setting of the story itself mirrors the isolation of its characters. The wife and her husband are stuck inside their hotel room because of the rain. The room faces out onto the sea and a public garden, yet even looking out the window offers no comforting glimpse of other people; there are no artists out painting in the garden, as there would be in better weather, and the square on which the room faces is empty—no cars can be seen anywhere. The image of water standing "in pools on the gravel path" further imbues the landscape with a sense of stillness and desertion.

Even if there were others around, however, the story suggests that the husband and wife would remain isolated. They are notably the only two Americans staying at the hotel and do not know any of the other guests. This implicitly suggests their sense of alienation from those around them in this foreign country—they are strangers in a strange land. What's more, as the husband contentedly retreats into a book, he leaves his wife alone to look out the window upon this wet, abandoned world, thereby deepening her feelings of solitude.

Indeed, the couple is not only isolated from those around them, but also from each other. The first image of the wife presented to the reader depicts her facing away from her spouse, who reclines on the bed reading. As she looks out the window, her physical position in relation to her husband echoes the emotional distance between them. The wife's alienation from her husband is again emphasized when she returns to their room after failing to find the cat. Again, the wife does not look at George, but instead goes to the mirror to look at herself before proceeding to look out the window—effectively choosing to turn away from her lonely life and toward the world beyond, which perhaps offers the possibility of connection.

George is not sympathetic to her subsequent string of complaints and desires about wanting the cat, wanting new silver, and wanting it to be spring. He responds by saying, "Oh, shut up and get something to read." This response affirms that George is unable to understand or connect to his wife's emotional needs. It is no wonder that she feels estranged from him and never bothers to look at him directly. Nevertheless, the wife still clearly longs for connection with someone—a desire that manifests in the narrator's statements about the hotel-keeper whom she meets when she descends to find the wet cat. The narrator states that the "wife liked him," and

"[s]he liked the way he wanted to serve her." The narrator never communicates any such feelings of fondness on the part of the wife for her husband.

Yet her relationship to the hotel-keeper is also ultimately characterized by distance. When the wife goes downstairs, for example, he stands "behind his desk in the far end of the dim room." He is physically separated from her—just as her husband had been upstairs. This distance between the woman and the hotel-keeper alludes to the fact that, regardless of her fondness for him, their relationship remains formal and remote; she can only interact with him in his professional capacity as the hotel-keeper.

These markedly cold relationships establish the wife's desperate loneliness; she has no means by which to feel valued, needed, and close to another living creature. The woman, in turn, projects her own feelings onto the cat that she seeks to save from the rain. Looking out of the hotel window at the beginning of the story, the woman sees the cat alone, crouching under a dripping café table. That the cat's trouble provokes her immediate sympathy suggests that she identifies with the animal's isolation.

Significantly, the woman's disappointment at not finding the cat when she goes to rescue it further highlights her need for some sort of intimate emotional contact and connection. She tells George that she "wanted [the cat] so much." That she sought to overcome her own loneliness through her contact with the cat is implied in her statement to George that "I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her." This image of close, warm, physical touch again underscores the

woman's immense sense of isolation—a feeling she had hoped her contact with the animal would alleviate.

Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" thus repeatedly highlights alienation as central to the American wife's experience. In portraying her distance from her husband, the story further underscores the ways in which people can feel emotionally disconnected even from those with whom they are supposedly most intimate. Nevertheless, the need for close emotional contact and connection remains irrepressible. People will look for such connection anywhere—even if that means turning to a helpless cat caught in the rain.

Gender Roles and Femininity

Published in 1925, a time of liberation and new-found freedoms for many women, "Cat in the Rain" projects a clear ambivalence regarding certain changes in women's position in society. The female protagonist herself—a short-haired, ostensibly childless wife living out of a hotel room—seems to bristle at being distanced from more stereotypical femininity, as is evidenced by her ultimate longing to embrace a more traditional woman's role (that is, to be a caretaker, a homemaker, to be beautiful). Yet the fact that she also seems to be dismissed or infantilized by the men around her (and even by the author himself) implicitly suggests the reductive nature of restrictive notions of both masculinity and femininity. The story's ultimate ambiguity regarding gender roles can be read both as a general reaction to era's promises of "progressiveness" that dictated new (but ultimately equally restrictive) rules for women's behavior, and as a likely

consequence of Hemingway's own positioning as a "macho" author writing at a time of radical transformation in the relations between the sexes.

George's attitude towards his wife is marked by condescension, which seems to stem from a stereotypical understanding of gender. When the wife first informs her husband that she will go outside to rescue the cat from the rain, George tells her, "I'll do it." In offering to take on this very simple task, one which his wife is easily capable of doing herself, the husband seems to position her as weak and dependent, and he himself as able and powerful by contrast. In this way, he reinforces a traditional gender hierarchy.

Furthermore, when the wife returns upstairs after having failed to locate the cat and begins examining herself in the mirror and wondering whether she should grow her hair out, George seems concerned that she keep her appearance according to his liking. Considering her short hair, he says, "I like it the way it is," and affirms again, "You look pretty darn nice." While perhaps a half-hearted attempt to assuage his wife's anxieties about her looks, these comments implicitly reveal George to be more fixated on his own appreciation of his wife's appearance, rather than on hers; his comments—however complimentary—suggest that his wife's appearance exists primarily for his consumption.

George's condescension towards his wife is further reflected in his irritation over the list of desires she communicates to him. Rather than affirming her desires—for a cat, for long hair, for silver, and for spring—he tells her, "Oh, shut up and get something to read," before turning back to his newspaper—effectively ending the discussion with a complete dismissal of his wife's attempt to communicate her

needs. While it's arguable that the wife's desires are in many ways mundane and petty, George's refusal and/or inability to respond to them—particularly to her need for genuine connection, expressed through her longing for the cat—alludes to a certain masculine insensitivity and callousness.

While the hotel-keeper behaves more kindly towards the wife than her husband does, his attitude, too, is ultimately marked by a distinct sense of condescension. The wife seems to like the hotel-keeper more than her husband. When she sees him downstairs, the narrator notes how she "liked" him and "liked the way he wanted to serve her." In responding to the way that he "wanted to serve her," the woman seems to be adopting a more traditionally feminine posture in relation to the hotel-keeper than towards her husband, whose offers of service she had refused.

And indeed, the hotel-keeper does serve the woman. At the end of the story, he sends up the hotel maid with a cat (one, however, that is likely not the same one that the woman had sought earlier). It remains unclear if the hotel-keeper's action is a reflection of his genuine respect for her wishes, or simply a sloppy attempt to "serve" an eccentric female guest. The fact that the cat the hotel-keeper offers may very well not be the same cat that the woman had wanted suggests that the hotel-keeper, like the husband, treats the woman in a condescending way—he thinks that any cat will do, and thus, in a way, fails to understand that her hankering for a cat has really been an expression of her longing for emotional intimacy. In fact, he arguably treats her like a child, seeking to distract her from the loss of one "toy" by offering another instead. This action suggests that he, like George, infantilizes her and her wishes.

The wife's own attitude towards gender is complex, in that she seems to revolt against the feminine passivity ascribed to her by her husband, yet also seems to embrace a more traditionally feminine identity. By insisting on going down to get the cat herself, for instance, she acts against her husband's presumption of her weakness and incapacity. In this way, she steps out of the role of passivity ascribed to her by George.

However, the longings that the wife expresses after failing to find the cat also suggest her desire for the stereotypically "feminine." She wants to grow her hair out because she is tired of "looking like a boy." She wants silver, presumably to entertain with, thus affirming her traditionally feminine identity a homemaker. She wants to nurture the cat—again expressing an impulse for caretaking often associated with femininity.

The wife's contradictory actions and expressions suggest an ambivalence at the heart of her identity. Again, given that this story was published in 1925, this can be read as a response to specific changes in women's position in society. The wife acts independently of her husband and wears a short hairstyle that, at the time, was reflective of the more progressive, rebellious identity that women were adopting. As such, her desire for things that are more traditionally "feminine" may suggest that she is not yet entirely comfortable with these changes, or that she ultimately finds them to be unfulfilling demands on her behavior.

The fact that the wife remains unnamed further complicates the story's ambiguous gender dynamics. While the narrative begins by referring to the two Americans as "husband" and "wife," this changes over the course of the story. The husband is

given a name—George—while the wife never is. This is especially striking given that she is the tale's protagonist. Her lack of naming can be taken to allude to her anonymity and invisibility as a woman; indeed, George ignore her desires and needs.

Furthermore, the tag that the narrator uses to identify the woman also changes over the course of the story. While the narrator refers to her as "wife" to begin with, as she grows increasingly insecure and unhappy after failing to find the cat the narrator begins to refer to her as "girl." Both labels identify the woman condescendingly: either in relation to her husband or in terms of her emotional immaturity. This, in turn, raises questions about the narrative voice telling the story: the voice seems to reflect (ironically or not) a masculine bias whose attitude towards the woman is characterized either by feminine dependency or feminine emotional immaturity.

Ultimately, the treatment of gender in Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" is anything but simple. Ambiguity and ambivalence are reflected even in the wife's attitude towards her own femininity. The men that surround her take on stereotypically masculine postures in relation to her, either by dismissing her desires, or by infantilizing her even in their attempts to appease her. "Cat in the Rain's" complicated depiction of gender is, of course, a reflection of the time in which the story is set—when gender roles were being fiercely contested both by women and men, and when attitudes towards gender were very much in flux. Furthermore, Hemingway's well-known tendency to idealize masculinity may well be a reason why the story, while striving to engage meaningfully with the predicament of its female protagonist, raises more questions than it answers.

https://www.litcharts.com/lit/cat-in-the-rain/themes/gender-roles-and-femininity

The Ambitious Guest.

by

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne (born **Nathaniel Hathorne**; July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American novelist and short story writer. His works often focus on history, morality, and religion.

He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, from a family long associated with that town. Hawthorne entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824,[1] and graduated in 1825. He published his first work in 1828, the novel *Fanshawe*; he later tried to suppress it, feeling that it was not equal to the standard of his later work.[2] He published several short stories in periodicals, which he collected in 1837 as *Twice-Told Tales*. The following year, he became engaged to Sophia Peabody. He worked at the Boston Custom House and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community, before marrying Peabody in 1842. The couple moved to The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, later moving to Salem, the Berkshires, then to The Wayside in Concord. *The Scarlet Letter* was published in 1850, followed by a succession of other novels. A political appointment as consul took Hawthorne and family to Europe before their return to Concord in 1860. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864.

Much of Hawthorne's writing centers on New England, and many works feature moral metaphors with an anti-Puritan inspiration. His fiction works are considered part of the Romantic movement and, more specifically, dark romanticism. His themes often center on the inherent evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. His published works include novels, short stories, and a biography of his college friend Franklin Pierce, written for his 1852 campaign for President of the United States, which Pierce won, becoming the 14th president.

Nathaniel Hathorne, as his name was originally spelled, was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts; his birthplace is preserved and open to the public.[3] His great-great-great-grandfather, William Hathorne, was a Puritan and the first of the family to emigrate from England. He settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, before moving to Salem. There he became an important member of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and held many political positions, including magistrate and judge, becoming infamous for his harsh sentencing.[4] William's son, Hawthorne's great-great-grandfather John Hathorne was one of the judges who oversaw the Salem witch trials. Hawthorne probably added the "w" to his surname in his early twenties, shortly after graduating from college, in an effort to dissociate himself from his notorious forebears.[5] Hawthorne's father Nathaniel Hathorne Sr. was a sea captain who died in 1808 of yellow fever in Dutch Suriname;[6] he had been a member of the East India Marine Society.[7] After his death, his widow moved with young Nathaniel, his older sister Elizabeth, and their younger sister Louisa to live with relatives named the Mannings in Salem,[8] where they lived for 10 years. Young Hawthorne was hit on the leg while playing "bat and ball" on November 10, 1813,[9]

and he became lame and bedridden for a year, though several physicians could find nothing wrong with him.

