PAUL GOODMAN'S EMPIRE CITY: GENRE AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
HUGH MORGAN STILLEY IV

1974

ABSTRACT

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By

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Paul Goodman, one of our most acute and prolific social critics is generally valued for his essays and books on education. Yet Goodman himself often declared that his artistic and aesthetic efforts were his primary concern. By focusing on his fiction this dissertation aims to redress the imbalance of considering Goodman solely a social critic.

Indeed, he wrote numerous volumes of poetry, plays, short stories, and five book-length works of fiction, four of which constitute The Empire City, a mammoth epic which received scant critical attention. Only a handful of critics have ventured beyond the common denominator of its being a "bad novel" to argue that it might be a "good" representative of some other genre. This dissertation addresses that problem.

Using Northrop Frye's taxonomy of fictional genre, we concede that it is a "bad novel" and examine its possible claims to being a romance, a confessional, or an anatomy. Although Goodman called it an "educational romance," and although it very obviously contains

elements of the "confessional," The Empire City is, we believe, best understood as an exemplar of Frye's "anatomy" category. Or, rather, to understand it as an anatomy is to defend it in two meaningful ways: (1) The Empire City is seen to have a bona fide literary heritage, allowing us to consider those very qualities the critics have found to make it a "bad novel" as contributing to its excellence and stature as an anatomy; and (2) such a vision intensifies our sense of what Goodman might have meant by calling his romance "educational."

To consider the work an anatomy, to determine the sense in which Goodman uses "educational" to modify "romance"--these amount to yet another means to reaffirm and clarify Goodman's well-known contextualist epistemological preferences. The Empire City's failure as a "novel" does not deter us from finding it a "great book"; instead, viewing it as an anatomy enables us to appreciate Goodman's achievement more accurately, and, from yet another of the multifarious possible "prospects" when dealing with a polymath of Goodman's scope, to emphasize his contribution to educational thought--through the form of his fiction.

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum

1974

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the several years during which this thesis was written a great many people provided invaluable assistance and encouragement. I would like to acknowledge especially the contributions of Dr. Marvin Grandstaff, chairman, and the other members of the committee: Dr. R. Glenn Wright, Dr. Frank Blackington and Dr. Dale Alam.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Paul Goodman is a major figure in educational thought of the past two decades. His several books on education are classics of the recent "educational humanism" movement, and until his death in 1972, he was a perepetetic speaker, listener, and general participant in the broad-gauged educational ferment that has simmered and, sometimes, boiled vigorously in America since at least Berkeley, 1964. Besides the reputation of liveliness that attended the appearance of his name on any list of conference speakers, he was directly associated with a rich and diverse array of innovations,[1] including Teacher Corps, storefront schools, the Free University movement and Vista. Yet, if we are to consider Goodman as a serious educational theorist and not merely as a figurehead or sloganeer, much remains to be done toward clarifying Goodman's thought.

To take Goodman seriously as a theorist involves a search for persistent and unifying conceptions that inform and animate his thought--an attempt, as it were, to discover the "principles" of education to which he seemed to assign the greatest power and the highest priority. Even in the case of relatively unilinear and systematic writers, that is not an easy task, nor one that is likely to be accomplished without some violation of the overall texture of the author's perspective. With Goodman, the problem is enormous

both because of the scope of his work (by his count, forty books) and because of his stubborn refusal to impose the boundaries of any single "discipline" on his thought. Throughout his career, Paul Goodman was a somewhat abrasive polymath, a "man of letters" in the nineteenth century style.

A further complication lies in his predilection for the specific and the concrete, so that it is easy to take fragments of his work at face value. When that happens, it begins to appear that there are many "Paul Goodmans," and that these are sometimes mutually incompatible--this, despite his contention that "everything I do has exactly the same subject--the organism and the environment."[2] It is just this fragmentation of Goodman's thought into a kaleidoscope of specifics--however brilliant--that must be avoided if the potential of his thought is to be realized.

The educator who would either style his practice on a Goodmanesque model or try to incorporate Goodman's thought into a well-wrought educational perspective has the obligation to try to make some sort of <u>unified</u> sense out of a man whose particularized characteristics seem to spawn an infinity of combinations: the old anarchist, the Jewish gadfly city planner, the Gestalt therapist, the bisexual Taoist, regional novelist, who while arguing for his own "finite experience," can conjecture that "a physics without the conservation of energy would look like Taoist magic. It might even be technologically productive. They say that the master rode the whirlwind, the only one motionless in the storm."[3]

The problem, of course, is that of finding an entry point into a body of thought that is deposited in novels, plays, poetry, social criticism, huffy letters to editors and government officials, journals, articles and meandering interviews. A number of possibilities exist--philosophy,[4] city planning,[5] personal psychology,[6] and so on. Perhaps the most productive strategy for Goodman scholarship, were such an entity to emerge would be to exploit as many plausible entry points to his thought as possible with a view to finding out whether the separate inquiries might yield similar terminii.

One vantage point, largely ignored by educational thinkers and yet obviously important, even central to Goodman, is his literature. Although he claimed always to write on the same subject--the organism and the environment--he was often dissatisfied about his reputation as a social critic obscuring his talents as an avant garde writer. "I am uneasy about the reputation I am getting for Growing Up and my recent essays. I feel I am going under false pretenses, for these things do not represent 'me' in the sense that my stories and plays do."[7]

This study attacks the problem of understanding Paul Goodman through literary criticism. More particularly, the characteristics of fictional genre constructed by Northrop Frye in his Anatomy of Criticism[8] are applied to Goodman's epic fictional work, The Empire City, in order to delineate a modal style of "having a world"--a style that can be taken to be Goodman's preferential way of dealing with the problem of acquiring, testing, and revising the knowledge base of behavior. The rationale for this course of analysis assumes that in The Empire City at least one part of Goodman's project is to say, "if you wish to live

a life of force, grace, and beauty, here is how you should go about learning what there is to know in the world."

Given that, it is reasonable to suppose that the conception of "education" that is embedded in The Empire City has some legitimate claim to being a generalized conception of what Goodman thought "education" should be. This notion is supported by Goodman's own contention that "education is an art,"[9] and by insistence that it was in his art--especially in The Empire City--that his thought was most fully and richly articulated. Others have agreed with him, and Theodore Roszak argues, "if we begin . . . with Goodman the novelist it is because Goodman understands himself primarily as a novelist (and poet). His social thought reaches out from his creative work and takes its distinctive style from it."[10] It is not necessary to this thesis that we take Roszak's claim as the demarcation of exclusive correctness in the interpretation of Goodman. All that is required is a recognition of the centrality, for Goodman himself, of his serious literary efforts in the sprawling corpus of his writing.

The remainder of this chapter is given over to a discussion of the biographical and literary context against which The Empire City was constructed, to a brief exposition of Frye's genre and to an introduction of the line of analysis and argument that will constitute the body of the study.

The Context of The Empire City

Although our analysis of The Empire City treats the work as a discrete entity, it may be helpful to sketch briefly the biographical

and literary events that surrounded the writing of that book. What is given here is a rough and tentative outline of Goodman's life and work rather than a definitive biography or literary chronicle. But the reasons (aside from the scope of this paper) for this remaining a sketch already suggest Goodman's habits of mind and of composition.

There is no adequate biography of Goodman yet available--he is too lately dead and his own autobiographical material, abundant as it is, is used so exclusively for the elucidation of ideas that it is of little value in the strictest sense of biography.

Similarly, a literary chronicle is difficult to construct. In many cases there were large time lags between the writing of a work and its publication. In other cases (Five Years and the collections of poetry are good instances), he organized his material in ideational rather than chronological ways, so that materials written in distinctly different times of Goodman's life appear together in published form. Finally, Goodman's tendency to borrow liberally from himself, to alter the format of his work, never to regard a work (especially a literary one) as quite finished makes for a confusing pattern of editions, versions, and reappearances of previously published material. One may, for example, find a passage presented as prose in The Empire City lined out as poetry in some other place. The task of saying exactly when and in what form Goodman said what will be a challenging one for some future scholar, preferably a scholar with access to computer facilities.

The following sketch, then, provides the reader with a basic sense of Goodman's life, his publications, and a few of his most dominant thematic concerns. The sense of an energetic jack of all

trades working simultaneously on six or eight "central" projects pervades what we know about Paul Goodman.

Goodman and His Literature

1911-1939.--Born in 1911, raised on the lower East Side of New York City, Paul Goodman grew as a "latch-key boy," after his father deserted the family. The young Goodman became a bisexual by the time he was eleven. By bourgeois standards, his life was to be frustrated by rejections so far reaching as to cover nearly the whole mode of his existence. From the outset, he seems to have been an outsider, nurturing the multi-faceted personality that is so evident in the Goodman canon.

Goodman's early life reveals both the interests and life style that he made his trademark. The qualities we associate with Goodman--brilliance, self-sufficiency, rejection, argumentation, eccentricity--are predicted by the youth who was, from the first, academically talented, curious and independent. A classmate from the now defunct Townsend Harris School, "the liberal arts version of Bronx Science, but tougher," remembers that Goodman was one of the "bona fide geniuses [who] loused it up for all the normal geniuses."[11] Fundamentally, the latch-key boy, wandering the streets, reading wherever he could get free books, may not differ very much from the mature Goodman, who, in Making Do, has his main character remark, "my exhausting days were not short, as I fled from one appointment to another, in my monstrous unpeaceful community, always arriving on time. It was cold, and I couldn't dwadle on the streets. But I am a man of the streets."[12]

The facts of Goodman's life hardly reveal the tone of that life. Except for the hiatus between his B.A. and his Ph.D., they might seem typical for a man who has to wait a while for success and recognition, for the chance to "make do." Graduated from New York's City College in 1931, by 1935 he was lecturing on English Literature at the University of Chicago. In 1939, Goodman had finished the work that would be published as The Structure of Literature.[13] It was prepared as a doctoral dissertation, but he refused to put it in acceptable format and left the university without a degree. He returned to New York, resuming that life style which became his trademark. His consuming interest in independent living, especially in "decent poverty," is as apparent in his life as it is in his books. Back in New York with no money, an armful of unpublished short stories, he somehow eked out a living from various publications and teaching posts and, one suspects, the aid of his friends, for the nearly twenty years that were to pass before Growing Up Absurd became "recommended reading."

The years between Goodman's return to New York and the publication of Growing Up Absurd in 1956 may be regarded, roughly, as the period during which The Empire City was written. These were both formative and productive years for Goodman. Poor from youth, he might not have been very different from many in his generation. But he seems to have been both poorer and angrier for longer than they were. He went through the exciting American heydays of Marxism and Freudianism, but he did not follow the general pattern of most of his contemporaries, who moved from the poverty-marked radicalism of the Thirties to the prosperity of war monies in the Forties and then to the complacent

affluence of the Fifties. Unlike other important figures of his generation, he was poor throughout. Unlike them, he was an active pacifist in World War II--an especially tough road for a Jew. And, unlike them, he was anything but optimistic at the end of the war.

1939-1956.--During the war years, Goodman published Stop Light,[14] a play, in 1941 and his first short "novel," The Grand Piano[15] in 1942. If Goodman's anger in the latter work is easily seen in retrospect, the full dimensions of his frustrations with the war are more apparent and more crystallized with the completion of The Empire City. The years immediately following the war brought a veritable salvo from Goodman. The diversity and intensity of his writing reveal Goodman working at a furious pace to foster an atmosphere of thought about what directions American society might choose, now that there was "peace of a kind." The post-war years are marked by a tremendous variety of books and jobs.

Drawing the Line,[16] published in 1946, is a bitterly pessimistic projection of what the monsters unleashed by the war would do to the world of the second half of the century. In 1946, he also published The State of Nature,[17] (Book II of The Empire City) and Art and Social Nature.[18] It is in these works, anarchist to the core and leavened by Reichian psychology, that one of his recurrent themes--the humanly destructive capacity of uncontrolled organizational forms--emerges clearly.

In 1947 his published works included the introduction of a further major intellectual influence on his later writing, Franz Kafka,

celebrated and analyzed in Kafka's Prayer.[19] In the same year he published The Copernican Revolution,[20] and, with his brother, architect Percival Goodman, a perceptive and profoundly decentralist work on city planning, Communitas.[21] Here again Goodman sounds the theme of the manageability of the environment and he reaffirms his anarchist tendency toward the rejection in toto, of settled organizational forms.

Intertwined with the production of these works are several years of work as a lay therapist and wandering lecturer. The former he finally came to regard as fruitless in comparison to the institutional change he believed necessary for real social progress, but not before it had produced an influential work, Gestalt Therapy,[22] written in collaboration with Fritz Perls and Ralph Hefferline. The Structure of Literature (for which Goodman was eventually granted the Ph.D.) was the only further book-length work before 1956. But as always, Goodman was writing numerous articles, short stories, and poems.

During the same period he held a number of teaching posts, all of them of short duration, all of them marked by controversy surrounding his "sexual irregularities." He taught "Greek, physics, history and mathematics"[23] at Manumit, a progressive school in Pawling, New York, and spent some time at Black Mountain College, where he was in close contact with many leading figures of the Beat Generation. Although his tenure there was stormy, confounded by both his bisexuality and his insistence on the value of classical studies, he remained an admiring advocate of the Black Mountain idea through his later years, building the notion of the Free University on a basic Black Mountain model.

It was this period that saw the writing of the pieces that eventually made up the last half of The Empire City. It was a time of diverse activity and almost frantic testing and exploring of his social and artistic potentials, of self-doubt and introspection. For range of position, diversity of talents and intellectual and artistic independence, Goodman, especially during this period, is remarkable and his singular combination of these qualities explains the difficulties attendant upon any attempt to classify him for once and all.

1956-1972.--The period of 1939-1956 was, in many respects, a desperate time for Goodman. He suffered deeply from his failure to arouse critical reaction, his problems in getting published, his frequently mucked-up personal life. He wrote, in the Foreward to Five Years, a journal of the years immediately preceding his emergence to prominence:

> I wrote in these notebooks when I had no one else to write for or talk to. . . . When I finished the first draft of The Empire City, there was no chance to get it published and I did not even try. Whatever bright schemes I had to improve my city or the schools were also evidently not wanted by anybody. There were no sighs of political revolt, certainly not among the young, to give me courage. The really desperate efforts for sexual happiness that I made got the reception that is given to all desperate efforts in this line. But worst of all I suffered from bleak hours of nothing to do or plan during lonely walks along the river or nursing a beer in a bar. It was in these circumstances that I started regularly writing down my thoughts in pocket notebooks. I was 45 years old.[24]

The years from 1956 onwards are more clearly delineated, more easily followed and more prominently a matter of the public record than those before Growing Up Absurd was published. Since that is so, and since the major object of this study, The Empire City, was, by then

completed, receiving full-blown publication in 1959, the later years of his life will not be treated in detail here. They were marked, initially, by a time of euphoria and simplification of ideas, rooted in his status as patron saint to the "youth revolution" of the Sixties. The basic theme of Growing Up Absurd--the absence of a worthwhile and manageable world, was worked through again and again, in Compulsory Mis-education,[25] Community of Scholars,[26] People or Personnel,[27] and Like a Conquered Province.[28] Three major collections of poetry, The Lordly Hudson,[29] Hawkweed,[30] and Homespun of Oatmeal Grey,[31] and his fifth "novel," Making Do, were published; and Goodman was in wide demand as a speaker. In these works Goodman simplifies his message, develops the tendency to "end on some thumping platitude" and presents himself as a spokesman with a relatively straightforward and persistent message--"change only in order to simplify."

One last turn remained and it involved a re-complexification of his thought, cast in the form of increasingly epigramatic statement--what seems like one last desperate attempt to get it all said understandably. The first indicator is New Reformation,[32] a complex attack on the misunderstandings of his thought by his youthful followers: "I have been hectored to my face with formulations that I myself put in their mouths."[33] "When the chips are down, they are just like their fathers."[34] Following that, and subsequent to a massive heart attack, he seems to have gone into semi-retirement at the one personal indulgence he allowed himself from the wealth of his famous years--a small farm in New Hampshire. There he turned again to his literature,

working on a collected edition of his poetry,[35] working on a serious treatment of language,[36] and a book on religion, Little Prayers and Finite Experience.

His manifest need to make the full comprehension of the scope and richness of his thought available to those who had come to use him as a sloganeer is apparent in these late works. Perhaps reflecting on the bogus student in the last work published in his lifetime (Speaking and Language), he sets out his relationship with language: "It makes a difference whether people don't speak or speak."[37] Perhaps aiming to explain how he at least "thought" in the face of open advocacy of non-thought in the universities, he said, "When spoken to (as opposed to being not-spoken to) one is included at least as a human being."[38] He yokes his conceptions of speaking as an experience and of linguistics to his theories of literature, ending with a defense of poetry in which he gets at his irk: "I have written forty books. Evidently, to make literature is my way of being in the world."[39] In the summer of the year the book was published; Paul Goodman was dead.

His life was marked by two qualities--tremendous practicality and energy. Focusing on immediate desires and the immediate relation of organism to environment, Goodman got to the roots of modern man's most pervasive horror: ubiquitous alienation. He had a personal understanding of it, and this made for both his snappishness and his tenderness. And his activities in search for a place for himself in the world led him to a charitable concern for others. To this stands the general testimony of anyone who knew him well.

His energy is manifest in his achievements. And only months before he died, he remarked that he was not taking it easy after the heart attack, because there was so much to do.

The Empire City

The Empire City is composed of four "novels;"* and Goodman had lived with it for nearly twenty-five years before it was issued in paperback by Macmillan in 1964. It is a huge sprawling work, dominating his literary comments in Five Years and it seems to have taken on a life of its own, absorbing many shorter pieces, and, no doubt, as Roszak hints, inspiring numerous others. It was recalled upon publication, but only weeks before its publication, "reading proofs of the reviews," Goodman remarks in Five Years,

> I myself judge that the work is sprawling and unplanned. . . . I have not aimed to make my characters "well rounded and human" and have defied the expectations of the very readers I now woo, so I anxiously yearn for them not to notice. . . . And I am afraid because of the risk I have taken in going toward reality, so now I need reassurance that I am a good boy.[40]

While to tease out of this sprawling and unplanned work a coherent sense of what Goodman means by "going toward reality" must remain the central task of any serious reader, it is worth remarking at the outset that The Empire City is so multi-dimensional, so varied in style and program, so large and tortuous that one may eventually be tempted to give over wondering what it is.

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*The Empire City was published together for the first time in 1959; and it bears copyright dates of 1942 (The Grand Piano), 1946 (The State of Nature), and 1959 (The Dead of Spring and The Holy Terror).

Yet at the same time the work seems to contain the quintessence of Paul Goodman; and it is here, in The Empire City, that one gets the work that most forcefully unifies the numerous Paul Goodmans. Indeed it stands so close to his heart that the perils of ignoring it are insurmountable if one would "understand" Paul Goodman.

The Empire City is a deliberately and self-consciously avant garde work of art, posing problems of structure and suggesting resolutions to them that were of interest to Goodman. As an avant garde work, it seeks, as Goodman puts it, "to alter the code."

Although its form is unusual to say the least, Goodman's content is manifestly didactic. The Empire City is crowded with prescriptions and speculations about how people ought best to live their lives--it "teaches" in a very old-fashioned sense. It is a pyrotechnical display of erudition, full of citations of thinkers from a dizzying array of times and disciplines, an empirical definition of what it means to be "a man of letters."

> A generalist is a man who knows something about many special sciences, in order to coordinate their conclusions in a system that has little relation to reality. A man of letters knows only a little about some major human concerns, but insists on relating what he does know to his concrete experience. So he explores reality. A generalist is inter-disciplinary. A man of letters finds that the nature of things is not easily divided into disciplines.[41]

It is thus possible to approach The Empire City from a staggering number of perspectives. (The next chapter will present a short summary of several literary critics' attempts to deal with it.) Much recommends our study of it rather than some other "collection" of Goodman's literary efforts. Its construction spans the very years that Goodman

was formulating the core of his educational thought; and it is unified by character and theme. Its massiveness allows him the scope necessary for the full flowering of what one critic calls his "sallies of his intellect and imagination."[42]

In our opinion, no other work of Goodman's attacks on such a comprehensive set of fronts the complex and intricate problems of knowing--knowing and acting, of "having a world," of being an educated man, that, is ultimately the stuff of any man's "theory of education." The Empire City, more than any other work, was the object of his most intense efforts, agonies, hopes and satisfactions, the work about which he could say, in a poem titled "The Empire City,"

> Thee God we praise for this complete
> book that overwork and doubt
> and pain could mar but not prevent
> because Thy spirit still was sent.
>
> Such as it is, this now belongs
> also among the created things
> whilst I relapse, Thy dying fact
> more spent, more sullen, and more racked.[43]

A brief description of the surface of The Empire City will perhaps aid the reader's recognition of the characters as they are identified in the next chapter before the lengthier "introductions" appear in our literary treatment itself. The Empire City is an episodic narrative of the lives of five central characters: the Alger family, consisting of young Horatio (with whom Goodman persistently identifies), his older anarchist brother, Lothar, and his architect-camofloeur sister, Laura; her lover, the intellectual, Mynheer; and brooding over them all, Goodman's sage, Eliphaz, a kind of Taoist entrepreneur. The

episodes span the years during which the work was written, from the Depression through the chaos of the war to the benumbed post-war period.

Ostensibly, the growth and education of the young Horatio is the main subject, but this soon is competing with Goodman's analysis of the whole "community," against which the backdrop of the world and its ways of doing things is considered. This interaction, contrast and comparison of varieties of social organisms (boy, community, world) doing in the "environment," the "nature of things" provides, becomes Goodman's subject.

Genre Criticism: A Methodological Approach

Probably the most pervasive question put to avant garde artists about their art is some form of "what is it?" One answer to that question is to identify the genre--the literary category in which it most clearly belongs. Indeed, until some answer to that question comes forth, we hardly know how to judge a work of art at all. In short, we lack a "background" against which to see it. By identifying its genre, the critic gains a theory of exposition.

Genre criticism is a model against which to consider a work of art. It is not the only way, nor is it a static way, since both new theories of genre and historical shifts in taste can yield surprising results--Wylie Sypher's treatment of the "metaphysical" poets as "Mannerists" in Four Stages of Renaissance Style would surprise earlier generations of readers.

Still, genre criticism responds to the imperative posed by most aestheticians--that of discovering the best (or a suitable) vantage

point from which to discover the value of a work. In the sense of Gestalt, genre criticism can provide a workable and vitalizing "background," against which a particular work may be cast as "figure."

It must, of course, be emphasized that any work, especially one as rich and complex as The Empire City, can be viewed from many vantage points, each giving a somewhat different sense of the work. The claim made here, based on the expositional and heuristic characteristics of genre criticism, is only that it provides one way of explaining the work and that this is one way of understanding and demonstrating Goodman's epistemological priorities. It is in no sense a final or comprehensive truth and, inevitably, emphasizes some aspects of the work at the expense of others.

Henry David Aiken articulated the "two countervailing errors of genre criticism" in his review of Goodman's The Structure of Literature.

> One is the tendency to force a work into a categorical straight-jacket which thereby induces a misreading; the other is the off-setting tendency to proliferate a maze of literary sub-types and cross-types that loses the individual work in the process and defeats the purpose of criticism by drawing attention away from the work to a problem of classification.[45]

Genre criticism avoids these just so far as it does not lose sight of its heuristic origins.

In this study we apply the general genre taxonomy presented by Northrop Frye in The Anatomy of Criticism to Paul Goodman's Empire City. Fry's theoretical perspective is recent, highly experimental and has, in our opinion, been applied in convincingly fruitful ways.