In the summer of 1816, the family lived as boarders with farmers[12] before moving to a home recently built specifically for them by Hawthorne's uncles Richard and Robert Manning in Raymond, Maine, near Sebago Lake.[13] Years later, Hawthorne looked back at his time in Maine fondly: "Those were delightful days, for that part of the country was wild then, with only scattered clearings, and nine tenths of it primeval woods."[14] In 1819, he was sent back to Salem for school and soon complained of homesickness and being too far from his mother and sisters.[15] He distributed seven issues of *The Spectator* to his family in August and September 1820 for fun. The homemade newspaper was written by hand and included essays, poems, and news featuring the young author's adolescent humor.[16]

Hawthorne's uncle Robert Manning insisted that the boy attend college, despite Hawthorne's protests.[17] With the financial support of his uncle, Hawthorne was sent to Bowdoin College in 1821, partly because of family connections in the area, and also because of its relatively inexpensive tuition rate.[18] Hawthorne met future president Franklin Pierce on the way to Bowdoin, at the stage stop in Portland, and the two became fast friends.[17] Once at the school, he also met future poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, future congressman Jonathan Cilley, and future naval reformer Horatio Bridge.[19] He graduated with the class of 1825, and later described his college experience to Richard Henry Stoddard:

I was educated (as the phrase is) at Bowdoin College. I was an idle student, negligent of college rules and the Procrustean details of academic life, rather

choosing to nurse my own fancies than to dig into Greek roots and be numbered among the learned Thebans.[20

Hawthorne had a particularly close relationship with his publishers William Ticknor and James T. Fields.[92] Hawthorne once told Fields, "I care more for your good opinion than for that of a host of critics."[93] In fact, it was Fields who convinced Hawthorne to turn *The Scarlet Letter* into a novel rather than a short story.[94] Ticknor handled many of Hawthorne's personal matters, including the purchase of cigars, overseeing financial accounts, and even purchasing clothes.[95] Ticknor died with Hawthorne at his side in Philadelphia in 1864; according to a friend, Hawthorne was left "apparently dazed"

Literary style and themes

Further information: Romance (literary fiction)

Hawthorne's works belong to romanticism or, more specifically, dark romanticism,[97] cautionary tales that suggest that guilt, sin, and evil are the most inherent natural qualities of humanity.[98] Many of his works are inspired by Puritan New England,[99] combining historical romance loaded with symbolism and deep psychological themes, bordering on surrealism.[100] His depictions of the past are a version of historical fiction used only as a vehicle to express common themes of ancestral sin, guilt and retribution.[101] His later writings also reflect his negative view of the Transcendentalism movement.[102]

Hawthorne was predominantly a short story writer in his early career. Upon publishing *Twice-Told Tales*, however, he noted, "I do not think much of them," and

he expected little response from the public.[103] His four major romances were written between 1850 and 1860: *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). Another novel-length romance, *Fanshawe*, was published anonymously in 1828. Hawthorne defined a romance as being radically different from a novel by not being concerned with the possible or probable course of ordinary experience.[104] In the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne describes his romance-writing as using "atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture".[105] The picture, Daniel Hoffman found, was one of "the primitive energies of fecundity and creation."[106]

Critics have applied feminist perspectives and historicist approaches to Hawthorne's depictions of women. Feminist scholars are interested particularly in Hester Prynne: they recognize that while she herself could not be the "destined prophetess" of the future, the "angel and apostle of the coming revelation" must nevertheless "be a woman."[107] Camille Paglia saw Hester as mystical, "a wandering goddess still bearing the mark of her Asiatic origins ... moving serenely in the magic circle of her sexual nature".[108] Lauren Berlant termed Hester "the citizen as woman [personifying] love as a quality of the body that contains the purest light of nature," her resulting "traitorous political theory" a "Female Symbolic" literalization of futile Puritan metaphors.[109] Historicists view Hester as a protofeminist and avatar of the self-reliance and responsibility that led to women's suffrage and sometime-reproductive emancipation. Anthony Splendora found her literary genealogy among other archetypally fallen but redeemed women, both historic and mythic. As examples, he offers Psyche of ancient legend; Heloise of twelfth-century France's

tragedy involving world-renowned philosopher Peter Abelard; Anne Hutchinson (America's first heretic, circa 1636), and Hawthorne family friend Margaret Fuller.[110] In Hester's first appearance, Hawthorne likens her, "infant at her bosom", to Mary, Mother of Jesus, "the image of Divine Maternity". In her study of Victorian literature, in which such "galvanic outcasts" as Hester feature prominently, Nina Auerbach went so far as to name Hester's fall and subsequent redemption, "the novel's one unequivocally religious activity".[111] Regarding Hester as a deity figure, Meredith A. Powers found in Hester's characterization "the earliest in American fiction that the archetypal Goddess appears quite graphically," like a Goddess "not the wife of traditional marriage, permanently subject to a male overlord"; Powers noted "her syncretism, her flexibility, her inherent ability to alter and so avoid the defeat of secondary status in a goal-oriented civilization

Aside from Hester Prynne, the model women of Hawthorne's other novels—from Ellen Langton of *Fanshawe* to Zenobia and Priscilla of *The Blithedale Romance*, Hilda and Miriam of *The Marble Faun* and Phoebe and Hepzibah of *The House of the Seven Gables*—are more fully realized than his male characters, who merely orbit them.[113] This observation is equally true of his short-stories, in which central females serve as allegorical figures: Rappaccini's beautiful but life-altering, garden-bound, daughter; almost-perfect Georgiana of "The Birth-Mark"; the sinned-against (abandoned) Ester of "Ethan Brand"; and goodwife Faith Brown, linchpin of Young Goodman Brown's very belief in God. "My Faith is gone!" Brown exclaims in despair upon seeing his wife at the Witches' Sabbath.[*citation needed*] Perhaps the most sweeping statement of Hawthorne's impetus comes from Mark Van Doren: "Somewhere, if not in the New England of his time, Hawthorne unearthed the

image of a goddess supreme in beauty and power."[114]

Hawthorne also wrote nonfiction. In 2008, the Library of America selected Hawthorne's "A show of wax-figures" for inclusion in its two-century retrospective of American True Crime.[115

The Ambitious Guest.

One December night, a long, long time ago, a family sat around the **fireplace** in their home. A golden light from the fire filled the room. The mother and father laughed at something their oldest daughter had just said. The girl was seventeen, much older than her little brother and sister, who were only five and six years old.

A very old woman, the family's grandmother, sat **knitting** in the warmest corner of the room. And a baby, the youngest child, smiled at the fire's light from its tiny bed. This family had found happiness in the worst place in all of New England. They had built their home high up in the White Mountains, where the wind blows violently all year long.

The family lived in an especially cold and dangerous spot. Stones from the top of the mountain above their house would often roll down the mountainside and wake them in the middle of the night. No other family lived near them on the mountain. But this family was never lonely. They enjoyed each other's company, and often had visitors. Their house was built near an important road that connected the White

Mountains to the Saint Lawrence River.

People traveling through the mountains in wagons always stopped at the family's door for a drink of water and a friendly word. Lonely travelers, crossing the mountains on foot, would step into the house to share a hot meal. Sometimes, the wind became so wild and cold that these strangers would spend the night with the family. The family offered every traveler who stopped at their home a kindness that money could not buy.

On that December evening, the wind came rushing down the mountain. It seemed to stop at their house to knock at the door before it **roared** down into the valley. The family fell silent for a moment. But then they realized that someone really was knocking at their door. The oldest girl opened the door and found a young man standing in the dark.

The old grandmother put a chair near the fireplace for him. The oldest daughter gave him a warm, **shy** smile. And the baby held up its little arms to him. "This fire is just what I needed," the young man said. "The wind has been blowing in my face for the last two hours."

The father took the young man's travel bag. "Are you going to Vermont?" the older man asked. "Yes, to Burlington," the traveler replied. "I wanted to reach the valley tonight. But when I saw the light in your window, I decided to stop. I would like to sit and enjoy your fire and your company for a while."

As the young man took his place by the fire, something like heavy footsteps was heard outside. It sounded as if someone was running down the side of the mountain,

taking enormous steps. The father looked out one of the windows.

"That old mountain has thrown another stone at us again. He must have been afraid we would forget him. He sometimes shakes his head and makes us think he will come down on top of us," the father explained to the young man. "But we are old neighbors," he smiled. "And we manage to get along together pretty well. Besides, I have made a safe hiding place outside to protect us in case a slide brings the mountain down on our heads."

As the father spoke, the mother prepared a hot meal for their guest. While he ate, he talked freely to the family, as if it were his own. This young man did not trust people easily. Yet on this evening, something made him share his deepest secret with these simple mountain people.

The young man's secret was that he was **ambitious**. He did not know what he wanted to do with his life, yet. But he did know that he did not want to be forgotten after he had died. He believed that sometime during his life, he would become famous and be **admired** by thousands of people. "So far," the young man said, "I have done nothing. If I disappeared tomorrow from the face of the earth, no one would know anything about me. No one would ask 'Who was he. Where did he go?' But I cannot die until I have reached my destiny. Then let death come! I will have built my **monument**!"

The young man's powerful emotions touched the family. They smiled. "You laugh at me," the young man said, taking the oldest daughter's hand. "You think my ambition is silly." She was very shy, and her face became pink with embarrassment.

"It is better to sit here by the fire," she whispered, "and be happy, even if nobody thinks of us."

Her father stared into the fire. "I think there is something natural in what the young man says. And his words have made me think about our own lives here. "It would have been nice if we had had a little farm down in the valley. Some place where we could see our mountains without being afraid they would fall on our heads. I would have been respected by all our neighbors. And, when I had grown old, I would die happy in my bed. You would put a stone over my grave so everyone would know I lived an honest life."

"You see!" the young man cried out. "It is in our nature to want a monument. Some want only a stone on their grave. Others want to be a part of everyone's memory. But we all want to be remembered after we die!" The young man threw some more wood on the fire to chase away the darkness.

The firelight fell on the little group around the fireplace: the father's strong arms and the mother's gentle smile. It touched the young man's proud face, and the daughter's shy one. It warmed the old grandmother, still knitting in the corner. She looked up from her knitting and, with her fingers still moving the needles, she said, "Old people have their secrets, just as young people do."

The old woman said she had made her funeral clothes some years earlier. They were the finest clothes she had made since her wedding dress. She said her secret was a fear that she would not be buried in her best clothes. The young man stared into the fire. "Old and young," he said. "We dream of graves and monuments. I

wonder how sailors feel when their ship is sinking, and they know they will be buried in the wide and nameless grave that is the ocean?"

A sound, rising like the roar of the ocean, shook the house. Young and old exchanged one wild look. Then the same words burst from all their lips. "The slide! The slide!" They rushed away from the house, into the darkness, to the secret spot the father had built to protect them from the mountain slide. The whole side of the mountain came rushing toward the house like a waterfall of destruction.

But just before it reached the little house, the wave of earth divided in two and went around the family's home. Everyone and everything in the path of the terrible slide was destroyed, except the little house. The next morning, smoke was seen coming from the chimney of the house on the mountain. Inside, the fire was still burning. The chairs were still drawn up in a half circle around the fireplace. It looked as if the family had just gone out for a walk.

Some people thought that a stranger had been with the family on that terrible night. But no one ever discovered who the stranger was. His name and way of life remain a mystery. His body was never found.

Words in This Story

fireplace - *n. a specially built place in a room where a fire can be built*

knit - *v. to make a piece of clothing from yarn or thread by using long needles or a special machine*

roar - *v. to make a long, loud sound*

shy - *adj. showing that you are nervous and uncomfortable about meeting and talking to people*

ambitious - *adj. having ambition; having a desire to be successful, powerful or famous*

admire - *v. to feel respect or approval for someone or something*

monument - *n. a building, statue, etc., that honors a person or event*

https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/ambitious-guest-nathaniel-hawthorne-american-stories/2807887.html

Analysis of The Ambitious Guest

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1804. He is a short story writer who wrote mainly on topics like religion and morality. His stories are characterized by gloom, as he is a writer of the Dark Romantic era, and focuses on stories surrounding guilt, or sin. His writing style involves using symbolism and metaphors to get his point across to the reader.

His most well-known works are 'The Scarlet Letter' and 'The House of the Seven Gables'. Hawthorne is honored in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans as an author and editor. He died in 1864, in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

The Ambitious Guest, a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is a commentary on the futility of ambition. This story portrays a man with a great yearning to be famous, who dies without making his mark on the world at all. The author shows us that while ambition might motivate man, it is fate that decides the direction of a

person's existence. This short story is inspired by a real event that took place at the Wiley House, New Hampshire in 1826.

This story portrays the author's view of ambition. He sees ambition as futile, as fate plays a more important role than human choice and effort. The convictions of the guest were all for naught as he died an unknown person, so much so that none of the living even knew whether he was there at all. The humility of the family is juxtaposed with the ambition and certainty of the traveler, though they both meet the same fate.

The story begins with a feeling of ease, comfort, and tranquility. A loving family sitting together, happy in their cottage, warm and cozy even though the wind was sharp, and the winter was brisk. They lived in a dangerous spot, yet they felt safe and happy.

A 'Notch' is a mountain pass, and in this case, it is the Crawford Notch in New Hampshire. This route is well-traveled for trade and is referred to as an 'artery' by the author. In the same way that an artery carries blood in the human body, and hence supports life, the Crawford pass is a route that supports the livelihood of the people and the economy. The family's tavern may be inhabited by a lorry driver (teamster), a lone traveler, or anyone in between.

That evening, they stood as if to welcome someone whose fate was linked with theirs. This is our first clue from the author that something important will take place involving them all. The man is the titular character, the ambitious guest. Soon, a big rock fell off the mountain, and here the scene is set of the family who is used to the

falling rocks and is ready with substitute shelter.

Now, the stranger does not remain strange at all. He allows himself to speak with honesty and with conviction. He speaks of his ambition to not be forgotten, though his life may be under the radar, it should not remain so after his death. He expressed that he wanted to leave a bright path for the future to look back upon and give him the recognition deserved to him.

The family in the cottage practice humility, and they are content in the life they live. But once this impassioned guest fell into their company, they began bringing forth their own ambitions. The father's desire for a gravestone led the guest to exclaim that wanting a monument to oneself is intrinsically human. This shows us that the guest saw the family as kindred spirits and believed them to be of the same mind as him. This was further affirmed by the natural flow of conversation and the emotions that he was willing to express to them.

The story has many little glimpses into a future that the characters desire. The father wants a farm, the guest wants fame, the young girl wants love. The glimpses into the future bring about a feeling of anticipation, a plan, a desire for something more than just living in a cottage for years on end. This anticipation is swiftly broken by the sudden deluge of rocks. The people rush out of the house to save themselves, but in actuality, they rush out to their deaths.

The mountain kept its agreement with the family, their house remained intact. The family, no longer content with their life in the Notch, rushed out to have a chance at a future but were buried in rubble instead. The Slide did not touch their house and

destroyed everything around it instead. And finally, their guest, with his lofty dreams and ideXals, met the same fate as the humble family that took him in.

This family had run the tavern for a long time, and there were people far and wide who knew them and mourned them. Their lives and demise became well known across the mountains, and poems have been written of their sorry fate. As for the guest, his existence in that room is doubted, and his assumption came true. He did die that night and, save for the family, nobody else knew he was there, and nobody felt the loss of his presence. The ambitious received nothing, and the untroubled family was given the recognition he desired.