His approach stresses that "the forms of prose fiction are mixed, like racial strains in human beings, not separable like the

sexes";[46] and thus he makes provision for our treatment of avant garde works through a consideration of the nature of the "mixture." And Frye seems to be as interested in providing a platform for understanding new fiction as he is in developing a tool for literary-historical studies.

Working with the two variables of content and approach, Frye divides prose fiction into four genres: the novel, the romance, the confessional, and the anatomy. In emphasizing the combinations a given work of fiction may have, Frye's methodology itself encourages an experimental technique.

The argument presented here is that while The Empire City can be approached as a romance or as a confessional, it is best understood as an exemplar of Frye's "anatomy" category. If that is so, then an important insight into Goodman's epistemological procedure and posture can be inferred from the general characteristics, the choice and the structure of the anatomy. In keeping with the program of genre criticism, what is attempted is simply to demonstrate that to see The Empire City as an anatomy is to discover important new aspects of the work and, by extrapolation, of Goodman's thought.

Prior to undertaking the application of Frye's system to The Empire City, it may be useful, both in setting the genre criticism within a more general context of literary criticism and in developing an overall perspective on the work, to review briefly a number of conventional critical approaches to The Empire City. The next chapter constitutes that review.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

[1]Jack Hruska, "An Analysis of Paul Goodman's Conception of the Nature of Man as a Perspective on His Educational Proposals: A Study in the Philosophical Foundations of Radical Educational Thought" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1969). Hruska listed seventeen major proposals, see pp. 194-209.

[2]Richard Kostalanetz, "The Prevalence of Paul Goodman," New York Times Magazine, April 3, 1966, p. 70.

[3]Paul Goodman, Little Prayers and Finite Experience (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 119.

[4]See, for example, Hruska.

[5]See, for example, Mark R. Penta, "Education as a Function of Community: Paul Goodman's Concept of the Educative City" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1972).

[6]See, for example, Kostalanetz's article or Henry S. Resnick, "Heretic from the Mass Faith in Scientific Technology," Saturday Review, May 23, 1970, pp. 43-45.

[7]Paul Goodman, Five Years: Thoughts During a Useless Time (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 248-249.

[8]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

[9]Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 3.

[10]Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 180.

[11]Kostalanetz, p. 71.

[12]Paul Goodman, Making Do (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 245.

[13]Paul Goodman, The Structure of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

[14]Paul Goodman, Stop Light (Harrington Park, N.J.: 5 x 8 Press, 1941).

[15]Paul Goodman, The Grand Piano, An Almanac of Alienation (San Francisco: Colt Press, 1942).

[16]Paul Goodman, Drawing the Line (New York: Random House, 1946).

[17]Paul Goodman, The State of Nature (New York: Vanguard Press, 1946).

[18]Paul Goodman, Art and Social Nature (New York: Vinco Publishing Company, 1946).

[19]Paul Goodman, Kafka's Prayer (New York: Vanguard Press, 1947).

[20]Paul Goodman, The Copernican Revolution (Saugatuck, Conn.: 5 x 8 Press, 1947).

[21]Paul Goodman and Percival Goodman, Communitas (New York: Random House, 1947).

[22]Frederick Perls, Ralph F. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1951).

[23]Hruska, p. 8.

[24]Goodman, Five Years, "Foreword."

[25]Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education and The Community of Scholars (New York: Random House, 1962). Further reference to these works will cite them by individual titles.

[26]Goodman, Community of Scholars.

[27]Paul Goodman, People or Personnel and Like a Conquered Province (New York: Random House, 1968). Further reference to these works will cite them by individual titles.

[28]Goodman, Like a Conquered Province.

[29]Paul Goodman, The Lordly Hudson (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

[30]Paul Goodman, Hawkweed (New York: Random House, 1967).

[31]Paul Goodman, Homespun of Oatmeal Grey (New York: Random House, 1970).

[32]Paul Goodman, New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative (New York: Random House, 1970).

[33]Ibid., p. 55.

[34]Ibid., p. xii.

[35]Paul Goodman, Collected Poems, ed. by Taylor Stoehr (New York: Random House, 1972).

[36]Paul Goodman, Speaking and Language (New York: Random House, 1970).

[37]Ibid., p. 3.

[38]Ibid., p. 4.

[39]Ibid., p. 234.

[40]Goodman, Five Years, p. 215 (emphasis mine).

[41]Goodman, Little Prayers, pp. 41-43.

[42]Sherman Paul, "Paul Goodman's Mourning Labor: The Empire City," Southern Review (New Series), IV, Autumn, 1968, p. 897.

[43]Paul Goodman, "The Empire City," Collected Poems, p. 73.

[44]Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955).

[45]Henry David Aiken, "Inductive Criticism," Kenyon Review, XIII, Winter, 1955, p. 306.

[46]Frye, p. 305.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE CRITICAL LITERATURE

Introduction

The critical reception for The Empire City was bleak--miniscule in bulk and sometimes disheartening in appraisal. One can assign plausible causes for this, ranging from criticism's habitual myopia about the radically different to Goodman's capacity to antagonize. Whatever the reasons for the poverty of the criticism, what little we do have is marked by its contradicitons, strength of statement, and even attacks with which Goodman himself might wryly agree. "His very weirdness makes him a suggestive voice,"[1] says one critic. The contradictions and strong expressions in the criticism suggest he has touched a central nerve. Looked at from their theoretical assumptions, there are senses in which all the critics are right. Perhaps one could simply say that the critics disagree about the term "novel."

The large number of terms used to describe The Empire City suggest both its breadth and fictional theory's legion difficulty in matters of classification. Threatened by generalities like "novel" and by particularities limited only by the inventiveness of individual critics, the whole enterprise is further hindered by its descriptive terminology's tendency to become evaluative.

Certainly in the criticism of twentieth century fiction, a central argument concerns "technique," and in general this has meant arcane

discussions of the nature of the narrator. All will agree that "he" consists of content and language, or, even more bluntly, story and story telling--the nature of which makes for "characterization," "plot," and "theme." Usually, one of these seems primary and generally we emphasize plot, content, and theme in older works and the intricacies of "point of view," technique and language manipulation in more recent ones. In order to understand Goodman's reception, we must keep in mind the climate of opinion fostered by recent criticism. It has turned its attention to "craft," (as indeed many of its great artists have done), to "showing" rather than "telling," and to a more or less prejudiced hatred for the direct appearance of the author. In short, the author is supposed to "hide" himself and we are supposed to "find" him. This does not predict a very hearty reception for an artist who aims to get as much of "himself" on the page as possible.

The most telling distinction in Goodman's fiction, the active intelligence of the narrator, makes Goodman's ideas a part of the "action" of the book.

To Goodman's critics--no less than in Goodman himself as a critic--description becomes evaluation. His voice, the critics' arguments for and against him, and the nature of Goodman's own critical theory make a review of his critical literature an especially appropriate place for hinting how far his literary theory informs his other notions as well. The following discussion suggests this by isolating some of Goodman's strongest critical statements and in doing so, anticipates both the nature and the reception of The Empire City. Since Goodman's primary criterion for meaningful art and conversation are "authenticity" and

"surprise," and his theory of language esteems "altering the code," it should come as no shock that he sees himself as "avant garde."

The most central argument he has with fictional theorists--seen easily in both his criticism and in his fiction--materializes in the critics' discussion of "point of view" and their critical attacks on Goodman's "language." About the former, no less a critic than Wayne Booth notes the differences between Goodman and more traditional approaches; about the latter, such commentators as the late John J. Enck, Nora Sayre, and Kingsley Widmer have their say. These remarks are opposed by Goodman's friend, George Dennison, and Sherman Paul, who, like Goodman in his own comments on his fiction, prefer to discuss it in terms of character and genre.

This chapter, then, outlines the place Goodman's literary theory has in relation to his other works, introduces the reader to Goodman's literary values and suggests some possible parallels between these and his social, political, and psychological ideas, reviews the critical literature about him as both a theorist of fictional theory and arts, and points toward a resolution of such clashes as occur through a more accurate understanding of genre.

Goodman's Values

From the start, in his earliest published literary criticism, Goodman's critical stance predicts his disagreement with current fictional theory and with what he comes to call the "standard novel." His later books (especially Speaking and Language), confirm, clarify, and strengthen those differences as he works to articulate them even more forcefully. As usual, he emphasizes authenticity and surprise as

valuable in both oral and literary communication--starting as he always has done with the notion that literature is just good speech.

Format

This reflects, we believe, Goodman's coming closer and closer to identifying what it is that he hates so much in our whole civilization, literary and otherwise. In fact, all his books--fiction and social criticism--focus on the extrinsic nature of "format," organization, model, administration. His rejection of "format" in literature is consistent with his anarchist politics and his Reichian psychology. Goodman sees "format" as degrading to art, just as introjection degrades the individual, and institutions, the populace at large. In each realm, format promotes the idea that nothing can be done, since format is the genesis of the self fulfilling prophecy and the self proving hypothesis. He not only demonstrates that our assumptions and expectations will bring about their own fulfillment--a now accepted artifact of pedagogy[2]--but he also shows that concrete acts establish their own proactive dynamics. The Venceremos Brigade go to Cuba to "help" by harvesting sugar cane, and by doing so help perpetuate the destructive monocrop system, for which Goodman attacks them in New Reformation.[3]

Avant Garde

Goodman considers himself an avant garde artist and his view of this role underlines everything we have said about his cranksidedness.

> Avant garde [art] tends to be capricious, impatient, fragmentary, ill-tempered. Yet except by raging and denying, a writer might not be able to stay alive at all as a writer. As a style avant garde is an hypothesis that something is very wrong in society. Avant garde artists

> do not take the current style for granted; it disgusts them. Avant garde is different from other inventive writing. If a work is felt to be "experimental," it is not that the writer is doing something new but that he is making an effort to be different, to be not traditional. In any period, powerful artists are likely to go way out and become incomprehensible. Surrealism said that rationality was a sell. As the century has worn on and wears on, these startling literary guesses have gotten a certain amount of confirmation. An ultimate step is always Dada, the use of art to deny the existence of meaning. A step after the last is to puff up examples of format itself to giant size. Pop. But in a confused society, avant garde does not flourish very well. What is done in order to be idiotic can easily be co-opted as the idiotic standard.[4]

At bottom, Goodman hates lifelessness more than he does anything else--in literature or in life.

Our insatiable appetite for the strange, our capacity to "use up" ideas without ever getting past their superficial implications, all the while clarifying, indeed "packaging" them for consumption--these apply as much to the literary marketplace as they do to the sartorial. Given such a view of things, Goodman can preface his original volume of The Empire City with his hope that it contains "nothing fundamentally unobjectionable."[5]

Altering the Code

If acceptance can only come from following a simple-minded and shopworn "format," Goodman would prefer "temporary" rejection. This means nothing less than preferring legitimate confusion to irrelevant clarity.

> Meaning and confusion are both beautiful. What is chilling is great deeds that have no meaning--the stock in trade of warriors and statesmen, but my radical friends also go in for them. What is exasperating is positivistic clarity and precision that are irrelevant to the real irk. A value of

literature is that it can inject the confusion into positivistic clarity, bring the shadows into the foreground.[6]

Seeing himself in a world obsessed with format, then, Goodman treats "communication" itself on a sliding scale from an imaginary void in which speech is "an exchange of prefabricated representations, [and] to speak is to be oneself a cog in the International Business Machine," which derives from "regarding language as essentially a constant code not to be modified by its speakers, [and] the only trustworthy words are emotional cries," to a real speech in which "speech [itself] has made a difference to how [the speakers] organize their experience," and where the possibility of being surprised survives. To Goodman, "the aim of communication is to later the code," and if he "is surprised by what you say . . . there is more communication" than if he goes "about [his] business using the information [and his] code is not changed." In this "closer contact of dialogue" as Buber calls it, Goodman says, "there is resistance, vulnerability, reaching, excitement and reconstructions." And "some people's personalities are very much their verbal patterns. Communication feels like physical aggression or seduction." It is, Goodman argues, a metaphorically "good sign of communication [that] the speakers touch one another." Finally, then, "poetic speech, which drastically alters the code, communicates better than ordinary speech; one has to give in to get something out of it."[7]

"To alter the code," to "create resistance, vulnerability, reaching, excitement and reconstruction"--these are values to Goodman. He stops short of saying that any changed Gestalt is better, but not very far from it.