Ambition bears no fruit, the author seems to tell us. No earthly immortality can be guaranteed from our desires nor our actions. Fate holds the threads of our lives and our deaths, and our ambition is meaningless in the face of fate

https://litbug.com/the-ambitious-guest-summary-and-analysis/

Araby

by

James Joyce

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (Irish: *Séamus Seoighe*) (2 February 1882 – 13 January 1941) was an Irish writer and poet of the modernist movement. He was from Dublin, Ireland. He wore an eyepatch, because of eye damage. He could not see well.

His books are written in a special style. At first he wrote in a way which describes very accurately how life is, in the short story collection called *Dubliners*. In his next book, called *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he started a new style. It is called stream of consciousness, which is writing all the thoughts that a character has. His work influenced many other writers in the 20th century.

Some books that Joyce wrote are:

- *Dubliners* (1914)
- *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)
- *Ulysses* (1922)
- *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

Early life

James Joyce was the oldest of ten children.[1] He went to a boarding school called Conglowes Wood College and later to Belvedere College.[2] (College here refers to

secondary school not to university as it can in the U.S.) Conglowes was run by Jesuit priests.

When he was very young, his family was rich. Later his father lost most of their money so he had to change schools and go to Belvedere College, which was cheaper.[3]

Family life

Joyce met Nora Barnacle in 1904 and they began to have a long relationship until his death in 1941. The couple moved out of Dublin to Zürich in 1904, then to Trieste, Paris then back to Zürich. They married in 1931. They had a son and a daughter. Their daughter had a mental illness later in her life. Because he was smart, his parents wanted him to go to college. He studied modern languages at University College Dublin.[1]

Joyce became a very famous writer after he published *Ulysses*. He also began to have a lot of problems with his eyes and his family. But he completed his last book, *Finnegans Wake* by 1939. He died in Zurich.

Araby

by

James Joyce

NORTH RICHMOND STREET being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour

when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot*, by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communnicant* and *The Memoirs of Vidocq*. I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen

turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not

understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "O love! O love!" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to Araby. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from

the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and. when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the halldoor. I heard him talking to

himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know The Arab's Farewell to his Steed. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous house and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical

name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words Cafe Chantant were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea- sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"0, there's a ... fib!"

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything.

The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

Summary

The narrator, an unnamed boy, describes the North Dublin street on which his house is located. He thinks about the priest who died in the house before his family moved in and the games that he and his friends played in the street. He recalls how they would run through the back lanes of the houses and hide in the shadows when they reached the street again, hoping to avoid people in the neighborhood, particularly the boy's uncle or the sister of his friend Mangan. The sister often comes to the front of their house to call the brother, a moment that the narrator savors.

Every day begins for this narrator with such glimpses of Mangan's sister. He places himself in the front room of his house so he can see her leave her house, and then he rushes out to walk behind her quietly until finally passing her. The narrator and Mangan's sister talk little, but she is always in his thoughts. He thinks about her when he accompanies his aunt to do food shopping on Saturday evening in the busy marketplace and when he sits in the back room of his house alone. The narrator's infatuation is so intense that he fears he will never gather the courage to speak with the girl and express his feelings.

One morning, Mangan's sister asks the narrator if he plans to go to Araby, a Dublin bazaar. She notes that she cannot attend, as she has already committed to attend a retreat with her school. Having recovered from the shock of the conversation, the narrator offers to bring her something from the bazaar. This brief meeting launches the narrator into a period of eager, restless waiting and fidgety tension in anticipation of the bazaar. He cannot focus in school. He finds the lessons tedious, and they distract him from thinking about Mangan's sister.

On the morning of the bazaar the narrator reminds his uncle that he plans to attend the event so that the uncle will return home early and provide train fare. Yet dinner passes and a guest visits, but the uncle does not return. The narrator impatiently endures the time passing, until at 9 p.m. the uncle finally returns, unbothered that he has forgotten about the narrator's plans. Reciting the epigram "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," the uncle gives the narrator the money and asks him if he knows the poem "The Arab's Farewell to his Steed." The narrator leaves just as his

uncle begins to recite the lines, and, thanks to eternally slow trains, arrives at the bazaar just before 10 p.m., when it is starting to close down. He approaches one stall that is still open, but buys nothing, feeling unwanted by the woman watching over the goods. With no purchase for Mangan's sister, the narrator stands angrily in the deserted bazaar as the lights go out.

Analysis

In "Araby," the allure of new love and distant places mingles with the familiarity of everyday drudgery, with frustrating consequences. Mangan's sister embodies this mingling, since she is part of the familiar surroundings of the narrator's street as well as the exotic promise of the bazaar. She is a "brown figure" who both reflects the brown façades of the buildings that line the street and evokes the skin color of romanticized images of Arabia that flood the narrator's head. Like the bazaar that offers experiences that differ from everyday Dublin, Mangan's sister intoxicates the narrator with new feelings of joy and elation. His love for her, however, must compete with the dullness of schoolwork, his uncle's lateness, and the Dublin trains. Though he promises Mangan's sister that he will go to Araby and purchase a gift for her, these mundane realities undermine his plans and ultimately thwart his desires. The narrator arrives at the bazaar only to encounter flowered teacups and English accents, not the freedom of the enchanting East. As the bazaar closes down, he realizes that Mangan's sister will fail his expectations as well, and that his desire for her is actually only a vain wish for change.

The narrator's change of heart concludes the story on a moment of epiphany, but not a positive one. Instead of reaffirming his love or realizing that he does not need

gifts to express his feelings for Mangan's sister, the narrator simply gives up. He seems to interpret his arrival at the bazaar as it fades into darkness as a sign that his relationship with Mangan's sister will also remain just a wishful idea and that his infatuation was as misguided as his fantasies about the bazaar. What might have been a story of happy, youthful love becomes a tragic story of defeat. Much like the disturbing, unfulfilling adventure in "An Encounter," the narrator's failure at the bazaar suggests that fulfillment and contentedness remain foreign to Dubliners, even in the most unusual events of the city like an annual bazaar.

The tedious events that delay the narrator's trip indicate that no room exists for love in the daily lives of Dubliners, and the absence of love renders the characters in the story almost anonymous. Though the narrator might imagine himself to be carrying thoughts of Mangan's sister through his day as a priest would carry a Eucharistic chalice to an altar, the minutes tick away through school, dinner, and his uncle's boring poetic recitation. Time does not adhere to the narrator's visions of his relationship. The story presents this frustration as universal: the narrator is nameless, the girl is always "Mangan's sister" as though she is any girl next door, and the story closes with the narrator imagining himself as a creature. In "Araby," Joyce suggests that all people experience frustrated desire for love and new experiences.

Dubliners "*Eveline*"

Summary

Eveline Hill sits at a window in her home and looks out onto the street while fondly recalling her childhood, when she played with other children in a field now developed with new homes. Her thoughts turn to her sometimes abusive father with whom she lives, and to the prospect of freeing herself from her hard life juggling jobs as a shop worker and a nanny to support herself and her father. Eveline faces a difficult dilemma: remain at home like a dutiful daughter, or leave Dublin with her lover, Frank, who is a sailor. He wants her to marry him and live with him in Buenos Aires, and she has already agreed to leave with him in secret. As Eveline recalls, Frank's courtship of her was pleasant until her father began to voice his disapproval and bicker with Frank. After that, the two lovers met clandestinely.

As Eveline reviews her decision to embark on a new life, she holds in her lap two letters, one to her father and one to her brother Harry. She begins to favor the sunnier memories of her old family life, when her mother was alive and her brother was living at home, and notes that she did promise her mother to dedicate herself to maintaining the home. She reasons that her life at home, cleaning and cooking, is hard but perhaps not the worst option—her father is not always mean, after all. The sound of a street organ then reminds her of her mother's death, and her thoughts change course. She remembers her mother's uneventful, sad life, and passionately embraces her decision to escape the same fate by leaving with Frank.

At the docks in Dublin, Eveline waits in a crowd to board the ship with Frank. She appears detached and worried, overwhelmed by the images around her, and

prays to God for direction. Her previous declaration of intent seems to have never happened. When the boat whistle blows and Frank pulls on her hand to lead her with him, Eveline resists. She clutches the barrier as Frank is swept into the throng moving toward the ship. He continually shouts "Come!" but Eveline remains fixed to the land, motionless and emotionless.

Analysis

Eveline's story illustrates the pitfalls of holding onto the past when facing the future. Hers is the first portrait of a female in *Dubliners*, and it reflects the conflicting pull many women in early twentieth-century Dublin felt between a domestic life rooted in the past and the possibility of a new married life abroad. One moment, Eveline feels happy to leave her hard life, yet at the next moment she worries about fulfilling promises to her dead mother. She grasps the letters she's written to her father and brother, revealing her inability to let go of those family relationships, despite her father's cruelty and her brother's absence. She clings to the older and more pleasant memories and imagines what other people want her to do or will do for her. She sees Frank as a rescuer, saving her from her domestic situation. Eveline suspends herself between the call of home and the past and the call of new experiences and the future, unable to make a decision.

The threat of repeating her mother's life spurs Eveline's epiphany that she must leave with Frank and embark on a new phase in her life, but this realization is short-lived. She hears a street organ, and when she remembers the street organ that played on the night before her mother's death, Eveline resolves not to repeat her mother's life of "commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness," but she does exactly

that. Like the young boys of "An Encounter" and "Araby," she desires escape, but her reliance on routine and repetition overrides such impulses. On the docks with Frank, away from the familiarity of home, Eveline seeks guidance in the routine habit of prayer. Her action is the first sign that she in fact hasn't made a decision, but instead remains fixed in a circle of indecision. She will keep her lips moving in the safe practice of repetitive prayer rather than join her love on a new and different path. Though Eveline fears that Frank will drown her in their new life, her reliance on everyday rituals is what causes Eveline to freeze and not follow Frank onto the ship.

Eveline's paralysis within an orbit of repetition leaves her a "helpless animal," stripped of human will and emotion. The story does not suggest that Eveline placidly returns home and continues her life, but shows her transformation into an automaton that lacks expression. Eveline, the story suggests, will hover in mindless repetition, on her own, in Dublin. On the docks with Frank, the possibility of living a fully realized life left her.

"The Tell-Tale Heart"

By

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe (né **Edgar Poe**; January 19, 1809 – October 7, 1849) was an American writer, poet, editor, and literary critic who is best known for his poetry and short stories, particularly his tales involving mystery and the macabre. He is widely regarded as one of the central figures of Romanticism and Gothic fiction in the United States, and of early American literature.[1] Poe was one of the country's first successful practitioners of the short story, and is generally considered to be the inventor of the detective fiction genre. In addition, he is credited with contributing significantly to the emergence of science fiction.[2] He is the first well-known American writer to earn a living by writing alone, which resulted in a financially difficult life and career.[3]

Poe was born in Boston. He was the second child of actors David and Elizabeth "Eliza" Poe.[4] His father abandoned the family in 1810, and when Eliza died the following year, Poe was taken in by John and Frances Allan of Richmond, Virginia. They never formally adopted him, but he lived with them well into young adulthood. Poe attended the University of Virginia, but left after only a year due to a lack of money. He frequently quarreled with John Allan over the funds needed to continue his education as well as his gambling debts. In 1827, having enlisted in the

United States Army under the assumed name of Edgar A. Perry, he published his first collection, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, which was credited only to "a Bostonian". Poe and Allan reached a temporary rapprochement after the death of Allan's wife Frances in 1829. However, Poe later failed as an officer cadet at West Point, declared his intention to become a writer, primarily of poems, and parted ways with Allan.

Poe switched his focus to prose, and spent the next several years working for literary journals and periodicals, becoming known for his own style of literary criticism. His work forced him to move between several cities, including Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York City. In 1836, when he was 27, he married his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm. She died of tuberculosis in 1847.

In January 1845, he published his poem "The Raven" to instant success. He planned for years to produce his own journal *The Penn*, later renamed *The Stylus*. But before it began publishing, Poe died in Baltimore in 1849, aged 40, under mysterious circumstances. The cause of his death remains unknown and has been attributed to many causes, including disease, alcoholism, substance abuse, and suicide.[5]

Poe's works influenced the development of literature throughout the world and even impacted such specialized fields as cosmology and cryptography. Since his death, he and his writings have appeared throughout popular culture in such fields as art, photography, literary allusions, music, motion pictures, and television. Several of his homes are dedicated museums. In addition, The Mystery Writers of America presents an annual Edgar Award for distinguished work in the mystery genre.

Early life and education

Plaque marking the approximate location of Poe's birth on Carver Street in Boston

Edgar Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 19, 1809, the second child of American actor David Poe Jr. and English-born actress Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins Poe. He had an elder brother, Henry, and a younger sister, Rosalie.[6] Their grandfather, David Poe, had emigrated from County Cavan, Ireland, around 1750.[7]

His father abandoned the family in 1810,[8] and his mother died a year later from pulmonary tuberculosis. Poe was then taken into the home of John Allan, a successful merchant in Richmond, Virginia, who dealt in a variety of goods, including cloth, wheat, tombstones, tobacco, and slaves.[9] The Allans served as a foster family and gave him the name "Edgar Allan Poe",[10] although they never formally adopted him.[11]

The Allan family had Poe baptized into the Episcopal Church in 1812. John Allan alternately spoiled and aggressively disciplined his foster son.[10] The family sailed to the United Kingdom in 1815, and Poe attended a grammar school for a short period in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, where Allan was born, before rejoining the family in London in 1816. There he studied at a boarding school in Chelsea until summer 1817. He was subsequently entered at the Reverend John Bransby's Manor House School at Stoke Newington, then a suburb 4 miles (6 km) north of London.[12]

Poe moved to Richmond with the Allans in 1820. In 1824, he served as the lieutenant of the Richmond youth honor guard as the city celebrated the visit of the

Marquis de Lafayette.[13] In March 1825, Allan's uncle and business benefactor William Galt died, who was said to be one of the wealthiest men in Richmond,[14] leaving Allan several acres of real estate. The inheritance was estimated at $750,000 (equivalent to $20,000,000 in 2023).[15] By summer 1825, Allan celebrated his expansive wealth by purchasing a two-story brick house called Moldavia.[16]

Poe may have become engaged to Sarah Elmira Royster before he registered at the University of Virginia in February 1826 to study ancient and modern languages.[17][18] The university was in its infancy, established on the ideals of its founder, Thomas Jefferson. It had strict rules against gambling, horses, guns, tobacco, and alcohol, but these rules were mostly ignored. Jefferson enacted a system of student self-government, allowing students to choose their own studies, make their own arrangements for boarding, and report all wrongdoing to the faculty.

The unique system was rather chaotic, and there was a high dropout rate.[19] During his time there, Poe lost touch with Royster and also became estranged from his foster father over gambling debts. He claimed that Allan had not given him sufficient money to register for classes, purchase texts, or procure and furnish a dormitory. Allan did send additional money and clothes, but Poe's debts increased.[20] Poe gave up on the university after a year, but did not feel welcome to return to Richmond, especially when he learned that his sweetheart, Royster, had married another man, Alexander Shelton. Instead, he traveled to Boston in April 1827, sustaining himself with odd jobs as a clerk and newspaper contributor. Poe started using the pseudonym Henri Le Rennet during this period.

Literary style and themes

Genres

Poe's best-known fiction works have been labeled as Gothic horror,[89] and adhere to that genre's general propensity to appeal to the public's taste for the terrifying or psychologically intimidating.[90] His most recurrent themes seem to deal with death. The physical signs indicating death, the nature of decomposition, the popular concerns of Poe's day about premature burial, the reanimation of the dead, are all at length explored in his more notable works.[91] Many of his writings are generally considered to be part of the dark romanticism genre, which is said to be a literary reaction to transcendentalism,[92] which Poe strongly criticized.[93] He referred to followers of the transcendental movement, including Emerson, as "Frog-Pondians", after the pond on Boston Common,[94][95] and ridiculed their writings as "metaphor—run mad,"[96] lapsing into "obscurity for obscurity's sake" or "mysticism for mysticism's sake".[93] However, Poe once wrote in a letter to Thomas Holley Chivers that he did not dislike transcendentalists, "only the pretenders and sophists among them".[97]

Beyond the horror stories he is most famous for, Poe also wrote a number of satires, humor tales, and hoaxes. He was a master of sarcasm. For comic effect, he often used irony and ludicrous extravagance in a deliberate attempt to liberate the reader from cultural and literary conformity.[90] "Metzengerstein" is the first story that Poe is known to have published,[98] and his first foray into horror, but it was originally intended as a burlesque satirizing the popular genres of Poe's time.[99] Poe was also one of the forerunners of American science fiction, responding in his voluminous

writing to such emerging literary trends as the explorations into the possibilities of hot air balloons as featured in such works as, "The Balloon-Hoax".[100]

Much of Poe's work coincided with themes that readers of his day found appealing, though he often professed to abhor the tastes of the majority of the people who read for pleasure in his time. In his critical works, Poe investigated and wrote about many of the pseudosciences that were then popular with the majority of his fellow Americans. They included, but were not limited to, the fields of astrology, cosmology, phrenology,[101] and physiognomy.[102]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe

"The Tell-Tale Heart"

True! Nervous -- very, very **nervous** I had been and am! But why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses -- not destroyed them.

Above all was the sense of hearing. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in the **underworld**. How, then, am I mad? Observe how healthily -- how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! He had the eye of a bird, a **vulture** -- a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell on me, my blood ran cold; and so --

very slowly -- I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and free myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You think that I am mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely and carefully I went to work!

I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, late at night, I turned the lock of his door and opened it – oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening big enough for my head, I put in a dark **lantern**, all closed that no light shone out, and then I stuck in my head. I moved it slowly, very slowly, so that I might not interfere with the old man's sleep. And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern just so much that a single thin ray of light fell upon the vulture eye.

And this I did for seven long nights -- but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who was a problem for me, but his Evil Eye.

On the eighth night, I was more than usually careful in opening the door. I had my head in and was about to open the lantern, when my finger slid on a piece of metal and made a noise. The old man sat up in bed, crying out "Who's there?"

I kept still and said nothing. I did not move a muscle for a whole hour. During that time, I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening -- just as I have done, night after night.

Then I heard a noise, and I knew it was the sound of human **terror**. It was the low sound that arises from the bottom of the soul. I knew the sound well. Many a night, late at night, when all the world slept, it has **welled** up from deep within my own chest. I say I knew it well.

I knew what the old man felt, and felt sorry for him, although I laughed to myself. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him.

When I had waited a long time, without hearing him lie down, I decided to open a little -- a very, very little -- crack in the lantern. So I opened it. You cannot imagine how carefully, carefully. Finally, a single ray of light shot from out and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open -- wide, wide open -- and I grew angry as I looked at it. I saw it clearly -- all a dull blue, with a **horrible** veil over it that chilled my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person. For I had directed the light exactly upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but a kind of over-sensitivity? Now, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when inside a piece of cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my anger.

But even yet I kept still. I hardly breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I attempted to keep the ray of light upon the eye. But the beating of the heart increased. It grew

quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every second. The old man's terror must have been extreme! The beating grew louder, I say, louder every moment!

And now at the dead hour of the night, in the horrible silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst.

And now a new fear seized me -- the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud shout, I threw open the lantern and burst into the room.

He cried once -- once only. Without delay, I forced him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled, to find the action so far done.

But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a quiet sound. This, however, did not concern me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length, it stopped. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the body. I placed my hand over his heart and held it there many minutes. There was no movement. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise steps I took for hiding the body. I worked quickly, but in silence. First of all, I took apart the body. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three pieces of wood from the flooring, and placed his body parts under the room. I then replaced the wooden boards so well that no human eye -- not even his -- could have seen anything wrong.

There was nothing to wash out -- no mark of any kind -- no blood whatever. I had been too smart for that. A tub had caught all -- ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock in the morning. As a clock sounded the hour, there came a noise at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart -- for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who said they were officers of the police. A cry had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of a crime had been aroused; information had been given at the police office, and the officers had been sent to search the building.

I smiled -- for what had I to fear? The cry, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I said, was not in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I told them to search -- search well. I led them, at length, to his room. I brought chairs there, and told them to rest. I placed my own seat upon the very place under which lay the body of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. I was completely at ease. They sat, and while I answered happily, they talked of common things. But, after a while, I felt myself getting weak and wished them gone. My head hurt, and I had a ringing in my ears; but still they sat and talked.

The ringing became more severe. I talked more freely to do away with the feeling. But it continued until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

I talked more and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased -- and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound like a watch makes when inside a piece of cotton. I had trouble breathing -- and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly -- more loudly; but the noise increased. I stood up and argued about silly things, in a high voice and with violent hand movements. But the noise kept increasing.

Why would they not be gone? I walked across the floor with heavy steps, as if excited to anger by the observations of the men -- but the noise increased. What could I do? I swung my chair and moved it upon the floor, but the noise continually increased. It grew louder -- louder -- louder! And still the men talked pleasantly, and smiled.

Was it possible they heard not? No, no! They heard! They suspected! They knew! They were making a joke of my horror! This I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this pain! I could bear those smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! And now -- again! Louder! Louder! Louder!

"Villains!" I cried, "Pretend no more! I admit the deed! Tear up the floor boards! Here, here! It is the beating of his hideous heart!"

Summary

An unnamed narrator opens the story by addressing the reader and claiming that he is nervous but not mad. He says that he is going to tell a story in which he will defend his sanity yet confess to having killed an old man. His motivation was neither passion nor desire for money, but rather a fear of the man’s pale blue eye.

Again, he insists that he is not crazy because his cool and measured actions, though criminal, are not those of a madman. Every night, he went to the old man's apartment and secretly observed the man sleeping. In the morning, he would behave as if everything were normal. After a week of this activity, the narrator decides, somewhat randomly, that the time is right actually to kill the old man.

When the narrator arrives late on the eighth night, though, the old man wakes up and cries out. The narrator remains still, stalking the old man as he sits awake and frightened. The narrator understands how frightened the old man is, having also experienced the lonely terrors of the night. Soon, the narrator hears a dull pounding that he interprets as the old man's terrified heartbeat. Worried that a neighbor might hear the loud thumping, he attacks and kills the old man. He then dismembers the body and hides the pieces below the floorboards in the bedroom. He is careful not to leave even a drop of blood on the floor. As he finishes his job, a clock strikes the hour of four. At the same time, the narrator hears a knock at the street door. The police have arrived, having been called by a neighbor who heard the old man shriek. The narrator is careful to be chatty and to appear normal. He leads the officers all over the house without acting suspiciously. At the height of his bravado, he even brings them into the old man's bedroom to sit down and talk at the scene of the crime. The policemen do not suspect a thing. The narrator is comfortable until he starts to hear a low thumping sound. He recognizes the low sound as the heart of the old man, pounding away beneath the floorboards. He panics, believing that the policemen must also hear the sound and know his guilt. Driven mad by the idea that they are mocking his agony with their pleasant chatter, he confesses to the crime and shrieks at the men to rip up the floorboards.

Analysis

Poe uses his words economically in the "Tell-Tale Heart"—it is one of his shortest stories—to provide a study of paranoia and mental deterioration. Poe strips the story of excess detail as a way to heighten the murderer's obsession with specific and unadorned entities: the old man's eye, the heartbeat, and his own claim to sanity. Poe's economic style and pointed language thus contribute to the narrative content, and perhaps this association of form and content truly exemplifies paranoia. Even Poe himself, like the beating heart, is complicit in the plot to catch the narrator in his evil game.

As a study in paranoia, this story illuminates the psychological contradictions that contribute to a murderous profile. For example, the narrator admits, in the first sentence, to being dreadfully nervous, yet he is unable to comprehend why he should be thought mad. He articulates his self-defense against madness in terms of heightened sensory capacity. Unlike the similarly nervous and hypersensitive Roderick Usher in "The Fall of the House of Usher," who admits that he feels mentally unwell, the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" views his hypersensitivity as proof of his sanity, not a symptom of madness. This special knowledge enables the narrator to tell this tale in a precise and complete manner, and he uses the stylistic tools of narration for the purposes of his own sanity plea. However, what makes this narrator mad—and most unlike Poe—is that he fails to comprehend the coupling of narrative form and content. He masters precise form, but he unwittingly lays out a tale of murder that betrays the madness he wants to deny.

Another contradiction central to the story involves the tension between the narrator's capacities for love and hate. Poe explores here a psychological mystery—that people sometimes harm those whom they love or need in their lives. Poe examines this paradox half a century before Sigmund Freud made it a leading concept in his theories of the mind. Poe's narrator loves the old man. He is not greedy for the old man's wealth, nor vengeful because of any slight. The narrator thus eliminates motives that might normally inspire such a violent murder. As he proclaims his own sanity, the narrator fixates on the old man's vulture-eye. He reduces the old man to the pale blue of his eye in obsessive fashion. He wants to separate the man from his "Evil Eye" so he can spare the man the burden of guilt that he attributes to the eye itself. The narrator fails to see that the eye is the "I" of the old man, an inherent part of his identity that cannot be isolated as the narrator perversely imagines.

The murder of the old man illustrates the extent to which the narrator separates the old man's identity from his physical eye. The narrator sees the eye as completely separate from the man, and as a result, he is capable of murdering him while maintaining that he loves him. The narrator's desire to eradicate the man's eye motivates his murder, but the narrator does not acknowledge that this act will end the man's life. By dismembering his victim, the narrator further deprives the old man of his humanity. The narrator confirms his conception of the old man's eye as separate from the man by ending the man altogether and turning him into so many parts. That strategy turns against him when his mind imagines other parts of the old man's body working against him.

The narrator's newly heightened sensitivity to sound ultimately overcomes him, as he proves unwilling or unable to distinguish between real and imagined sounds. Because of his warped sense of reality, he obsesses over the low beats of the man's heart yet shows little concern about the man's shrieks, which are loud enough both to attract a neighbor's attention and to draw the police to the scene of the crime. The police do not perform a traditional, judgmental role in this story. Ironically, they aren't terrifying agents of authority or brutality. Poe's interest is less in external forms of power than in the power that pathologies of the mind can hold over an individual. The narrator's paranoia and guilt make it inevitable that he will give himself away. The police arrive on the scene to give him the opportunity to betray himself. The more the narrator proclaims his own cool manner, the more he cannot escape the beating of his own heart, which he mistakes for the beating of the old man's heart. As he confesses to the crime in the final sentence, he addresses the policemen as "[v]illains," indicating his inability to distinguish between their real identity and his own villainy.

https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/poestories/section6/

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

by

Ambrose Bierce

I

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners--two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as "support," that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm

thrown straight across the chest--a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it. Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground--a gentle acclivity topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between the bridge and fort were the spectators--a single company of infantry in line, at "parade rest," the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the

bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference. The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good--a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well-fitting frock coat. He wore a mustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for

hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his "unsteadfast footing," then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes

followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move, What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift--all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by--it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and--he knew not why--apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer, the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he

feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. "If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

II

Peyton Farquhar was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner and like other slave owners a politician he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with

the gallant army that had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in war time. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

"The Yanks are repairing the railroads," said the man, "and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order."

"How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?" Farquhar asked.

"About thirty miles."

"Is there no force on this side the creek?"

"Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge."

"Suppose a man--a civilian and student of hanging--should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

The soldier reflected. "I was there a month ago," he replied. "I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood

against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tow."

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

III

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened--ages later, it seemed to him--by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well-defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of

fulness--of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud splash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!--the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was

rising toward the surface--knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. "To be hanged and drowned," he thought? "that is not so bad; but I do not wish to be shot. No; I will not be shot; that is not fair." He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort!--what magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake. "Put it back, put it back!" He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had been succeeded by the direst pang that he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire; his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a

great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface. He felt his head emerge; his eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draught of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek!