Resignation

Over the years Goodman found that such a theory of surprise and acting on it in literature as elsewhere was doomed to temporal failure; and from this discovery he fashioned that particular Goodmanesque tone of resignation and hopefulness that is his trademark. He pulses through rage to a quietism that seems to derive from having gotten rid of that rage. Of course, this can be seen as an aesthetic structure, a psychological or a sexual one, a religious one and so forth.

He consistently speaks of working "on the boundary of the unknown," which to him seems to have been at once a real psychological state and a manifestly religious one. He seems to reach it by paradoxes:

> The Zen "acceptance of imperfection" is dillentantism. According to what standard is a thing imperfect? When there is no good and evil there is no imperfection. But once you have judged, it is your nature to try to be perfect. "You do not need to finish the job; neither are you free to leave off."[8]

Noting in passing the similarity of the above with Kafka, we might think of the difference as one of emphasis. Both Goodman and Kafka know the folly of Western man's aim for perfection: Kafka emphasizes its absurdity and notes the faith it takes to do anything at all in life; Goodman notes the absurdity and emphasizes the faith (sometimes posing himself as an example of a man fighting the "drawn out losing battle) just because truth is in the act.

Truth and Faith

If public knowledge depends on empirical verification of analytically consistent terminology, art is doomed from the start,

and becomes painting by numbers, or, to Goodman, "the standard novel." Yet notoriously art does exist. This Goodman knows. But aiming to make precise models for spontaneity is simply wrong-headed. Goodman also knows this. And such quips as "truth is structured faith,"[9] or "the word becomes the thing,"[10] suggest both how close and how far away he was from saying the unsayable.

If his literary values sometimes seem vague and to the verification of our era, "subjective," he has been honest enough to say so in plain language and he has often given specific instances of what delights him. Neither does this suggest that he lacks sophisticated methodology. Five Years, Speaking and Language, Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals are brimming with articulate linguistic explications and queries about language. He is like many critics in using that methodology to back up the blunt truth of whether or not he likes a book. He is unlike them in that he makes this abundantly clear.

The difficulties of founding "truth" on "faith"--endemic in the artist's position--are also those of any sincere individual man and his occupation, for the necessity of "faith" in a socially hostile world is finally to Goodman only more dramatically revealed by the artist than by other kinds of personal commitments and involvements. While the ends of these activities may vary, their means have similar qualities and the "essential" structure is to Goodman the same. It values "faith"--pure and simple.

He commiserates with authors and others in these terms:

> At the end of [the literary] process, somehow, the finished work will have been worth doing. If it is a long

> poem, it will have the kind of meaning that poems have. If it is a prose essay, it will say something true about its subject matter.
>
> This last is, of course, simply an act of faith, but it is no different in kind from the faith of all who work at the boundary of the unknown--the faith of a physician that, if he pursues his method, nature will heal the patient; or the faith of an empirical scientist that, if he pursues his method, the nature of things will reveal a secret; or, for that matter, the faith of a child who runs across a field and the ground supports him. If they fail, they do not give up the method, because they have no alternative way of being.[11]

This is as close as we can get to Goodman's paradigm dilemma, the source of that distinct Goodman tone. On the one hand, socially, plenty of alternative life styles--most of them better as ways of living--do exist. On the other hand, personally and psychologically at least for the artist (and by extension, for anyone committed to functioning in a real social role), no alternative way of being does exist. Importantly, both are held together by "faith," but one is bogus and the other is real because ways of living must congrue to our way of being in order to be genuine. And to Goodman, because of our institutions' powerful "anti-imagination"--America's ways of living are too shallow and too few to accommodate many useful ways of being, whether we think of these as traditional or invented. Such wide language as this explains alienation as both a stance and subject for Goodman's literature.

Literature

Finally, what does Goodman value in literature qua literature? His characteristic valuation is remarkable for its breadth.

> Schopenhauer or Nietzsche--I no longer remember which; either is possible because both were snappish and down-to-earth--advises looking first at the last chapter and asking, "Was will der Mensch?" ("What's the man after?"). He is after where he ends up. But has he gone there? If so, you have to go the way with him. My own usual experience is that I do start out with him frankly on his way; but somewhere along he fakes something, or he doesn't know something that he ought to know, and then I find it hard to continue. My experience also is that one can usually easily recognize the writer who is really in there pitching, suffering, doing his best, finding new things--at least new to himself--and not just working a sewing machine. To him one allows any number of mistakes and gaps.[12]

Thus, it is simply faith--in both Goodman's criticism and his own writings that he banks on. To Goodman, since art aims to work at the "boundary of the unknown," certainly only faith will finally justify it. To go further, to attempt to create or to criticize it in conformity with prescribed codes is simply wrongheaded.

Valuing the intra-personal aspects of communication, spontaneity, surprise, altering the code, Goodman may seem to respond more actively to authors than other modern critics who praise them for their "technique."

> Ancient and modern writers are my closest friends, with whom I am in sympathy. They are wise and talented and their conversation sends me. Maybe I am more lonely than average (How would I know?), but I need them. Books and artworks are extraordinary company (one does not need to make allowances), and in the nature of the case, they speak most clearly to us writers and artists because we respond to them most actively: we notice how he does that, and if it is congenial we say, "I could do something like that." Despite its bloodlessness, the tradition of literature is a grand community and, much as I envy the happy and the young, I doubt that they have as good a one. (How would I know?)[13]

Criticism of the Empire City

A survey of Goodman's criticism suggests how profoundly he differs with any critical view that enshrines the disappearing narrator and even predicts, we think, the inevitable argument over the value of The Empire City, and that book's "point of view," in contrast to that of the "novel." Goodman's habitual personification of the writer (whether in terms of the artist or in terms of the narrator) is the major stumbling block.

In The Structure of Literature, Goodman seems to attack the problem at the level of interaction of artist-artwork-viewer. Thus, in a theoretical view he goes further than almost all critics in pointing to the narrator's presence; and operationally, in The Empire City, he creates a "voice" which underscores that presence. This offers a central and illustrative starting place for a more specific discussion of Goodman and his critics.

Wayne Booth, in his recent definitive work, The Rhetoric of Fiction, emphasizes Goodman's divergence on the question of the "narrator." Arguing himself for the author having a "second story telling self" with whom the reader "collaborates," Booth points out that

> . . . it may be extreme to call this relationship one of identification as [does] Paul Goodman, [but] there are times when we do surrender ourselves to the great authors and allow our judgments to merge completely with theirs. . . . Much [authorial, narrator's] commentary that seems excessive if judged by narrow standards of function is wholly defensible when seen as contributing to our sense of traveling with a trustworthy companion, an author who is sincerely battling to do justice to his materials.[14]

Using Henry Fielding as a classic example, Booth reminds us very generally that "even the most clumsily worded intrusion can redeem itself by conveying this sense of how deeply the narrator cares about what he is doing."[15]

Goodman's emphasis on the intra-personal relationship between author and reader and his keen eye for detail may suggest that his criticism will focus on the ethical and ferret out minute evidence for the nature of the narrator. Proceeding from a position similar to Booth's, that the critic should help the reader find what it is the author wants him to think, Goodman goes on to say that any mixed type of literature (comedy vs. tragedy) demands the presence of the narrator to direct the reading. In comparison with many modern critics he exaggerates the presence of the narrator. In short, he finds that not only powerful verbal constructions (e.g., wit and epigram) point to the narrator, but also <u>any</u> management of time and place, such as juxtaposition of scenes to achieve a literary effect (e.g., irony in the drama), also point to the narrator and, to Goodman, <u>either</u> the narrator's withdrawal <u>or</u> intrusion will heighten the "drama" by creating the reader's interaction with character <u>or</u> narrator respectively. For instance,

> Any literary gesture that attracts attention to itself implies the narrator and a similar series of such gestures is the narrator's attitude.[16]

> . . . Even where the characters are all dramatic the narrator may appear in the disposition of scenes, as when one scene follows another with an effect of irony, or when one scene is set as foil to another, and this sequence is not strictly probable. And to go to the limit, we must say that any shift of scene at all introduces the narrator into the plot, since it distracts from the immediate presentation.[17]

> In one way we must say that every work is dramatic, because some part is always immediately presented as Homer's part in the Iliad. The narrative may then become more dramatic in either of two ways: (a) by minimizing the narrator's dramatic role to a few lines and having the narrator assume the roles of the characters and speak for them, as Aristotle praises Homer for doing; or (b) by expanding the narrator's immediately dramatic role, as in the case of a lyrical narrative, for example, The Solitary Reaper, where the emotions and thoughts of the narrator are a major part.[18]

In The Empire City, Goodman's emotions and thoughts constitute a major part of the "story." About this, the handful of critics who have treated the work are agreed. About the value of Goodman's "narrative voice"--composed of "point of view" and "language"--they are in fundamental disagreement, except to note that the "voice" is indeed a strange one in fiction.

Point of View

The divergence of critical opinion about the point of view of The Empire City is so radical as to suggest at least two different kinds of readings. According to George Dennison, Goodman invents a "voice which assimilates philosophic content to the excitement of narration."[19] But John J. Enck, writing about a volume of Goodman's short stories, finds

> No matter what the ostensible subject, the stories throughout Our Visit to Niagara contain certain repeated oddities, one of which is point of view. As in Goodman's fiction [sic.], the point of view shifts edgily: Hodges [the main character in "The Architect from New York"] sees, the author reports, another character observes, or bare narrative takes over. This raw nervousness always distracts the reader from the meaning to the lack of technique. Elsewhere, Goodman, like a parent anxious about a child's ability to fend for itself, will walk into his own scenes: striking up an acquaintance with the protagonist at the Museum of Modern Art, dropping down from a tree, or just materializing on a Greek galley.[20]

Still, Sherman Paul, in his excellent lengthy article, "Paul Goodman's Mourning Labor: The Empire City," finds Goodman's presence in The State of Nature admirable. Goodman opens the second volume of the tetralogy with a satirical essay on how our society is organized, followed by the cavalier and realistic dismissal of such readers "as explain by political difference these enormous "things concurred in by all."[21] Paul says that Goodman's use of "our boy" and "our society" to refer to Horatio Alger and both the fictional and real world of 1944 makes for a familiarity, "as if reading the first book had earned us membership in the community of his friends. We concede him the right to tell us the story and to fill it, as never before, with his own social and psychological disquisitions." Furthermore, the narrator's "familiarity," Paul concludes, "may be said to insure his reception. [Its] presence secures the unity of the novel's episodic action as well as the unity of its bitter spirit."[22] Yet to Kingsley Widmer in The Literary Rebel, Goodman's Empire City is marred by "authorial pontifications about abstract metaphors."[23]

This is the heart of critical complaints--not so much that Goodman does appear in his own fiction but that he does so without disguise, without keeping up the "narrative," without concealing his contempt for the way we have organized our society. It is, thus, his lordly manner, his language and tone that the critics who dislike him hate so much. Our awareness of the narrator's intellectual presence absolutely enrages Enck and Widmer, who certainly agree about his overbearing qualities. In most first person novels, we may feel slightly superior to the character because we can explain by means of

abstractions what his plight is. In most third person novels, we may agree with the author from a kind of God's eye view about what his characters are really up to. In Goodman's Empire City, the first person Paul Goodman quotes Goethe at us; the "narrator" explains to us. He tells us, and in no uncertain terms; and his level of abstraction galls the unfriendly critics.