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf--saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the grey spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass.

The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragon flies' wings, the strokes of the water-spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat--all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him. The captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, spattering his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water

saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a grey eye and remembered having read that grey eyes were keenest, and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counter-swirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking into the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous singsong now rang out behind him and came across the water with a distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling, aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning's work. How coldly and pitilessly--with what an even, calm intonation, presaging, and enforcing tranquillity in the men--with what accurately measured intervals fell those cruel words:

"Attention, company! . . Shoulder arms! . . . Ready! . . . Aim! . . . Fire!"

Farquhar dived--dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears

like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dulled thunder of the volley and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther down stream nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning.

The officer," he reasoned, "will not make that martinet's error a second

time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!"

An appalling splash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, diminuendo, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its deeps!

A rising sheet of water curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken a hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

"They will not do that again," he thought; "the next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun; the smoke will apprise me--the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun."

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round--spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men--all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color--that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick. In a few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream--the southern bank--and behind a projecting point which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over himself in handfuls and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their

branches the music of olian harps. He had no wish to perfect his escape--was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman's road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, footsore, famishing. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both

sides, terminating on the horizon in a point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great garden stars looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which--once, twice, and again--he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

His neck was in pain and lifting his hand to it found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cold air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue--he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene--perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all

bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! He springs forward with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon--then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.

The Apparition of Mrs. Veal

A short story by

Daniel Defoe

This thing is so rare in all its circumstances, and on so good authority, that my reading and conversation have not given me anything like it. It is fit to gratify the most ingenious and serious inquirer. Mrs. Bargrave is the person to whom Mrs. Veal appeared after her death; she is my intimate friend, and I can avouch for her reputation for these fifteen or sixteen years, on my own knowledge; and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth to the time of my acquaintance. Though, since this relation, she is calumniated by some people that are friends to the brother of Mrs. Veal who appeared, who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavor what they can to blast Mrs. Bargrave's reputation and to laugh the story out of countenance. But by the circumstances thereof, and the cheerful disposition of Mrs. Bargrave, notwithstanding the ill usage of a very wicked husband, there is not yet the least sign of dejection in her face; nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression; nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity, which I have been a witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

Now you must know Mrs. Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on her by her going off from her discourse very abruptly to some impertinence. She was maintained by an only brother,

and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her brother a very sober man to all appearance; but now he does all he can to null and quash the story. Mrs. Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Bargrave from her childhood. Mrs. Veal's circumstances were then mean; her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships. And Mrs. Bargrave in those days had as unkind a father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing; while Mrs. Veal wanted for both, insomuch that she would often say, "Mrs. Bargrave, you are not only the best, but the only friend I have in the world; and no circumstance of life shall ever dissolve my friendship." They would often condole each other's adverse fortunes, and read together _Drelincourt upon Death_, and other good books; and so, like two Christian friends, they comforted each other under their sorrow.

Some time after, Mr. Veal's friends got him a place in the custom-house at Dover, which occasioned Mrs. Veal, by little and little, to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs. Bargrave, though there was never any such thing as a quarrel; but an indifferency came on by degrees, till at last Mrs. Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a half, though above a twelvemonth of the time Mrs. Bargrave hath been absent from Dover, and this last half-year has been in Canterbury about two months of the time, dwelling in a house of her own.

In this house, on the eighth of September, one thousand seven hundred and five, she was sitting alone in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life, and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard: "And," said she, "I have been

provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still, and am well satisfied that my afflictions shall end when it is most fit for me." And then took up her sewing work, which she had no sooner done but she hears a knocking at the door; she went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs. Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding-habit. At that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"Madam," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am surprised to see you, you have been so long a stranger"; but told her she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her, which Mrs. Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched, and then Mrs. Veal drew her hand across her own eyes, and said, "I am not very well," and so waived it. She told Mrs. Bargrave she was going a journey, and had a great mind to see her first. "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "how can you take a journey alone? I am amazed at it, because I know you have a fond brother." "Oh," says Mrs. Veal, "I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had so great a desire to see you before I took my journey." So Mrs. Bargrave went in with her into another room within the first, and Mrs. Veal sat her down in an elbow-chair, in which Mrs. Bargrave was sitting when she heard Mrs. Veal knock. "Then," says Mrs. Veal, "my dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and beg your pardon for my breach of it; and if you can forgive me, you are the best of women." "Oh," says Mrs. Bargrave, "do not mention such a thing; I have not had an uneasy thought about it." "What did you think of me?" says Mrs. Veal. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I thought you were like the rest of the world, and that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me." Then Mrs. Veal reminded Mrs. Bargrave of the many friendly offices

she did her in former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the times of their adversity; what books they read, and what comfort in particular they received from Drelincourt's _Book of Death_, which was the best, she said, on the subject ever wrote. She also mentioned Doctor Sherlock, and two Dutch books, which were translated, wrote upon death, and several others. But Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death and of the future state of any who had handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs. Bargrave whether she had Drelincourt. She said, "Yes." Says Mrs. Veal, "Fetch it." And so Mrs. Bargrave goes up-stairs and brings it down. Says Mrs. Veal, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard. The notions we have of Heaven now are nothing like what it is, as Drelincourt says; therefore be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard to you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favor; and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you. And believe me, my dear friend, believe what I say to you, one minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all your sufferings. For I can never believe" (and claps her hand upon her knee with great earnestness, which, indeed, ran through most of her discourse) "that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state. But be assured that your afflictions shall leave you, or you them, in a short time." She spake in that pathetical and heavenly manner that Mrs. Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it.

Then Mrs. Veal mentioned Doctor Kendrick's _Ascetic_, at the end of

which he gives an account of the lives of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said, "Their conversation was not like this of our age. For now," says she, "there is nothing but vain, frothy discourse, which is far different from theirs. Theirs was to edification, and to build one another up in faith, so that they were not as we are, nor are we as they were. But," said she, "we ought to do as they did; there was a hearty friendship among them; but where is it now to be found?" Says Mrs. Bargrave, "It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days." Says Mrs. Veal, "Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses, called _Friendship in Perfection_, which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?" says Mrs. Veal. "No," says Mrs. Bargrave, "but I have the verses of my own writing out." "Have you?" says Mrs. Veal; "then fetch them"; which she did from above stairs, and offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused, and waived the thing, saying, "holding down her head would make it ache"; and then desiring Mrs. Bargrave to read them to her, which she did. As they were admiring _Friendship_, Mrs. Veal said, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, I shall love you forever." In these verses there is twice used the word "Elysian." "Ah!" says Mrs. Veal, "these poets have such names for Heaven." She would often draw her hand across her own eyes, and say, "Mrs. Bargrave, do not you think I am mightily impaired by my fits?" "No," says Mrs. Bargrave; "I think you look as well as ever I knew you."

After this discourse, which the apparition put in much finer words than Mrs. Bargrave said she could pretend to, and as much more than she can remember--for it cannot be thought that an hour and three quarters'

conversation could all be retained, though the main of it she thinks she does--she said to Mrs. Bargrave she would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him she would have him give rings to such and such; and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson.

Talking at this rate, Mrs. Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself on a chair just before her knees, to keep her from falling to the ground, if her fits should occasion it; for the elbow-chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side. And to divert Mrs. Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown-sleeve several times, and commended it. Mrs. Veal told her it was a scoured silk, and newly made up. But, for all this, Mrs. Veal persisted in her request, and told Mrs. Bargrave she must not deny her. And she would have her tell her brother all their conversation when she had the opportunity. "Dear Mrs. Veal," says Mrs. Bargrave, "this seems so impertinent that I cannot tell how to comply with it; and what a mortifying story will our conversation be to a young gentleman. Why," says Mrs. Bargrave, "it is much better, methinks, to do it yourself." "No," says Mrs. Veal; "though it seems impertinent to you now, you will see more reasons for it hereafter." Mrs. Bargrave, then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink, but Mrs. Veal said, "Let it alone now, but do it when I am gone; but you must be sure to do it"; which was one of the last things she enjoined her at parting, and so she promised her.

Then Mrs. Veal asked for Mrs. Bargrave's daughter. She said she was not at home. "But if you have a mind to see her," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll

send for her." "Do," says Mrs. Veal; on which she left her, and went to a neighbor's to see her; and by the time Mrs. Bargrave was returning, Mrs. Veal was got without the door in the street, in the face of the beast-market, on a Saturday (which is market-day), and stood ready to part as soon as Mrs. Bargrave came to her. She asked her why she was in such haste. She said she must be going, though perhaps she might not go her journey till Monday; and told Mrs. Bargrave she hoped she should see her again at her cousin Watson's before she went whither she was going. Then she said she would take her leave of her, and walked from Mrs. Bargrave, in her view, till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three-quarters after one in the afternoon.

Mrs. Veal died the seventh of September, at twelve o'clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours' senses before her death, in which time she received the sacrament. The next day after Mrs. Veal's appearance, being Sunday, Mrs. Bargrave was mightily indisposed with a cold and sore throat, that she could not go out that day; but on Monday morning she sends a person to Captain Watson's to know if Mrs. Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs. Bargrave's inquiry, and sent her word she was not there, nor was expected. At this answer, Mrs. Bargrave told the maid she had certainly mistook the name or made some blunder. And though she was ill, she put on her hood and went herself to Captain Watson's, though she knew none of the family, to see if Mrs. Veal was there or not. They said they wondered at her asking, for that she had not been in town; they were sure, if she had, she would have been there. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am sure she was with me on Saturday almost two hours." They said it

was impossible, for they must have seen her if she had. In comes Captain Watson, while they were in dispute, and said that Mrs. Veal was certainly dead, and the escutcheons were making. This strangely surprised Mrs. Bargrave, when she sent to the person immediately who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Captain Watson's family; and what gown she had on, and how striped; and that Mrs. Veal told her that it was scoured. Then Mrs. Watson cried out, "You have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself that the gown was scoured." And Mrs. Watson owned that she described the gown exactly; "for," said she, "I helped her to make it up." This Mrs. Watson blazed all about the town, and avouched the demonstration of truth of Mrs. Bargrave's seeing Mrs. Veal's apparition. And Captain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs. Bargrave's house to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and sceptical part of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task that she was forced to go out of the way; for they were in general extremely satisfied of the truth of the thing, and plainly saw that Mrs. Bargrave was no hypochondriac, for she always appears with such a cheerful air and pleasing mien that she has gained the favor and esteem of all the gentry, and it is thought a great favor if they can but get the relation from her own mouth. I should have told you before that Mrs. Veal told Mrs. Bargrave that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "How came you to order matters so strangely?" "It could not be helped," said Mrs. Veal. And her brother and sister did come to see her,

and entered the town of Dover just as Mrs. Veal was expiring. Mrs. Bargrave asked her whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs. Veal, "I do not care if I do; but I'll warrant you this mad fellow"--meaning Mrs. Bargrave's husband--"has broke all your trinkets." "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll get something to drink in for all that"; but Mrs. Veal waived it, and said, "It is no matter; let it alone"; and so it passed.

All the time I sat with Mrs. Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs. Veal. And one material thing more she told Mrs. Bargrave, that old Mr. Bretton allowed Mrs. Veal ten pounds a year, which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs. Bargrave till Mrs. Veal told her.

Mrs. Bargrave never varies in her story, which puzzles those who doubt of the truth, or are unwilling to believe it. A servant in the neighbor's yard adjoining to Mrs. Bargrave's house heard her talking to somebody an hour of the time Mrs. Veal was with her. Mrs. Bargrave went out to her next neighbor's the very moment she parted with Mrs. Veal, and told her what ravishing conversation she had had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. Drelincourt's _Book of Death_ is, since this happened, bought up strangely. And it is to be observed that, notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs. Bargrave has undergone upon this account, she never took the value of a farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take anything of anybody, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story.

But Mr. Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said he would see Mrs. Bargrave; but yet it is certain matter of fact that he has been at Captain Watson's since the death of his sister, and yet never went near

Mrs. Bargrave; and some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr. Bretton's ten pounds a year. But the person who pretends to say so has the reputation to be a notorious liar among persons whom I know to be of undoubted credit. Now, Mr. Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies, but says a bad husband has crazed her; but she needs only present herself, and it will effectually confute that pretence. Mr. Veal says he asked his sister on her death-bed whether she had a mind to dispose of anything. And she said no. Now the things which Mrs. Veal's apparition would have disposed of were so trifling, and nothing of justice aimed at in the disposal, that the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs. Bargrave satisfy the world of the reality thereof as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation among the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then, again, Mr. Veal owns that there was a purse of gold; but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb-box. This looks improbable; for that Mrs. Watson owned that Mrs. Veal was so very careful of the key of her cabinet that she would trust nobody with it; and if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs. Veal's often drawing her hands over her eyes, and asking Mrs. Bargrave whether her fits had not impaired her, looks to me as if she did it on purpose to remind Mrs. Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange that she should put her upon writing to her brother, to dispose of rings and gold, which look so much like a dying person's request; and it took accordingly with Mrs. Bargrave as the effect of her fits coming upon her, and was one of the many instances of her wonderful love to her and care of her, that she should not be

affrighted, which, indeed, appears in her whole management, particularly in her coming to her in the daytime, waiving the salutation, and when she was alone; and then the manner of her parting, to prevent a second attempt to salute her.

Now, why Mr. Veal should think this relation a reflection--as it is plain he does, by his endeavoring to stifle it--I cannot imagine; because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were, to comfort Mrs. Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for her breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her. So that, after all, to suppose that Mrs. Bargrave could hatch such an invention as this, from Friday noon to Saturday noon--supposing that she knew of Mrs. Veal's death the very first moment--without jumbling circumstances, and without any interest, too, she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked, too, than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs. Bargrave several times if she was sure she felt the gown. She answered, modestly, "If my senses be to be relied on, I am sure of it." I asked her if she heard a sound when she clapped her hand upon her knee. She said she did not remember she did, but said she appeared to be as much a substance as I did who talked with her. "And I may," said she, "be as soon persuaded that your apparition is talking to me now as that I did not really see her; for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend, and parted with her as such. I would not," says she, "give one farthing to make any one believe it; I have no interest in it; nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time, for aught I know; and, had it not come

to light by accident, it would never have been made public." But now she says she will make her own private use of it, and keep herself out of the way as much as she can; and so she has done since. She says she had a gentleman who came thirty miles to her to hear the relation; and that she had told it to a roomful of people at the time. Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth.

This thing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best-grounded matter of fact. And why we should dispute matter of fact, because we cannot solve things of which we can have no certain or demonstrative notions, seems strange to me; Mrs. Bargrave's authority and sincerity alone would have been undoubted in any other case.

The Child's Story

by

Charles Dickens

Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey. It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through.

He travelled along a rather dark path for some little time, without meeting anything, until at last he came to a beautiful child. So he said to the child, "What do you do here?" And the child said, "I am always at play. Come and play with me!"

So, he played with that child, the whole day long, and they were very merry. The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butteries, that everything was beautiful. This was in fine weather. When it rained, they loved to watch the falling drops, and to smell the fresh scents. When it blew, it was delightful to listen to the wind, and fancy what it said, as it came rushing from its home-- where was that, they wondered!--whistling and howling, driving the clouds before it, bending the trees, rumbling in the chimneys, shaking the house, and making the sea roar in fury. But, when it snowed, that was best of all; for, they liked nothing so well as to look up at the white flakes falling fast and thick, like down from the breasts of millions of white birds; and to see how smooth and deep the drift was; and to listen to the hush upon the paths and roads.

They had plenty of the finest toys in the world, and the most astonishing picture-books: all about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and genii and fairies, and blue- beards and bean-stalks and riches and caverns and forests and Valentines and Orsons: and all new and all true.

But, one day, of a sudden, the traveller lost the child. He called to him over and over again, but got no answer. So, he went upon his road, and went on for a little while without meeting anything, until at last he came to a handsome boy. So, he said to the boy, "What do you do here?" And the boy said, "I am always learning. Come and learn with me."

So he learned with that boy about Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks and the Romans, and I don't know what, and learned more than I could tell-- or he either, for he soon forgot a great deal of it. But, they were not always learning; they had the merriest games that ever were played. They rowed upon the river in summer, and skated on the ice in winter; they were active afoot, and active on horseback; at cricket, and all games at ball; at prisoner's base, hare and hounds, follow my leader, and more sports than I can think of; nobody could beat them. They had holidays too, and Twelfth cakes, and parties where they danced till midnight, and real Theatres where they saw palaces of real gold and silver rise out of the real earth, and saw all the wonders of the world at once. As to friends, they had such dear friends and so many of them, that I want the time to reckon them up. They were all young, like the handsome boy, and were never to be strange to one another all their lives through.

Still, one day, in the midst of all these pleasures, the traveller lost the boy

as he had lost the child, and, after calling to him in vain, went on upon his journey. So he went on for a little while without seeing anything, until at last he came to a young man. So, he said to the young man, "What do you do here?" And the young man said, "I am always in love. Come and love with me."

So, he went away with that young man, and presently they came to one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen--just like Fanny in the corner there--and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's, and she laughed and coloured just as Fanny does while I am talking about her. So, the young man fell in love directly--just as Somebody I won't mention, the first time he came here, did with Fanny. Well! he was teased sometimes--just as Somebody used to be by Fanny; and they quarrelled sometimes--just as Somebody and Fanny used to quarrel; and they made it up, and sat in the dark, and wrote letters every day, and never were happy asunder, and were always looking out for one another and pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time, and sat close to one another by the fire, and were going to be married very soon--all exactly like Somebody I won't mention, and Fanny!

But, the traveller lost them one day, as he had lost the rest of his friends, and, after calling to them to come back, which they never did, went on upon his journey. So, he went on for a little while without seeing anything, until at last he came to a middle-aged gentleman. So, he said to the gentleman, "What are you doing here?" And his answer was, "I am always busy. Come and be busy with me!"

So, he began to be very busy with that gentleman, and they went on

through the wood together. The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown. The gentleman was not alone, but had a lady of about the same age with him, who was his Wife; and they had children, who were with them too. So, they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard.

Sometimes, they came to a long green avenue that opened into deeper woods. Then they would hear a very little, distant voice crying, "Father, father, I am another child! Stop for me!" And presently they would see a very little figure, growing larger as it came along, running to join them. When it came up, they all crowded round it, and kissed and welcomed it; and then they all went on together.

Sometimes, they came to several avenues at once, and then they all stood still, and one of the children said, "Father, I am going to sea," and another said, "Father, I am going to India," and another, "Father, I am going to seek my fortune where I can," and another, "Father, I am going to Heaven!" So, with many tears at parting, they went, solitary, down those avenues, each child upon its way; and the child who went to Heaven, rose into the golden air and vanished.

Whenever these partings happened, the traveller looked at the gentleman, and saw him glance up at the sky above the trees, where the day was beginning to decline, and the sunset to come on. He saw, too,

that his hair was turning grey. But, they never could rest long, for they had their journey to perform, and it was necessary for them to be always busy.

At last, there had been so many partings that there were no children left, and only the traveller, the gentleman, and the lady, went upon their way in company. And now the wood was yellow; and now brown; and the leaves, even of the forest trees, began to fall.

So, they came to an avenue that was darker than the rest, and were pressing forward on their journey without looking down it when the lady stopped.

"My husband," said the lady. "I am called."

They listened, and they heard a voice a long way down the avenue, say, "Mother, mother!"

It was the voice of the first child who had said, "I am going to Heaven!" and the father said, "I pray not yet. The sunset is very near. I pray not yet!"

But, the voice cried, "Mother, mother!" without minding him, though his hair was now quite white, and tears were on his face.

Then, the mother, who was already drawn into the shade of the dark avenue and moving away with her arms still round his neck, kissed him, and said, "My dearest, I am summoned, and I go!" And she was gone.

And the traveller and he were left alone together.

And they went on and on together, until they came to very near the end of the wood: so near, that they could see the sunset shining red before them through the trees.

Yet, once more, while he broke his way among the branches, the traveller lost his friend. He called and called, but there was no reply, and when he passed out of the wood, and saw the peaceful sun going down upon a wide purple prospect, he came to an old man sitting on a fallen tree. So, he said to the old man, "What do you do here?" And the old man said with a calm smile, "I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!" So the traveller sat down by the side of that old man, face to face with the serene sunset; and all his friends came softly back and stood around him. The beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the father, mother, and children: every one of them was there, and he had lost nothing. So, he loved them all, and was kind and forbearing with them all, and was always pleased to watch them all, and they all honoured and loved him. And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather, because this what you do to us, and what we do to you.

The Shooting of an Elephant'

By

George Orwell

In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people--the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaar alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee another Burman looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically--and secretly, of course--I was all for the Burmese and all against their

oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been Bogged with bamboos--all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism--the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang

me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in terrorem. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must." It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it. The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as

usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish. The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin

from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant--I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary--and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches

of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant--it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery--and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of "must" was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home. But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle

in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd--seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the "natives," and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing--no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.

Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick--one never does when a shot goes home--but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frighfful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time--it might have been five seconds, I dare say--he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly

upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open--I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured

gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

'Luck'

by

Mark Twain

[Note—This is not a fancy sketch. I got it from a clergyman who was an instructor at Woolwich forty years ago, and who vouched for its truth.—M.T.]

It was at a banquet in London in honor of one of the two or three conspicuously illustrious English military names of this generation. For reasons which will presently appear, I will withhold his real name and titles, and call him Lieutenant General Lord Arthur Scoresby, V.C., K.C.B., etc., etc., etc. What a fascination there is in a renowned name! There sat the man, in actual flesh, whom I had heard of so many thousands of times since that day, thirty years before, when his name shot suddenly to the zenith from a Crimean battlefield, to remain forever celebrated. It was food and drink to me to look, and look, and look at that demigod; scanning, searching, noting: the quietness, the reserve, the noble gravity of his countenance; the simple honesty that expressed itself all over him; the sweet unconsciousness of his greatness—unconsciousness of the hundreds of admiring eyes fastened upon him, unconsciousness of the deep, loving, sincere worship welling out of the breasts of those people and flowing toward him.

The clergyman at my left was an old acquaintance of mine—clergyman now, but had spent the first half of his life in the camp and field, and as an instructor in the military school at Woolwich. Just at the moment I

have been talking about, a veiled and singular light glimmered in his eyes, and he leaned down and muttered confidentially to me—indicating the hero of the banquet with a gesture:

"Privately—he's an absolute fool."

This verdict was a great surprise to me. If its subject had been Napoleon, or Socrates, or Solomon, my astonishment could not have been greater. Two things I was well aware of: that the Reverend was a man of strict veracity, and that his judgement of men was good. Therefore I knew, beyond doubt or question, that the world was mistaken about this hero: he was a fool. So I meant to find out, at a convenient moment, how the Reverend, all solitary and alone, had discovered the secret.

Some days later the opportunity came, and this is what the Reverend told me.

About forty years ago I was an instructor in the military academy at Woolwich. I was present in one of the sections when young Scoresby underwent his preliminary examination. I was touched to the quick with pity; for the rest of the class answered up brightly and handsomely, while he—why, dear me, he didn't know anything, so to speak. He was evidently good, and sweet, and lovable, and guileless; and so it was exceedingly painful to see him stand there, as serene as a graven image, and deliver himself of answers which were veritably miraculous for stupidity and ignorance. All the compassion in me was aroused in his behalf. I said to myself, when he comes to be examined again, he will be flung over, of course; so it will be simply a harmless act of charity to ease his fall as much as I can. I took him aside, and found that he knew a little

of Cæsar's history; and as he didn't know anything else, I went to work and drilled him like a galley slave on a certain line of stock questions concerning Cæsar which I knew would be used. If you'll believe me, he went through with flying colors on examination day! He went through on that purely superficial "cram," and got compliments too, while others, who knew a thousand times more than he, got plucked. By some strangely lucky accident—an accident not likely to happen twice in a century—he was asked no question outside of the narrow limits of his drill.

It was stupefying. Well, all through his course I stood by him, with something of the sentiment which a mother feels for a crippled child; and he always saved himself—just by miracle, apparently.

Now of course the thing that would expose him and kill him at last was mathematics. I resolved to make his death as easy as I could; so I drilled him and crammed him, and crammed him and drilled him, just on the line of questions which the examiners would be most likely to use, and then launching him on his fate. Well, sir, try to conceive of the result: to my consternation, he took the first prize! And with it he got a perfect ovation in the way of compliments.

Sleep? There was no more sleep for me for a week. My conscience tortured me day and night. What I had done I had done purely through charity, and only to ease the poor youth's fall—I never had dreamed of any such preposterous result as the thing that had happened. I felt as guilty and miserable as the creator of Frankenstein. Here was a woodenhead whom I had put in the way of glittering promotions and

prodigious responsibilities, and but one thing could happen: he and his responsibilities would all go to ruin together at the first opportunity.

The Crimean war had just broken out. Of course there had to be a war, I said to myself: we couldn't have peace and give this donkey a chance to die before he is found out. I waited for the earthquake. It came. And it made me reel when it did come. He was actually gazetted to a captaincy in a marching regiment! Better men grow old and gray in the service before they climb to a sublimity like that. And who could ever have foreseen that they would go and put such a load of responsibility on such green and inadequate shoulders? I could just barely have stood it if they had made him a cornet; but a captain—think of it! I thought my hair would turn white.

Consider what I did—I who so loved repose and inaction. I said to myself, I am responsible to the country for this, and I must go along with him and protect the country against him as far as I can. So I took my poor little capital that I had saved up through years of work and grinding economy, and went with a sigh and bought a cornetcy in his regiment, and away we went to the field.

And there—oh dear, it was awful. Blunders? Why, he never did anything but blunder. But, you see, nobody was in the fellow's secret—everybody had him focused wrong, and necessarily misinterpreted his performance every time—consequently they took his idiotic blunders for inspirations of genius; they did, honestly! His mildest blunders were enough to make a man in his right mind cry; and they did make me cry—and rage and rave too, privately. And the thing that kept me always in a sweat of

apprehension was the fact that every fresh blunder he made increased the luster of his reputation! I kept saying to myself, he'll get so high, that when discovery does finally come, it will be like the sun falling out of the sky.

He went right along up, from grade to grade, over the dead bodies of his superiors, until at last, in the hottest moment of the battle of ------- down went our colonel, and my heart jumped into my mouth, for Scoresby was next in rank! Now for it, said I; we'll all land in Sheol in ten minutes, sure. The battle was awfully hot; the allies were steadily giving way all over the field. Our regiment occupied a position that was vital; a blunder now must be destruction. At this crucial moment, what does this immortal fool do but detach the regiment from its place and order a charge over a neighboring hill where there wasn't a suggestion of an enemy! "There you go!" I said to myself; "this is the end at last."

And away we did go, and were over the shoulder of the hill before the insane movement could be discovered and stopped. And what did we find? An entire and unsuspected Russian army in reserve! And what happened? We were eaten up? That is necessarily what would have happened in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. But no, those Russians argued that no single regiment would come browsing around there at such a time. It must be the entire English army, and that the sly Russian game was detected and blocked; so they turned tail, and away they went, pell-mell, over the hill and down into the field, in wild confusion, and we after them; they themselves broke the solid Russian center in the field, and tore through, and in no time there was the most tremendous rout you

ever saw, and the defeat of the allies was turned into a sweeping and splendid victory! Marshal Canrobert looked on, dizzy with astonishment, admiration,and delight; and sent right off for Scoresby, and hugged him, and decorated him on the field, in presence of all the armies!