Language

Widmer generalizes for all these critics when he finds Goodman "a significant writer who cannot write well,"[24] and is echoed by Nora Sayre when she says, "Paul Goodman's ideas must be salvaged from his language. Nestling amidst the Socspeak and the bad verbal plumbing there are many valuable points all worthy of the repetition that Mr. Goodman gives them."[25] Of these detractors, clearly Enck is the most inventive, but rather curiously his charges for the most part might meet with a wry smile from Goodman who has always argued that good writing is good speech. Thus, many of Enck's attacks might be construed as compliments--given Goodman's aims. For instance,

> In the first place, he cannot, or does not care to, write sentences. The jerkily flowing phrases share more affinities with words spoken into a dictaphone and transcribed than with those set down by typewriter or pen.[26]

Goodman's prose is oral. He thinks that good writing "alters the code," and as an avant garde artist, he aims partly to confuse the tiresome lullaby of "format." Neither can he be pinned down, nor does he pin himself down; but much of the following from Enck might be just as good an argument for Goodman's "architectonic aesthetic" as it is an attack on his "style."

> His violence against the Organization permeates the writing itself: sentences, paragraphs, segments, and whole chapters digress, reiterate points, modify earlier claims, or nervously drop a topic.[27]

To be sure, Goodman's prose is open-ended, but there are numerous other writers--Sterne, Rabelais, and Gide--who might be similarly accused. Even though open endedness and abstraction from another era is often credited as brilliant invention, Goodman's modern use of abstract language and his collector's "air" infuriates Enck.

> He tends to rely upon the general no matter the genre; . . . jargons, made familiar by social theorists of all sorts, dominate whole pages; . . . echoes from the better nineteenth century minds bound between many lines; . . . perhaps truth is a cliche and one must only repeat it. I cannot bring myself to applaud a middle high seriousness in this century about absolute rules which even the nineteenth framed with ironies. . . . For years Goodman's resorting to the hyphenated phrase, perhaps part of his belief in Gestalt psychology, has put me off by its creating colecisms-beyond-strict-necessity. I find it hard to convince myself that a man whose native language is English talking to another naturally employs these choked syllables and more difficult to believe that, unless forced by an exact reference, anyone writes them willingly.[28]

The attack already spills over into content, and continues to do so as Enck and Widmer comment on his Goodman's orthography, word-coinage, and finally his "qualities." Enck apologizes for "the plethora of Capitalized Abstraction [he has] so far used, but the political group, usually, and Goodman, especially, almost demand them."[29] This, plus Goodman's "embarrassment before the isolated and concrete, even if he had no other claims, surely guarantee his credentials as being very much of today, or wishing to be."[30] To Enck, Goodman is "in the comic plight of those who strive to define their freedom while bound in a strait jacket woven with Abstraction and locked by Slang."[31]

Kingsley Widmer is more direct in his criticism, but again, like Enck, curiously echoes some of Goodman's own sentiments and at least some portion of what he says might also be regarded as compliment.

> The arty additions of allegorical bits of sociology, muddled "GI" and "shaggy dog" jokes, private allusions and pedantic burlesque truly achieve "an almenac of alienation." The solopsism reminds us of the perils of literary rebellion, especially in a time when there is little community of rich speech, and the writer with no intuitive sense of language and drama can assert arbitrariness as individual innovation.[32]

Widmer accuses him of writing in "tone deaf slang" and including "whimsical disjointed musings," and says "he lacks 'natural' talent" and has "a dead ear . . . , lack of sensory responses, taste for the flat generality, earnest sentimentality, and no redeeming concreteness."[33]

Finally, both Enck and Widmer are baffled by Goodman. They both have begrudging compliments for his activities and some of his ideas. They are simply not sure how he meant it all, and too timid to pursue their own suggestions. If they deride his stance itself, they do note the tension between his method and his content. "A strange and often comical, war goes on in most of Goodman's work between defiant gestures and pretentious moralizing."[34] And, "such grandiose swaggering fails to square with the reasonable programs which he constantly urges. This split influences not only his theories of life and literary values but also his own fiction."[35] Ultimately to Widmer, "despite the absurd literary pretensions, [Goodman's] very weirdness makes him a suggestive voice."[36]

Goodman, for his part has said,

> The proposition that science progresses but art does not progress seems plausible till one realizes that important portions of science do not progress because they have arrived; e.g., you boil water by heating it; you know where the babies come from. So there are achieved things in art, like Homer or Haydn, invaluable to know but quite pointless to repeat. The average standard novel may be quite fine and a contribution to solace and entertainment, but esthetically it is about as interesting as a new careful demonstration that you can boil water with fire. And as "communication," every new standard work is a dis-service, on Norbert Weiner's principle that every repetition of a clear message increases the noise.[37]

Such works may surprise, but they do not do so "authentically." They may be "clever," but they do not "alter the code."

Genre and Character

Goodman's hatred for "repetition" might lead us to reflect that literary history is strewn with the landmarks of successful (and sometimes rediscovered) new genres and the epitaphs of failed "new" genre. It is an analytical truth that anyone who aims to avoid repetition and does so successfully must hack out something approaching a new "genre." That is, the "genre" will have to be discovered before the author can be lauded for being faithful to it, an excellent example of it, and so forth. In addition, to a certain extent, the new genre must at least have some similarities with established genre in order to find explanatory comparison at all. Bluntly, to the extent that we delight in likenesses (perhaps "reverberations" is a better word), and enjoy "art" both for its innovation and for its faithfulness to its implied form, the more comprehensive our sense of genre, the more mathematically possible it is to find something valuable and true in it. If this

suggests a rather conservative view of literature and timid critics, I would say that no other possibility seems to exist for explaining why we find something worth our while.

A glance at Widmer's and Enck's remarks substantiates that they think Empire City is a bad novel. Everything points to their wanting more "story" and less "Goodman." Dennison and Paul, on the other hand, operating on the strength of having read Goodman not only more sympathetically, but more perceptively and thoroughly as well, are not overwhelmed by the book's being a bad novel. It is. But their examination of the book's nature doesn't stop there; given a bad "novel," these critics consider that it might be a good "something else." Both treat The Empire City as a "romance," and suggest other helpful generic and structural possibilities. Professors Enck and Widmer do not mention seriously any genre other than novel or short story in their treatment of Goodman's fiction.

Yet Goodman himself called attention to his method in his earliest volume. He refers to The Grand Piano in his preface to the first edition as an "almanac of alienation," as a "comedy of sociological humors modeled rather after Ben Jonson,"[38] Goodman's explication of that method, like Dennison's and Paul's, emphasizes both genre and characterization simultaneously.

> The method is to extend each social role to infinity and give it rein; and everybody has such a role. Fixed completely in their attitudes, the characters clash only superficially--for each gets the satisfaction that befits him, and the Empire (we see it every day!) is great enough to house them all. Therefore the tone and action are comic and even cheerful. But in fact, the framework of their Empire being what it is, none of these persons is aspiring to any good thing, so the tone and action are sarcastic and even dismayed.

> The formal structure of such a combination of cheer and dismay is that the persons proceed unobstructed to an impasse and no miracle is prepared to relieve the impasse.
>
> (What I say here does not apply to the boy, whom I have freed by a trick. His action is a simple educational romance in the manner of Horatio Alger Jr.)
>
> This work is a sociological abstraction in that no motives of personal psychology have weight.[39]

Extending social roles to infinity, characters fixed completely in their attitudes, no motives of personal psychology--these already suggest the dream, the inevitability of the event and numerous "interpretations." Indeed, the action is highly imaginative; and sympathetic critics have emphasized the freedom Goodman's characters have because of their imaginative context. But this can also be looked at as systematic denial: Goodman does not allow us to "identify" with the characters (they do not change); neither does Goodman allow us to "analyze" ("excuse") them; nor does he allow us to "pity" them in the sense that they might have won their battle with society had it just been a bit different (as in Steinbeck). In the absence of such ways of "explaining" them, we turn to the narrator himself, and, like Goodman, he is brimming with reasons for the events, none of which (not even the totality of reasons) are final, but held up as "possibilities" in a surrealistically disordered kaleidoscope which has a range, it would seem, from the manic joy of destruction to the depressing passivity of seemingly pointless self-sacrifice.

It is nip and tuck whether we think of these characters as imaginative possibilities or as logically extended necessities. The scope of the "possibilities" and the range of the emotions which Goodman evokes about these characters is the great achievement of

The Empire City. The characters are so huge that they can contain Goodman's paradoxes about them.

Perhaps it is fruitful to think about the characters as competing with Goodman's multifarious explanatory systems for the center of our attention. George Dennison emphasizes the "hagiographic quality of the whole work," because he thinks of the characters as "persons whose ideal thought must inevitably appear as action [and] this transformation of the ideal into the actual is the characteristic action of the saint."[40]

But when Goodman describes The Empire City as a "comedy of sociological humors," he hints the methodology itself. Part of the delight of the work derives from our attempts to unify two or more discrete systems of thought, the literary manifestations of which contradict novelistic design in a fundamental way.

Goodman "explains" his characters' actions in abstract language; and the characters do not "develop." (Character "development" has long been thought a staple of the novel.) Goodman's methodology is revealed when we consider that the main characteristic of a "humor" is, according to Northrop Frye, its being "dominated by what Pope calls a ruling passion," and the humor's "dramatic function is to express a state of what might be called ritual bondage, [on] the principle that unincremental repetition, the literary imitation of ritual bondage, is funny."[41] But Frye remarks also that repetition has two possible ends: "in a tragedy . . . repetition leads logically to catastrophe; [but] repetition overdone or not going anywhere belongs

to comedy, for laughter is partly a reflex, and like other reflexes, it can be conditioned by a simple repeated pattern."[42]

In terms of emotional tone, Goodman has "let" these two kinds of repetition (or perhaps more accurately, his own views of their possible effects) compete, so that in principle yesterday's repetition can appear funny or tragic today.

Put another way, the systems of analysis themselves compete for our attention. Thus, in the medieval psychological scheme, the unincremental repetition leads to our discovery of the characters' essences. But this absolutist system collides with the modern determinism (such as those of Freud, Marx, Darwin and Skinner) apparent in Goodman's "explanations." And these latter of course compete with each other for dominance. This competition and the relativistic fluctuating importances we normally ascribe to these systems make them seem incapable of dealing with the more absolutistic conceptualization apparent in "essences." (The "humor" can also be thought of as an archetype, an ultimate stuff for the character or the character's ultimate "stuff" as matter and emotion are mixed in alchemy, in connection with which the humor has a long and venerable heritage.) Neither one of the "determinisms," nor the sum of them is capable of "explaining" a character's "essence" completely, for, given the absolutistic nature of the "humor," it logically and psychologically (emotionally) subsumes more recent and fragmentary "explanatory systems."

Thus, Goodman's characters might be said to constitute literally demonstrations of a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

(Yet, while this is of some concern to us in the next chapter and certainly in the two concluding chapters, in the latter part of this one, we examine Goodman's relationship with those characters and the critics' perceptions of his characterization in The Empire City in more modern senses of character and genre.)

These are really questions of the author/narrator's imagination, not about the characters themselves. In other words, we can laugh at them or pity them in their situation, but we cannot respond to them in the sense that we can loathe, love, have hopes or predictions for them. We and they are primarily in the world of Goodman's imagination, but neither of us are free of his judgment and intellect. This might be said of many writers, but Goodman's more active presence differentiates him from other didactic writers.