And what was Scoresby's blunder that time? Merely the mistaking his right hand for his left—that was all. An order had come to him to fall back and support our right; and instead, he fell forward and went over the hill to the left. But the name he won that day as a marvelous military genius filled the world with his glory, and that glory will never fade while history books last.

He is just as good and sweet and lovable and unpretending as a man can be, but he doesn't know enough to come in when it rains. Now that is absolutely true. He is the supremest ass in the universe; and until half an hour ago nobody knew it but himself and me. He has been pursued, day by day and year by year, by a most phenomenal and astonishing luckiness. He has been a shining soldier in all our wars for a generation; he has littered his whole military life with blunders, and yet has never committed one that didn't make him a knight or a baronet or a lord or something. Look at his breast; why, he is just clothed in domestic and foreign decorations. Well, sir, every one of them is the record of some shouting stupidity or other; and taken together, they are proof that the very best thing in all this world that can befall a man is to be born lucky. I say again, as I said at the banquet, Scoresby's an absolute fool.

The Birds of Spring

by

Washington Irving

My quiet residence in the country, aloof from fashion, politics, and the money market, leaves me rather at a loss for important occupation, and drives me to the study of nature, and other low pursuits. Having few neighbors, also, on whom to keep a watch, and exercise my habits of observation, I am fain to amuse myself with prying into the domestic concerns and peculiarities of the animals around me; and, during the present season, have derived considerable entertainment from certain sociable little birds, almost the only visitors we have, during this early part of the year.

Those who have passed the winter in the country, are sensible of the delightful influences that accompany the earliest indications of spring; and of these, none are more delightful than the first notes of the birds. There is one modest little sad-colored bird, much resembling a wren, which came about the house just on the skirts of winter, when not a blade of grass was to be seen, and when a few prematurely warm days had given a flattering foretaste of soft weather. He sang early in the dawning, long before sun-rise, and late in the evening, just before the closing in of night, his matin and his vesper hymns. It is true, he sang occasionally throughout the day; but at these still hours, his song was more remarked. He sat on a leafless tree, just before the window, and warbled forth his notes, free and simple, but singularly sweet, with something of a plaintive

tone, that heightened their effect. The first morning that he was heard, was a joyous one among the young folks of my household. The long, deathlike sleep of winter was at an end; nature was once more awakening; they now promised themselves the immediate appearance of buds and blossoms. I was reminded of the tempest-tossed crew of Columbus, when, after their long dubious voyage, the field birds came singing round the ship, though still far at sea, rejoicing them with the belief of the immediate proximity of land. A sharp return of winter almost silenced my little songster, and dashed the hilarity of the household; yet still he poured forth, now and then, a few plaintive notes, between the frosty pipings of the breeze, like gleams of sunshine between wintry clouds.

I have consulted my book of ornithology in vain, to find out the name of this kindly little bird, who certainly deserves honor and favor far beyond his modest pretensions. He comes like the lowly violet, the most unpretending, but welcomest of flowers, breathing the sweet promise of the early year.

Another of our feathered visitors, who follows close upon the steps of winter, is the Pe-wit, or Pe-wee, or Phoebe-bird; for he is called by each of these names, from a fancied resemblance to the sound of his monotonous note. He is a sociable little being, and seeks the habitation of man. A pair of them have built beneath my porch, and have reared several broods there for two years past, their nest being never disturbed. They arrive early in the spring, just when the crocus and the snow-drop begin to peep forth. Their first chirp spreads gladness through the house.

"The Phoebe-birds have come!" is heard on all sides; they are welcomed back like members of the family, and speculations are made upon where they have been, and what countries they have seen during their long absence. Their arrival is the more cheering, as it is pronounced, by the old weather-wise people of the country, the sure sign that the severe frosts are at an end, and that the gardener may resume his labors with confidence.

About this time, too, arrives the blue-bird, so poetically yet truly described by Wilson. His appearance gladdens the whole landscape. You hear his soft warble in every field. He sociably approaches your habitation, and takes up his residence in your vicinity. But why should I attempt to describe him, when I have Wilson's own graphic verses to place him before the reader?

When winter's cold tempests and snows are no more,
Green meadows and brown furrowed fields re-appearing:
The fishermen hauling their shad to the shore,
And cloud-cleaving geese to the lakes are a-steering;
When first the lone butterfly flits on the wing,
When red glow the maples, so fresh and so pleasing,
O then comes the blue-bird, the herald of spring,
And hails with his warblings the charms of the season.
The loud-piping frogs make the marshes to ring;
Then warm glows the sunshine, and warm glows the weather;
The blue woodland flowers just beginning to spring,
And spice-wood and sassafras budding together;

O then to your gardens, ye housewives, repair,
Your walks border up, sow and plant at your leisure;
The blue-bird will chant from his box such an air,
That all your hard toils will seem truly a pleasure.
He flits through the orchard, he visits each tree,
The red flowering peach, and the apple's sweet blossoms;
He snaps up destroyers, wherever they be,
And seizes the caitiffs that lurk in their bosoms;
He drags the vile grub from the corn it devours,
The worms from the webs where they riot and welter;
His song and his services freely are ours,
And all that he asks is, in summer a shelter.
The ploughman is pleased when he gleams in his train,
Now searching the furrows, now mounting to cheer him;
The gard'ner delights in his sweet simple strain,
And leans on his spade to survey and to hear him.
The slow lingering school-boys forget they'll be chid,
While gazing intent, as he warbles before them,
In mantle of sky-blue, and bosom so red,
That each little loiterer seems to adore him.

The happiest bird of our spring, however, and one that rivals the European lark, in my estimation, is the Boblincon, or Boblink, as he is commonly called. He arrives at that choice portion of our year, which, in this latitude, answers to the description of the month of May, so often given by the poets. With us, it begins about the middle of May, and lasts

until nearly the middle of June. Earlier than this, winter is apt to return on its traces, and to blight the opening beauties of the year; and later than this, begin the parching, and panting, and dissolving heats of summer. But in this genial interval, nature is in all her freshness and fragrance: "the rains are over and gone, the flowers appear upon the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." The trees are now in their fullest foliage and brightest verdure; the woods are gay with the clustered flowers of the laurel; the air is perfumed by the sweet-briar and the wild rose; the meadows are enamelled with clover-blossoms; while the young apple, the peach, and the plum, begin to swell, and the cherry to glow, among the green leaves.

This is the chosen season of revelry of the Boblink. He comes amidst the pomp and fragrance of the season; his life seems all sensibility and enjoyment, all song and sunshine. He is to be found in the soft bosoms of the freshest and sweetest meadows; and is most in song when the clover is in blossom. He perches on the topmost twig of a tree, or on some long flaunting weed; and as he rises and sinks with the breeze, pours forth a succession of rich tinkling notes; crowding one upon another, like the outpouring melody of the skylark, and possessing the same rapturous character. Sometimes he pitches from the summit of a tree, begins his song as soon as he gets upon the wing, and flutters tremulously down to the earth, as if overcome with ecstasy at his own music. Sometimes he is in pursuit of his paramour; always in full song, as if he would win her by his melody; and always with the same appearance of intoxication and delight.

Of all the birds of our groves and meadows, the Boblink was the envy of my boyhood. He crossed my path in the sweetest weather, and the sweetest season of the year, when all nature called to the fields, and the rural feeling throbbed in every bosom; but when I, luckless urchin! was doomed to be mewed up, during the livelong day, in that purgatory of boyhood, a school-room. It seemed as if the little varlet mocked at me, as he flew by in full song, and sought to taunt me with his happier lot. Oh, how I envied him! No lessons, no tasks, no hateful school; nothing but holiday, frolic, green fields, and fine weather. Had I been then more versed in poetry, I might have addressed him in the words of Logan to the cuckoo:

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy note,
No winter in thy year.
Oh! could I fly, I'd fly with thee;
We'd make, on joyful wing,
Our annual visit round the globe,
Companions of the spring!

Farther observation and experience have given me a different idea of this little feathered voluptuary, which I will venture to impart, for the benefit of my school-boy readers, who may regard him with the same unqualified envy and admiration which I once indulged. I have shown him only as I saw him at first, in what I may call the poetical part of his career, when he in a manner devoted himself to elegant pursuits and enjoyments, and

was a bird of music, and song, and taste, and sensibility, and refinement. While this lasted, he was sacred from injury; the very school-boy would not fling a stone at him, and the merest rustic would pause to listen to his strain. But mark the difference. As the year advances, as the clover-blossoms disappear, and the spring fades into summer, his notes cease to vibrate on the ear. He gradually gives up his elegant tastes and habits, doffs his poetical and professional suit of black, assumes a russet or rather dusty garb, and enters into the gross enjoyments of common, vulgar birds. He becomes a bon-vivant, a mere gourmand; thinking of nothing but good cheer, and gormandizing on the seeds of the long grasses on which he lately swung, and chaunted so musically. He begins to think there is nothing like "the joys of the table," if I may be allowed to apply that convivial phrase to his indulgences. He now grows discontented with plain, every-day fare, and sets out on a gastronomical tour, in search of foreign luxuries. He is to be found in myriads among the reeds of the Delaware, banqueting on their seeds; grows corpulent with good feeding, and soon acquires the unlucky renown of the ortolan. Whereever he goes, pop! pop! pop! the rusty firelocks of the country are cracking on every side; he sees his companions falling by the thousands around him; he is the _reed-bird_, the much-sought-for tit-bit of the Pennsylvanian epicure. Does he take warning and reform? Not he! He wings his flight still farther south, in search of other luxuries. We hear of him gorging himself in the rice swamps; filling himself with rice almost to bursting; he can hardly fly for corpulency. Last stage of his career, we hear of him spitted by dozens, and served up on the table of the gourmand, the most vaunted of

southern dainties, the _rice-bird_ of the Carolinas.

Such is the story of the once musical and admired, but finally sensual and persecuted Boblink. It contains a moral, worthy the attention of all little birds and little boys; warning them to keep to those refined and intellectual pursuits, which raised him to so high a pitch of popularity, during the early part of his career; but to eschew all tendency to that gross and dissipated indulgence, which brought this mistaken little bird to an untimely end.

Which is all at present, from the well-wisher of little boys and little birds,

GEOFFREY CRAYON.

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Eeldrop and Appleplex

By

T. S. Eliot

Eeldrop and Appleplex rented two small rooms in a disreputable part of town. Here they sometimes came at nightfall, here they sometimes slept, and after they had slept, they cooked oatmeal and departed in the morning for destinations unknown to each other. They sometimes slept, more often they talked, or looked out of the window.

They had chosen the rooms and the neighborhood with great care. There are evil neighborhoods of noise and evil neighborhoods of silence, and Eeldrop and Appleplex preferred the latter, as being the more evil. It was a shady street, its windows were heavily curtained; and over it hung the cloud of a respectability which has something to conceal. Yet it had the advantage of more riotous neighborhoods nearby, and Eeldrop and Appleplex commanded from their windows the entrance of a police station across the way. This alone possessed an irresistible appeal in their eyes. From time to time the silence of the street was broken; whenever a malefactor was apprehended, a wave of excitement curled into the street and broke upon the doors of the police station. Then the inhabitants of the street would linger in dressing-gowns, upon their doorsteps: then alien visitors would linger in the street, in caps; long after the centre of misery had been engulphed in his cell. Then Eeldrop and Appleplex would break off their discourse, and rush out to mingle with the mob. Each pursued his own line of enquiry. Appleplex, who had the gift of an

extraordinary address with the lower classes of both sexes, questioned the onlookers, and usually extracted full and inconsistent histories: Eeldrop preserved a more passive demeanor, listened to the conversation of the people among themselves, registered in his mind their oaths, their redundance of phrase, their various manners of spitting, and the cries of the victim from the hall of justice within. When the crowd dispersed, Eeldrop and Appleplex returned to their rooms: Appleplex entered the results of his inquiries into large notebooks, filed according to the nature of the case, from A (adultery) to Y (yeggmen). Eeldrop smoked reflectively. It may be added that Eeldrop was a sceptic, with a taste for mysticism, and Appleplex a materialist with a leaning toward scepticism; that Eeldrop was learned in theology, and that Appleplex studied the physical and biological sciences.

There was a common motive which led Eeldrop and Appleplex thus to separate themselves from time to time, from the fields of their daily employments and their ordinarily social activities. Both were endeavoring to escape not the commonplace, respectable or even the domestic, but the too well pigeonholed, too taken-for-granted, too highly systematized areas, and,--in the language of those whom they sought to avoid--they wished "to apprehend the human soul in its concrete individuality."