The importance that emotion and paradox have to Goodman and his more sympathetic critics is worth emphasizing. He chooses to explain his characterization and tone in terms of ethical response: "the tone and action are comic and even cheerful" (because the characters are after all what they are) and are hence out of Goodman's "control," and evince his joy and laughter in their faithfulness to their idiosyncratic ways of being in the world no matter how stupid or wrongheaded these may be); and the tone and action are sarcastic and even dismayed (because the characters are, after all, damnit, what they are, because they are aspiring to no good thing, and because while out of Goodman's "control," they are certainly within range of his "judgment"). If we extend the aspirations of his characters to the aspirations of real people, we see more clearly into his paradoxes--

how, for instance, they concentrate on what is the case and joy about that and on what is the case in contrast to what might be the case, and his absolute frustration that what is the case does not itself present a very convincing case for a better case, or more succinctly, how, "If we conformed to the mad society, we became mad; but if we did not conform to the only society there is, we became mad."[43] His characters have fidelity to their own absurdities and are operationally funny. Given though, an imaginative context, their absurdities are pitiful and tragic. Apparently, too, one must not press for more accuracy than can be suggested by "aspiration," for anything more specific automatically brings death. In The Empire City, Goodman discusses the hard problem of aspiring for freedom in these terms:

> Our spokesman cried ¡wopəəɹɟ but the word fell upside down. We are frozen in criticism. It is impossible to have a formulation of freedom and at the same time to do a free deed. Must we not say that we have made a formulation of freedom in order to protect ourselves from the unformable daring of doing a free deed? Yet how, in the face of the most obvious evidences of stupidity and slavery, is it possible to avoid hitting on a formulation of freedom? How not to dream it up? Is one to call the formulation of freedom a lie when it is not a lie, just because it does not give freedom, and even though it protects against freedom?[44]

Whether we are speaking of Goodman's characters or of his typical visions of people around him, we must note that they sometimes "act" in the context of his imagination, and that within that realm, it is their aspirations that he focuses on. Beware of what you wish for, he paraphrases Goethe, for at middle age you will have achieved it. His characters, with the exception of Horatio Alger, have arrived at this state; and the reader no longer has the luxury of explaining--

only the horror and laughter of watching. And Goodman's most perceptive critics have celebrated this "achievement" in terms of character and genre.

Thus, George Dennison argues that The Empire City is not a "novel of ideas," because "Goodman values understanding chiefly in its integral or poetic sense. . . . The abundant perceptions, analyses, and thoughts of the work cohere in poetic wholes rather than in formulations."[45] Even more drastically Harold Rosenberg[46] emphasizes that the narrative could

> . . . have been subtitled, "The Memoirs of An Ideologist." Except that, unlike naive conceptualists and joiners, with their faith in systems and their disillusionments, Goodman takes on ideas in order to get rid of them. . . . Goodman knows what is hidden from other ideologists: that the secret of the ideological age is a hunger for miracles.*

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*While Rosenberg may seem blunt here, he is correct; Goodman has often argued, "Too precise a preconception of what is wanted discourages creativity more than it channels it" (Goodman, New Reformation, p. 19). Whether we see this as getting rid of the informing ideas of our age or as working toward more correct, generally looser formulations of them is finally less urgent than that we do so in order to avoid the increasing incidence of the self-proving hypothesis in our thought. A typically Goodmanesque statement of the problem occurs in Marvin Grandstaff's article, "The Family as an Educational Institution: The Lost Perspective," "It will not do for educators to participate in the process that robs the family of its function and cohesiveness and then to use the dissolution of the family as an excuse for their own failure" [Marvin Grandstaff, "The Family as an Educational Institution: The Lost Perspective," Social Foundations of Education, ed. by Cole S. Brembeck and Marvin Grandstaff (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1969), p. 131.] Given the applicability of just such thinking to a vast preponderence of social and governmental "activity," Goodman may well have thought it best to deal with "ideas" themselves by getting rid of their rigid application, for Grandstaff's comment and much of Paul Goodman focus on the modern dilemma of the controlling aim of an "activity" also being its product and hindrance and simultaneously providing a defense for not having done better. The "miracle" Goodman and Grandstaff hope for is

Dennison, however, connects the idea that it is not a "novel of idea" with the peculiarities of Goodman's characterization, substantiated by "the independent life the characters acquire; like the author of Tom Jones he is able to look upon them not only as the creatures of his art, but as entities in their own right."[47] Thus, Dennison suggests the reasons The Empire City is not a novel of idea: the characters in such a novel are restricted by their fidelity to the idea they represent.

Neither is it a psychological novel. The characters do not have singular personalities in the sense that they, as psychologically discrete and fully rounded characters, might have. In short, they are types, not psychologically interesting in themselves because they are types; yet not "typical" because they have their "prototypes" not in society at large but in the imagination and are to that extent free agents. Dennison continues with explicit reference to genre:

> This epic quality--the identity of character and fate--is an achievement so rare that one might spend a great deal of time describing it. The method behind it is like one of Dostoyevsky's, a method he himself described as the creation of types--types neither representative nor archetypal of the usual, but immenent, demanded by experience. . . . The author of the Notes from the Underground is the best. Such a type had no model in nature, and yet its delineation clearly brought together important elements of the life of the times. The psychology of such "persons," of course, was not truly personal--or it was more than personal, the advantage

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liberation from the stultifying effects of rampant operationalism, e.g., "Prediction is not the 'confirmation of an hypothesis, but its meaning, for truth is not the description of a state of things but the orientation of an ongoing activity. Truth is structured faith. . . . For the principle of operationalism I would substitute something like reasoned-history-plus-prediction," (Goodman, Five Years, p. 187). This line of argument is discussed further in Chapter V of this paper.

> being that the author might put in motion a pure form of actions which must otherwise appear in so qualified a way as to lose all philosophic bite.[48]

Using Lothar as an example of the kind of character Goodman draws, Dennison goes on to say about him--and by extension, about all the characters--that his "behavior, unlike that of a naturalistic figure, is not modulated by the behavior of others; if he is deflected at all, the deflection is cataclysmic, an upheaval."[49] Kingsley Widmer is right, then, when he says that in The Empire City "stock characters do not engage each other."[50] Unfortunately, they are neither stock in the way he supposes they are, nor is their lack of "engaging" each other as ill-planned as he thinks.

The thematic notion of total impasse is incompatible with authentic engagement. And it is impasse itself that dramatizes the plight of America and Americans to Paul Goodman. Neither the characters nor society aspires to any good thing; and Horatio is bewildered. If aspiration is often innocent, its disappointment with fact is most often that the aspirant discovers that he has been sold out long since--that no one ever really thought anyone would want this, even though the word for his desire ("freedom" for instance), seems a part of our working vocabulary, but is meaningless when uttered by politicians and upside down when some radicals get their hands on it. The trouble is more serious than a mere "no!" "These people," Goodman seems to say of our society continually, "are worse off than I thought." But the characters in The Empire City are distinguished by their purity of "aspiration." Dennison explains, "Goodman's characters stand not within but upon the structure of modern psychology with the result

that their actions are moral and religious--serious in the Aristotelian sense--rather than psychological."[51] And he finds that they have

> . . . the freedom of metaphor in poetry, partly . . . because they have been liberated from the need to demonstrate a personal psychology. But also because a metaphorical method is perhaps the best way (it is certainly an expeditious way) to hit off the essence of an archetypal career.[52]

Sherman Paul echoes Dennison when he finds the characters "allegorical" but not only so; they are, he finds, "fuller than that would suggest. No one is here solely in a social role, having curiously, by being typified, acquired the large freedom of an imaginative world. Even as allegorical figures they are unusually full, such is the imaginative force of the author's ideas."[53] Phrases that Paul finds helpful in explaining the work are: "an alegory of (Goodman's) dismay";[54] (and Goodman's own phrases), "a history of my friends," a picaresque epic," and "educational romance treated eqpically, which relates epic exploit to a genre closer in kind to that found here."[55] Paul further claims that thinking of its former subtitle, An Almanac of Alienation, is useful because of the almanac's "general relevance to any year as well as its particular relevance for its year," and explains, "the 'keeping' of its seemingly miscellaneous character and also indicates Goodman's manner, which, however much the sophistication of the idea of the book and the occasional reference to Gide or Kant, is homespun." And "it chronicles the spirit of our times."[56]

Their comments on genre touch on Goodman's own motivation as well as hint the confessional tone and the autobiographical genre that appears indirectly throughout and directly, as it were, fleetingly. In

The Dead of Spring, critic Paul finds the narrator ". . . grimmer than usual, though not without his characteristic humor, and he may even be using the book for his own therapeutic ends, perhaps as Goodman suggests in an essay on writer's block--to mourn and memorialize 'a phase of life wrecked.'"[57] And in summarizing his own terminologies, Dennison neatly explains them in terms of structure, subject, and characters. "One might," he suggests, "get an idea of the overall tone by considering the three genres which Goodman combines: the picaresque, the chronicle, and the epic."[58] He continues,

> Like the picaresque the work is a series of adventures and the basic method is narrative. Like the chronicle it refers to real events and the author speaks in his own person. Like the epic the characters are larger than life and the action of each leads directly to his fate.[59]

Dennison's and Paul's capacities to view The Empire City, not as a botched "novel," but as something else, foster their more sympathetic reading of the book. They have argued, though neither has directly stated, that it is a simple mistake to read it as "novel"; and they have given us a number of comparisons useful as reading guides for The Empire City. Specific genres have been suggested, but these have been connected to different aspects of the work: the characterizations suggest its epic qualities; while the fact that the characters, minor ones and the narrator himself, are real people and suggest its dimensions as a chronicle. This is, then, not to say that we should view The Empire City as an epic; rather, that parts of it are like an epic, chronicle, and so forth. If we take the "epic" as a standardized genre, we will find The Empire City at least as badly a

botched epic as it is a botched novel. But this flexibility of approach in both Paul's and Dennison's hands leads us to discover more accurate readings of Goodman's fiction, finally ways in which to identify with the "narrator" and his "imagination," in order to make a more complete statement of "its way of being in the world," and how "it is always in there pitching."

In the next two chapters, using Northrop Frye's system of analysis, we discuss The Empire City as a romance and confessional and as an anatomy. Since a complete analysis of The Empire City, via Frye, would logically involve all four possibilities ("novel," romance, confessional, anatomy), we demonstrate in the opening pages of the next chapter why thinking of The Empire City as a novel is likely to mislead the reader. We have included "introductions" to each genre we discuss in the hopes of refreshing the reader's acquaintance with Frye's system and to allow us to cull the most important aspects of each genre from Frye's ample supply. Since our argument is essentially that considering the work an anatomy offers a fresh, more vital and accurate vantage point than considering it a romance or confessional affords--but that these are also useful--we demonstrate the benefits and the shortcomings of considering The Empire City "fully explained" by these two genre and their characteristics.

Frye's Four Genre

Before turning to the individual genre, perhaps the reader will find it helpful to consider Frye's most succinct characterization of the four genre involved.

> The novel tends to be extroverted and personal; its chief interest is in human character as it manifests itself in society. The romance tends to be introverted and personal: it also deals with characters, but in a more subjective way. (Subjective here refers to treatment, not subject-matter. The characters of romance are heroic and therefore inscrutable; the novelist is freer to enter his characters' minds because he is more objective.) The confession is also introverted, but intellectualized in content. Our next step is evidently to discover a fourth form of fiction which is extroverted and intellectual. [This form is the anatomy.][60]

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

[1]Kingsley Widmer, The Literary Rebel (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), p. 189.

[2]See, for example, Wilbur B. Brookover and Jeffrey M. Schneider, "Academic Environments and Elementary School Achievement" (unpublished paper, Michigan State University, n.d.). Almost all of Brookover's work in the last decade would serve to justify the importance of "expectations" as an accepted artifact of pedagogy.

[3]Resnik, p. 44.

[4]Goodman, Speaking and Language, pp. 216-217, rearranged here for emphasis.

[5]Goodman, The Grand Piano, p. viii.

[6]Goodman, Speaking and Language, p. 236.

[7]Ibid., pp. 218-220.

[8]Goodman, Five Years, pp. 255-256. In Little Prayers, p. 121, he attributes the concluding sentence to Rabbi Tarfon.

[9]Goodman, Speaking and Language, p. 186.

[10]Ibid., p. 153.

[11]Ibid., p. 163.

[12]Ibid., p. 163, emphasis mine.

[13]Ibid., pp. 236-237.

[14]Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 213-214.

[15]Ibid., p. 215.

[16]Goodman, Structure of Literature, p. 119.