"Why," said Eeldrop, "was that fat Spaniard, who sat at the table with us this evening, and listened to our conversation with occasional curiosity, why was he himself for a moment an object of interest to us? He wore his napkin tucked into his chin, he made unpleasant noises while eating, and while not eating, his way of crumbling bread between fat fingers made me

extremely nervous: he wore a waistcoat cafe au lait, and black boots with brown tops. He was oppressively gross and vulgar; he belonged to a type, he could easily be classified in any town of provincial Spain. Yet under the circumstances--when we had been discussing marriage, and he suddenly leaned forward and exclaimed: 'I was married once myself'--we were able to detach him from his classification and regard him for a moment as an unique being, a soul, however insignificant, with a history of its own, once for all. It is these moments which we prize, and which alone are revealing. For any vital truth is incapable of being applied to another case: the essential is unique. Perhaps that is why it is so neglected: because it is useless. What we learned about that Spaniard is incapable of being applied to any other Spaniard, or even recalled in words. With the decline of orthodox theology and its admirable theory of the soul, the unique importance of events has vanished. A man is only important as he is classed. Hence there is no tragedy, or no appreciation of tragedy, which is the same thing. We had been talking of young Bistwick, who three months ago married his mother's housemaid and now is aware of the fact. Who appreciates the truth of the matter? Not the relatives, for they are only moved by affection, by regard for Bistwick's interests, and chiefly by their collective feeling of family disgrace. Not the generous minded and thoughtful outsider, who regards it merely as evidence for the necessity of divorce law reform. Bistwick is classed among the unhappily married. But what Bistwick feels when he wakes up in the morning, which is the great important fact, no detached outsider conceives. The awful importance of the ruin of a life is overlooked. Men are only allowed to be

happy or miserable in classes. In Gopsum Street a man murders his mistress. The important fact is that for the man the act is eternal, and that for the brief space he has to live, he is already dead. He is already in a different world from ours. He has crossed the frontier. The important fact is that something is done which can not be undone--a possibility which none of us realize until we face it ourselves. For the man's neighbors the important fact is what the man killed her with? And at precisely what time? And who found the body? For the 'enlightened public' the case is merely evidence for the Drink question, or Unemployment, or some other category of things to be reformed. But the mediaeval world, insisting on the eternity of punishment, expressed something nearer the truth."

"What you say," replied Appleplex, "commands my measured adherence. I should think, in the case of the Spaniard, and in the many other interesting cases which have come under our attention at the door of the police station, what we grasp in that moment of pure observation on which we pride ourselves, is not alien to the principle of classification, but deeper. We could, if we liked, make excellent comment upon the nature of provincial Spaniards, or of destitution (as misery is called by the philanthropists), or on homes for working girls. But such is not our intention. We aim at experience in the particular centres in which alone it is evil. We avoid classification. We do not deny it. But when a man is classified something is lost. The majority of mankind live on paper currency: they use terms which are merely good for so much reality, they never see actual coinage."

"I should go even further than that," said Eeldrop. "The majority not only have no language to express anything save generalized man; they are for the most part unaware of themselves as anything but generalized men. They are first of all government officials, or pillars of the church, or trade unionists, or poets, or unemployed; this cataloguing is not only satisfactory to other people for practical purposes, it is sufficient to themselves for their 'life of the spirit.' Many are not quite real at any moment. When Wolstrip married, I am sure he said to himself: 'Now I am consummating the union of two of the best families in Philadelphia.'"

"The question is," said Appleplex, "what is to be our philosophy. This must be settled at once. Mrs. Howexden recommends me to read Bergson. He writes very entertainingly on the structure of the eye of the frog."

"Not at all," interrupted his friend. "Our philosophy is quite irrelevant. The essential is, that our philosophy should spring from our point of view and not return upon itself to explain our point of view. A philosophy about intuition is somewhat less likely to be intuitive than any other. We must avoid having a platform."

"But at least," said Appleplex, "we are. . ."

"Individualists. No!! nor anti-intellectualists. These also are labels. The 'individualist' is a member of a mob as fully as any other man: and the mob of individualists is the most unpleasing, because it has the least character. Nietzsche was a mob-man, just as Bergson is an intellectualist. We cannot escape the label, but let it be one which carries no distinction, and arouses no self-consciousness. Sufficient that we should find simple labels, and not further exploit them. I am, I confess to you, in private life,

a bank-clerk. . . ."

"And should, according to your own view, have a wife, three children, and a vegetable garden in a suburb," said Appleplex.

"Such is precisely the case," returned Eeldrop, "but I had not thought it necessary to mention this biographical detail. As it is Saturday night, I shall return to my suburb. Tomorrow will be spent in that garden. . . ."

"I shall pay my call on Mrs. Howexden," murmured Appleplex.

II

The suburban evening was grey and yellow on Sunday; the gardens of the small houses to left and right were rank with ivy and tall grass and lilac bushes; the tropical South London verdure was dusty above and mouldy below; the tepid air swarmed with flies. Eeldrop, at the window, welcomed the smoky smell of lilac, the gramaphones, the choir of the Baptist chapel, and the sight of three small girls playing cards on the steps of the police station.

"On such a night as this," said Eeldrop, "I often think of Scheherazade, and wonder what has become of her."

Appleplex rose without speaking and turned to the files which contained the documents for his "Survey of Contemporary Society." He removed the file marked London from between the files Barcelona and Boston where it had been misplaced, and turned over the papers rapidly. "The lady you mention," he rejoined at last, "whom I have listed not under S. but as Edith, alias Scheherazade, has left but few evidences in my possession. Here is an old laundry account which she left for you to pay, a cheque drawn by her and marked 'R/D,' a letter from her mother in Honolulu (on

ruled paper), a poem written on a restaurant bill--'To Atthis'--and a letter by herself, on Lady Equistep's best notepaper, containing some damaging but entertaining information about Lady Equistep. Then there are my own few observations on two sheets of foolscap."

"Edith," murmured Eeldrop, who had not been attending to this catalogue, "I wonder what has become of her. 'Not pleasure, but fulness of life. . . to burn ever with a hard gem-like flame,' those were her words. What curiosity and passion for experience! Perhaps that flame has burnt itself out by now."

"You ought to inform yourself better," said Appleplex severely, "Edith dines sometimes with Mrs. Howexden, who tells me that her passion for experience has taken her to a Russian pianist in Bayswater. She is also said to be present often at the Anarchist Tea Rooms, and can usually be found in the evening at the Cafe de l'Orangerie."

"Well," replied Eeldrop, "I confess that I prefer to wonder what has become of her. I do not like to think of her future. Scheherazade grown old! I see her grown very plump, full-bosomed, with blond hair, living in a small flat with a maid, walking in the Park with a Pekinese, motoring with a Jewish stock-broker. With a fierce appetite for food and drink, when all other appetite is gone, all other appetite gone except the insatiable increasing appetite of vanity; rolling on two wide legs, rolling in motorcars, rolling toward a diabetic end in a seaside watering place."

"Just now you saw that bright flame burning itself out," said Appleplex, "now you see it guttering thickly, which proves that your vision was founded on imagination, not on feeling. And the passion for experience--

have you remained so impregnably Pre-Raphaelite as to believe in that? What real person, with the genuine resources of instinct, has ever believed in the passion for experience? The passion for experience is a criticism of the sincere, a creed only of the histrionic. The passionate person is passionate about this or that, perhaps about the least significant things, but not about experience. But Marius, des Esseintes, Edith. . ."

"But consider," said Eeldrop, attentive only to the facts of Edith's history, and perhaps missing the point of Appleplex's remarks, "her unusual career. The daughter of a piano tuner in Honolulu, she secured a scholarship at the University of California, where she graduated with Honors in Social Ethics. She then married a celebrated billiard professional in San Francisco, after an acquaintance of twelve hours, lived with him for two days, joined a musical comedy chorus, and was divorced in Nevada. She turned up several years later in Paris and was known to all the Americans and English at the Cafe du Dome as Mrs. Short. She reappeared in London as Mrs. Griffiths, published a small volume of verse, and was accepted in several circles known to us. And now, as I still insist, she has disappeared from society altogether."

"The memory of Scheherazade," said Appleplex, "is to me that of Bird's custard and prunes in a Bloomsbury boarding house. It is not my intention to represent Edith as merely disreputable. Neither is she a tragic figure. I want to know why she misses. I cannot altogether analyse her 'into a combination of known elements' but I fail to touch anything definitely unanalysable.

"Is Edith, in spite of her romantic past, pursuing steadily some hidden

purpose of her own? Are her migrations and eccentricities the sign of some unguessed consistency? I find in her a quantity of shrewd observation, an excellent fund of criticism, but I cannot connect them into any peculiar vision. Her sarcasm at the expense of her friends is delightful, but I doubt whether it is more than an attempt to mould herself from outside, by the impact of hostilities, to emphasise her isolation. Everyone says of her, 'How perfectly impenetrable!' I suspect that within there is only the confusion of a dusty garret."

"I test people," said Eeldrop, "by the way in which I imagine them as waking up in the morning. I am not drawing upon memory when I imagine Edith waking to a room strewn with clothes, papers, cosmetics, letters and a few books, the smell of Violettes de Parme and stale tobacco. The sunlight beating in through broken blinds, and broken blinds keeping out the sun until Edith can compel herself to attend to another day. Yet the vision does not give me much pain. I think of her as an artist without the slightest artistic power."

"The artistic temperament--" began Appleplex.

"No, not that." Eeldrop snatched away the opportunity. "I mean that what holds the artist together is the work which he does; separate him from his work and he either disintegrates or solidifies. There is no interest in the artist apart from his work. And there are, as you said, those people who provide material for the artist. Now Edith's poem 'To Atthis' proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that she is not an artist. On the other hand I have often thought of her, as I thought this evening, as presenting possibilities for poetic purposes. But the people who can be material for

art must have in them something unconscious, something which they do not fully realise or understand. Edith, in spite of what is called her impenetrable mask, presents herself too well. I cannot use her; she uses herself too fully. Partly for the same reason I think, she fails to be an artist: she does not live at all upon instinct. The artist is part of him a drifter, at the mercy of impressions, and another part of him allows this to happen for the sake of making use of the unhappy creature. But in Edith the division is merely the rational, the cold and detached part of the artist, itself divided. Her material, her experience that is, is already a mental product, already digested by reason. Hence Edith (I only at this moment arrive at understanding) is really the most orderly person in existence, and the most rational. Nothing ever happens to her; everything that happens is her own doing."

"And hence also," continued Appleplex, catching up the thread, "Edith is the least detached of all persons, since to be detached is to be detached from one's self, to stand by and criticise coldly one's own passions and vicissitudes. But in Edith the critic is coaching the combatant."

"Edith is not unhappy."

"She is dissatisfied, perhaps."

"But again I say, she is not tragic: she is too rational. And in her career there is no progression, no decline or degeneration. Her condition is once and for always. There is and will be no catastrophe.

"But I am tired. I still wonder what Edith and Mrs. Howexden have in common. This invites the consideration (you may not perceive the connection) of Sets and Society, a subject which we can pursue tomorrow

night."

Appleplex looked a little embarrassed. "I am dining with Mrs. Howexden," he said. "But I will reflect upon the topic before I see you again."

A YOUNG, BLIND WHIZ' ON COMPUTERS

by Tom Petzinger

from The Wall Street Journal

Sometimes, a perceived disability job. Though he is only 18 years old and blind, Suleyman (pronounced gok-yi-it) is among the top computer technic programmers at InteliData Technologies Corp., a large company with several offices across the United States.

"After a merger last October, two disparate computer the were driving us crazy," recalls Douglas Braun, an InteliDat president. "We couldn't even send e-mail to each other." In weeks, Mr. Gokyigit, a University of Toledo sophomore who part-time at IntellData's office in the city, created the soft needed to integrate the two networks. "None of the company's 350 other employees could have done the job in three months." save Braun. "Suleyman can literally 'see' into the heart of the computer

Mr. Gokyigit's gift, as Mr. Braun calls it, is an unusual ability conceptualizes the innards of a machine. "The computer permits me to reach out into the world and do almost anything I want to do," says Mr. Gokyigit, who is a computer science engineering major with straight As.

Like most blind people who work with computers, Mr. Gokyigit uses a voice-synthesizer that reads the video display on his monitor in a mechanical voice. Devices that produce Braille screen displays are also available, but Mr. Gokyigit says they "waste time." Instead, he depends on memory. Turning the synthesizer to top speed, he remembers almost everything he hears, at least until a project is completed. While the synthesizer talks, Mr. Gokyigit mentally "maps" the computer

screen with numbered coordinates (such as three across, two down) and memorizes the location of each icon on the grid so he can call up files with his mouse.

The young programmer is also at home with hardware, thanks partly to a highly developed sense of touch. Mitzi Nowakowski, an office manager at InteliData, recalls how he easily disconnected and reconnected their computer systems during a move last year. "Through feel, Suleyman can locate connectors, pins and wires much faster than most other people with sight," she says.

Several months ago, on a trip to San Francisco, Mr. Braun had difficulty accessing to the company's mainframe using his laptop. He needed specific numbers to get into four InteliData files. Instead of asking someone to manually search a thick logbook of computer addresses, he called Mr. Gokyigit, who had committed the logbook to memory and produced the proper numbers in ten seconds, Mr. Braun says.

Much of the student programmer's speed comes from his ability to block out12 distractions while at the computer. When typing, he listens intently to the synthesizer. His long, thin fingers fly over the keyboard. "Nothing seems to shake his concentration," says Mrs. Nowakowski, his immediate boss.13

Mr. Gokyigit is the only company employee on calll4 24 hours a day. "We consider him our top troubleshooter, 15" says Mr. Braun.

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1. **whiz**: very talented person

2.**perceived disability:** something you think of as a disability or negative thing

3 **merger:** a combining of two or more companies into one

4 **two disparate computer networks**: two groups of computers that can't communicate with each other

5 **to conceptualize:** to form an idea of

6 **the innards of**: the inside of

7. **grid :** a pattern of evenly spaced vertical and horizontal lines

8 **at home with:** comfortable with; good with

9 **locate:** find the position of

10 **accessing**: getting into; getting information from

11 **logbook** : written record of information

12 **block**: out ignore

13 **his immediate boss** : the person he reports directly to

14 **on cal**l: available to go to work on bio

15 **troubleshooter:** problem solver

Understanding the Text

A. ***True or False? Read the statements about Suleyman Gokyo write T(True) or F (False). Then correct the statements that are not true.***

1. He uses a Braille screen display to read the video display on his computer monitor. (F) because he used voice- synthesizer not Braille screen display

2. He is in his second year at the university and he is majoring in computer science engineering. ( )

3. He is an excellent student. ( )

4. He is on call twelve hours a day. ( )

5. He was able to help the vice-president locate a computer address because he keeps all the addresses in his logbook. ( )

6. He can solve both hardware and software problems. ( )

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