[17]Ibid., p. 160.

[18]Ibid., p. 150, emphasis mine.

[19]George Dennison, "The Tetralogy Concluded," Kenyon Review, XXI, Summer, 1959), p. 498.

[20]John J. Enck, "Book Review of Growing Up Absurd and Our Visit to Niagara," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, I, No. 3, p. 96.

[21]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 153.

[22]Paul, p. 903.

[23]Widmer, p. 187.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Nora Sayre, "Desires and Disappointments," Reporter, XXXVI, January 26, 1967, p. 48.

[26]Enck, p. 91.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., pp. 90-94.

[29]Ibid., p. 90.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 92.

[32]Widmer, p. 187.

[33]Ibid., pp. 187-188.

[34]Ibid., p. 196.

[35]Enck, p. 95.

[36]Widmer, p. 189.

[37]Goodman, Five Years, p. 205.

[38]Goodman, The Grand Piano, p. viii. The concept of "humor" is discussed below.

[39]Ibid., pp. viii-ix.

[40]Dennison, p. 503, emphasis mine.

[41]Frye, p. 168.

[42]Ibid., p. 168.

[43]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 404.

[44]Ibid., p. 285.

[45]Dennison, p. 498.

[46]Harold Rosenberg, "An Hypothetical Tale, Review of Empire City by Paul Goodman," Partisan Review, III, Summer, 1959, pp. 493, 496.

[47]Dennison, p. 498.

[48]Dennison, pp. 499-500.

[49]Ibid, p. 500.

[50]Widmer, p. 187.

[51]Dennison, p. 498.

[52]Ibid., p. 500.

[53]Paul, p. 898.

[54]Ibid., p. 896.

[55]Ibid., pp. 896, 923.

[56]Ibid., p. 895, emphasis mine.

[57]Ibid., p. 911.

[58]Dennison, p. 499.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Frye, p. 309.

CHAPTER III

THE EMPIRE CITY AS ROMANCE AND CONFESSIONAL

Introduction

While it is possible to speak of the romance-like aspects of The Empire City, its tone is more striking for its divergences from that genre than for its fidelity to it. One could say as much for the confessional as a possible genre, were it not patently obvious that the work is only partially a confessional. Of these two possibilities, the confessional is the most obvious, and the romance, the most interesting. In this chapter they receive treatment roughly equivalent to the interest they have generated for us.

Even though the romance is Goodman's basic form and the romancer's method partly his method, when we start considering the nature of the narrative, we cannot sustain such an argument. It would be more accurate to say the work parodies romance, not because it stringently disallows the aims of that form, but because Goodman goes the normal methodology of the romance one better. The following section presents a very short examination of the historical trends of the genre, some remarks on Frye's particular emphasis, and we proceed to examine The Empire City in terms of its setting, plot, theme, and characterization. Finally, something as pervasive as language makes for our multifarious qualifications about seeing

Goodman as primarily a romancer. The stock romance is simply a foil to Goodman. It provides him with direction and aim, but finally the form's demands are for a fiction too abstract and airy for his concreteness and too linguistically prudent to allow the furthest of his imaginary journeys. Aspects of the romance are plentiful in The Empire City, but for all these similarities, the overall effect of the book is at odds with that genre.

Goodman's impatience with the form is reflected in his satiric handling of it, in his insistence on diverse ideological superstructures, and in his restlessness with any set language level. Goodman's love of paradox brings to the mystery of the romance an intellectuality not often found in that form, and his characters are too knowledgeable for the innocence required in naive romance and too direct for ironical romance.

The romance is clearly related to the epic in action and theme. Like the earlier form, it glorifies wonderful deeds done by a heroic figure which loom large in the psychological, social, moral, or religious fabric of its particular audience. Its ties are with prose rather than verse and historically it has tended increasingly to be connected with rising social classes. Especially true of its English heritage from Lyly's Euphues and Greene's imitations to Goodman's most obvious models, including even the works of Horatio Alger, Jr., the romance has strong connections with the idealized world of humanism, but this sometimes degenerates into tiresome pontifications on manners and morals perhaps necessary for the instruction of the lower court of the genre's original time and often mainly of antiquarian interest to later generations of readers.

In connection with the rising middle classes, its peculiar blend of the awesome and the instructive predicts its popularity and its literary reputation as a kind of placebo. It has often lacked the "poetry" necessary to evoke our awe; and the "realism" to evoke our concern. Predictably too, the miraculous deeds tend to take place in settings as remote as their times--"in the olden days"--though the more outspokenly didactic, the less wondrous and more workaday the work is, the more it is apt to come closer to some apparently real setting (as those English prose romances of the late sixteenth century were often removed to Italy), while the religious and psychological romance-like works of Bunyan and Hawthorne tend to emphasize their very "timelessness," even though a work of Hawthorne's like The Marble Faun has specific dates and settings.

Frye's Treatment of the Romance

Frye's aim of capturing our reconsideration of what he calls the "Ptolemaic universe" of novel centered reading leads him to a very broad definition of romance.

> Myth . . . is one extreme of literary design; naturalism is the other, and in between lies the whole area of romance, using that term to mean . . . the tendency . . . to displace myth in a human direction and yet, in contrast to "realism" to conventionalize content in an idealized direction.[1]

Other critics would probably emphasize the unusual action and deeds, the sparse attention to realistic details, the extravagance and remoteness in the genre, a lack of "personal" psychology in characterization and an assumed importance to the story. But Frye is determined to examine the relation between the author and his material. Thus, Frye

emphasizes the author's relation to his characters and discovers that of the four genres, romance contains the most obvious uses of Jungian archetypes.

Seeing the author's relation in these terms calls attention to two aspects of the romance, its tendency toward allegory and its tendency toward personal significances in the quasi-private world of the artist. Though Frye does not do so, one might hypothesize that at least a partial cause for what he calls the form's "wildness," is the author switching from the allegorical and public conception of his characters the genre tends to have to the felt and inner significance they also tend to have--á la Jung. And in connection with The Empire City, we can more accurately understand the characters as "urges" or "insights" in Goodman and as Goodman saw them in others, a momentary grasping the way things are and striving to do justice to them.

A common response to characters in the romance is that they seem somehow to have arrived fully formed; and Frye would explain this through their relation to the author. Since they are excused from the need to have personal psychologies, they tend to become archetypal. Our feelings of astonishment, helplessness, and often of the rectitude of their acts have obvious similarities with the dream. Frye connects the form's "revolutionary" qualities with the author's approach to "characters who are in vacuo, idealized by revery."[2] The author, we feel sure, in a romance assumes the importance of his characters and in doing so aims for a salient distillation of them. This approach itself will be marred by the details and reasons demanded in a novel.

Goodman's own terminology, "educational romance treated epically" points to certain of the work's tendencies and subjects; but The Empire City is more even than this broad characterization suggests.

The Empire City as a Romance

Setting

Place.--If one approached The Empire City with the characteristic settings of romance in mind, one would discover Goodman's typical modification of that aspect almost immediately. Usually, the romance is removed in both space and time from any detailed "here and now"--if not in fact, then in the spirit of presentation. Hawthorne and Goodman may very well be regionalists, but their first allegiance as romancers is to the region of the heart, to the collective unconscious, to an almost psychic stage.

The romance often tends to be set in the times of our grandfathers and uses a fixed historical time rather than the plastic historical time of the novel, argues Frye.[3] This fixedness contributes a great deal to the similarities the events of the work will have with dream--where things happen, but not because--they just happen. Partly it is setting that makes for this tone, and we often recognize the places of traditional romance, the dungeon, the meadow, the garden, and so forth.

But Goodman's Empire City is set in New York City, 1938 and after--smack dab in the center of our consciousness. There are of course various scenes set outside the city, and some of them are among

the most bizzarre in the book, such as those fires set by the escaping adolescents and Laura's work as a camofloeur during the war.

On first glance, however, it appears that Goodman is aiming toward a kind of off-beat naturalism. The reader is in the realm of the aspiring multitudes. Like the naturalists, Goodman tells a brisk story and focuses on slummy detail. Yet to a great extent Goodman does so without creating a huge sense of material detail and without dwelling on all those relatively gloomy thoughts about the nature of the universe, suggested by Crane, Dreiser, and Steinbeck in their descriptions. Rather, Goodman seems to approach the places in his New York almost with an air of sentimentality--focusing on them as having meaning to his characters and to himself. And these meanings are developed through the romancer's stock in trade--the pathetic fallacy--as in his treatment of the war years in The State of Nature. His emphasis is not on the "drizzle" as a physical fact, but as a psychological tone. And he undercuts both romancers and naturalists when he explains it. "The cold drizzle was the drizzle of the war, for in the middle of the war is not like a noisy storm but a steady drizzle."[4]

He sketches scenes quickly, and nowhere does elaborate description of place overwhelm our sense of action. In the marvelous scenes of the zoo, the beach, Lothar perched with the pigeons on the spire of a skyscraper, our attention is directed to action or to thought--not to the physical scene itself, but toward the mood of character and sometimes of the narrator.

Moreover, Goodman's restlessness with both the naturalistic tendencies and the romance tendencies can be clarified further as part of his surrealistic aims. Naturalism focuses on the material, romance on the psychological. Both subordinate scene to congruity of tone. Because man is selfish in a neutral universe, material want and waste, eternal processes of consumption dominate naturalism. Because man's dreams and nightmares do reveal his inner nature, the setting for the romance is archetypally vague and is itself a manifestation of the correct interpretation of events. But in Goodman such traditional congruence rarely occurs. His pastoral romance is an "urban pastoral romance."[5] His poetic "Laura," the symbol of spontaneity for whose death all men mourn with elegiac verse, is found hanging amidst paper flowers in a walkup slummy apartment. The situation has the ring of naturalism, but because naturalism's typical characters are generally pathetically inarticulate and its narrators generally interested in material detail, we rarely find poetry in its pages. On the one hand, Goodman wishes to romanticize the concrete reality of New York; if it has hysterical freeways and derelicts, Goodman also beleives it has the capacity to become a city of God. On the other hand, he is far too specific to be called romantic--"We are sitting in front of the fire at Mike's house in Amagansett after a swim, Parker, Lionel, Diana, Dick and Gloria Mayes"--and he achieves a surrealistic tone as well as a "democratic" one by finding beauty in out of the way places so that when we come to those community scenes, for instance, neither do they take place outside of town in a rural tribal atmosphere, nor do they have the urban setting proper to "executive" meetings.

Goodman thinks of his characters as the natural executives of his community. It is the social atmosphere that is tribal.

In Goodman's Empire City, the romancer's emphasis on place to define mood gives way to mood defining place and the results are sometimes incongruent--the symbol of culture itself, the "grand piano," moves from Eliphaz's patristic home to a meeting of grubby anarchists and finally into the open air. In short, if we come to examine the settings in The Empire City expecting traditional romance settings, our first response must be bewilderment, though there is a case to be made for them reflecting Goodman's theme. By making it an urban romance, Goodman democratizes the form in terms of place, much as Twain might be said to do in terms of character in Huck Finn.

Time.--Some of the implications of his restlessness with congruence of tone may be even better revealed by considering the sense of time in The Empire City. Traditionally, one supposes the romance has been removed in time in order for the artist to gain freedom from the sticky questions of historical fact, or put more positively, to be unencumbered from the base reality of fact versus the "higher" reality of emotional tone. Thus, whatever the years, the romance will tend qualitatively to be set in the past, gaining a non-empirical world for having been set there. Ultimately, it gains its freedom by this qualitative removal, not by the time in the strictest sense. The aura is one of helplessness and awe, for neither reason nor the reader seem capable of changing the way things were.

All matters of real suspense and real alternatives are subordinated in order to suggest a timeless recurrence of the structure itself, which precisely because it is recurrent, appeals to our unconscious present situation. This Jungian relationship, then, suggests inevitability and sometimes focuses on it as a theme. To a certain extent all romances must give the impression of the "truth" (Hawthorne's characterization of his "moral" in the preface to The House of the Seven Gables), that "the wrongdoing of every generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief."[6]

Thus, the qualitative pastness and the thematic overtones of inevitability combine to let the author dramatize "attitude" and this explains why romances are often set in a past that either we have fairly well known attitudes about or so far in the past that present contingencies seem niggling. But Goodman treats those very years in which he was writing his book, romantically, and this has the effect of freeing him to deal with his attitudes toward that time but automatically predicates an argument between writer and reader over the question of how things were. In the end, of course, the form itself argues for Goodman's vision; it is his vision and historical fact be damned. That is, the form does not demand historical veracity at all.

But the prediction of the argument itself can justify Goodman's argumentative tone--not a romantic characteristic. As it turns out, more and more clearly he seems to have been right, the book gains a dimension as large and powerful as that which the Horatio Alger books lose because they increasingly appear to be absolutely malevolent

distortions of what we have come to envision as true about the turn of the century. This is to say that Goodman's Empire City seems to have caught the mood, not perhaps so much of the times themselves (especially the forties), but of our later reflections on them--much as Hawthorne might be said to do the same for the early New England experience.

The sociolatry that Goodman characterized as systematically promoting specific problems, which were already universal in American literary experience--rotten wars, the degradation of the poor, the collapse of meaningful humanistic education for most--itself has furthered the romantic temper of Goodman's work. The years he treats--when the sociolatry might still be questioned--do indeed seem today to be on the far side of the "olden days."

Goodman predicted such an occurrence at least as early as 1946 when The State of Nature was published. Because an accurate understanding of the "sociolatry" is essential to our further explication of The Empire City and because Goodman's complete sense of the sociolatry enhances rather dramatically his status as a prophet, we quote his complete passage. It seems nearly impossible to sort out all the factors that go into it--sociology, psychology, economics--so that it might best be characterized as a "spirit of our era," and thus be relevant to our discussion of time in The Empire City.

In the passage, Mynheer asks Horatio, who is said to converse with the "dead Eliphaz" to reveal that sage's prophecy, "'What is it that [he] prophesied to us, with the unerring speech of the dead that cannot mislead us, until the forces of the past play themselves out to

the bitter end?'" And "the Voice of Eliphaz" speaks through Horatio, who himself is not "in" the sociolatry, because he stole the school records and because he speaks with the "dead Eliphaz." The Voice of Eliphaz starts ambiguously "'You [the community? Mynheer? Horatio? and Horatio trembles] are going to live in the Sociolatry, . . . and there will be no new thing.'" The Voice continues,

> ". . . In the time of Eliphaz there was a class war; but now throughout the land there will be peace and a harmonious organization. And millions will fall down on the streets of the Asphyxiation.
>
> "Sociolatry is the period when the great society that has inherited itself from me will be organized for the good of all, and will coordinate unchanged its wonderful productive capacities to heighten continually the Standard of Living. You will buy many expensive things that you do not absolutely need. And millions will fall down on the streets of the Asphyxiation.
>
> "Next, the great society will turn to assure the psychological well-being of most of its members. This is called the 'education for democracy in the conditions of mass industrialization.' This is the Sociolatry.
>
> "It is the adjustment of the individual to a social role without releasing any new forces of nature. Everywhere there will be personal and public peace (except among the wild and crazy); nowhere will there be love or community. And millions will fall down on the streets of the Asphyxiation.
>
> "Please, I am not speaking of a crude regimentation but of a conformity with universal tolerance and intelligent distinction as among the collegians at Yale. Each person will warrant individual attention, for there is a man fitted, with alterations, for every job.
>
> "And out of California will come a race of vitamized young giants, nourished on the juice of the orange. This youth will be expert in the wisdom of the East and West and immunized from thought by early acquaintance with the worst that the classics can tell us. Accustomed to success and without toughness but with plenty of the callousness that comes from fundamental ignorance. These will be the ministers of our collective democracy.
>
> "If a man then chooses a wife, she must be screened by the company; is she such as will fit into his public relations and steady his career as a junior executive? This is literally having a man by the balls. And millions will fall down on the streets of the Asphyxiation.

> "And because the productive machine is so efficient and cannot be put to any humane or magnificent use, there will be a great surplus of wealth and with this a distinction between soft or giveaway money and hard money that you work for. If a man has expended spirit and labor, he will be paid in a little bit of hard money. But if he appears as a personality on television, he will be given a lot of soft money. This will create confusion among young folk, who will not know what to aim at. (Hell they won't!)
>
> "You will nowhere find a written declaration of this order, for no one in authority will be close enough to existent things to take a pen and sign his name. Everywhere, instead of having either government or anarchy, you will be faced by one anonymous front.
>
> "Now these people will be impenetrable by any serious or comic word. Out of touch with their natures, they and their entertainers will see to it that nothing recalls them to themselves. Shall they not suddenly be taken by panic fright?"[7]

While there is nothing incongruent about prophecy and the romance, such a sarcastic prophecy about the more or less immediate present is anything but common in the romance.

Goodman has tempered the romancer's traditional appeals to our moods: through description by explaining that "drizzle" is his image for "in the middle of the war"; through romanticizing the present in order to pick a squabble with the reader and to prove to him how bad things really are. This squabble is his major subject, and in part a reason for seeing the book as gaining stature since it was written. It will probably continue to do so as the complexity and far reaching implications of the sociolatry begin to asphyxiate us and the sociolatry perhaps to crumble from its own weight. In essence this tone derives from having started with the romance form. Goodman's modifications of it have a kind of desperado quality--a desire to explain and re-explain his feelings, so that he must explain the mataphor, clarify it, bring

it to earth and at the same time create metaphors beyond the range of fantasy often found in romance. And The Empire City's approach to space and time is anything but a good representative of the "stock romance."

Plot

Traditionally, the plot of the romance has involved good overcoming evil. If we continue to identify the form with Jungian archetypes, we see that this working through to a happy ending is in some sense really the integration of parts of the individual; it is a working out of the archetype of the "self." And therein lies the romance's psychological appeal and its manifest connections with all tales of unity--religious, social or psychological. In the form itself, empirical credibility has never been an issue, though it has often been applied as one. As romances, the original Horatio Alger tales do not need to answer for their statistically obvious unlikelihoods; they are lousy sociology, but they give no hint of pretending they are anything else. And probably it is more literarily honest to excoriate Alger for having had banal dreams than for being unfaithful to the facts of his ostensible subject. In any event, we connect romance with the statistically unlikely--heroes, battles, and wondrous deeds.

Hero.--The Empire City, insofar as it is a romance, Horatio Alger is its most obvious hero and the plot of that story is his growing up from the urchin he is in The Grand Piano to the young married man of the community in the last pages of The Holy Terror.

Horatio's story starts as a problem of legitimacy--will he or won't he inherit the Empire? He does, but it is tainted, already besmirched by the two systems of money, the duration that Eliphaz correctly predicts will outlast the war, the lack of magnanimity of men in high places and the deaths of magnanimous men wherever they are situated. Of the five major characters, only Horatio and Mynheer (intellect) are alive at the end of the book. Eliphaz's and Laura's deaths are certainly metaphorically connected with the sociolatry as is Arthur's as a war casualty--and the whole theme of the "presence of the absence of our friends" comes to be associated with war.

As a romantic hero, Horatio has significant battles as the four books progress. In The Grand Piano, he gains his father, Eliphaz, and wins the grand piano with a daring musical piece that nearly blows it apart--perhaps a symbolic counterpart to Horatio's often uttered solution to community and psychological problems, "Sometimes you gotta push down the walls in order to see the countryside."[8] Having escaped the starting place for the sociolatry's grasp on him by snitching his grammar school records at "the neat minute," he will be haunted by its catching up with him in Book III.

In The State of Nature, Horatio, like Goodman, is at a loss--and while the war rages on, he nearly disappears from the story, but we sense him wandering aimlessly about in the drizzly fog trying to find explanations for that which makes no sense to begin with--the war.

He reappears in the last two books and, through confronting his own warped psyche, undergoes the transformation necessary to love Rosalind. In the last book he undergoes therapy at the hands of

Minetta Tyler, finally deciding at the end of the close of the fourth book that he can become a handyman, frustrated by whether or not "spoiling for a fight" means he is cowardly. Given the situation, he is as victorious in these battles as he can be; but this situation and Goodman's insistence on its nature are both decidedly anti-romantic.

In The Empire City, the villain is the sociolatry itself. The familiar battle between good and evil is anything but a place for clear cut victory or defeat--it is a "drawn out losing battle," most easily characterized as a kind of holding action against the possible further inroads that the sociolatry seeks to make on living sensibly.

Miraculous Deeds.--Of the many contending scenes, one of the most wondrous deeds in the work is Horatio's bicycle journey to Eliphaz's house. This homely miracle is easily one of the most flowing pieces of description in all four volumes, perhaps because Horatio is at the acme of his powers when the book opens. In the later volumes, he is sometimes considerably less the romantic hero, for he is trying to recover his golden age, and the prose accordingly becomes "troubled." To have had a golden age and to have lost it, is fatal, Lothar remarks later. The spontaneity of the bicycle ride, the sense of being at one with the universe as Goodman catches Horatio flying down Broadway--that is not to be rediscovered in whole.

Each of the four books in principle has a central deed that seems magical and romantically "huge" in nature and scope which aims to describe the book's tone. As the work proceeds, however, these become forums for Goodman's explanation, which demonstrably detracts

from their spectacular qualities as acts. That is, there is no lack of miraculous deeds, but Goodman does not focus on the suspense or mysteriousness of these to the extent that a full-fledged romancer might.

Of the many particulars common to some "romances," necessarily left unstated by Frye in his aim to gather the tendencies of the genre under one heading, we might remark on the marvelous scary old houses of the gothic novel, long lineages of good and evil ogres, omens, and forces, and mysterious transformations. Or, in the pastoral romance, we find innocence, spring, bucolic splendor conducing to marriage as in Longus. Or in the heroic quest, great deeds are sufficient to meet all trials.

In short, one can identify similarities in Goodman's plot until the cows come home, with the results that one has more evidence for what we already have demonstrated--The Empire City is in part a romance; and that form's aims in part inspired the work.

The nature of The Empire City, however, is probably more clearly revealed in the following two sections--on theme and character and on Goodman's peculiarities as a romancer--because they, like the chapter on the work as an anatomy, confront the central and pervasive issue of Goodman's "language" more directly.

Theme and Character

Goodman's approach to his material is further clarified when we think in terms of theme and character. The romance is so far inward that definitive notions about whether character precedes theme, or

theme, character, are simply impossible to formulate with any precision. The romancer's approach is, Frye notes, not intellectual, and so we might expect that a "feeling" for character, even perhaps that a discovery of their natures dictates theme. Such would seem to be the case if we keep in mind the Jungian overtones of the form. On the other hand, the form does have a tendency toward allegory, and this suggests that some romancers may mute their ideas. The direction we feel the author to be going in distinguishes the anatomy from the romance and is discussed later in this chapter. In Goodman, theme is inseparable from character.

Theme.--Goodman's main thesis might be simply that growing up is absurd. But the normal romance's theme is that growing up is not absurd, that there is a right and a wrong way to do it, that the straight road is not only the shortest distance between two points but that it is the road to success, God, and other desireable goals, as is clearly suggested by the humanist and courtly tradition of the form. Moreover, the notion that the "wrongdoing" of former generations "lives into successive ones"[9] imagines attaining a similar goal, through a process of purification, wisdom, learning, ethics, and justice will combine in an ideal person. Both the tradition and theme in this wide sense make us believe that the form aims for the individual to be better than he is, or at least to be able to divine who is better than he and his peers.

The aristocratic tendencies of the form are obvious and even justified so long as aristocracy is plausible, but when there are no

dominant agreed upon and reasonable values, or if, as Goodman clearly perceives is the case, the social values are opposed to what is demonstrably "valuable," then the notion of an aristocracy alligned with its society loses its meaning. One must rediscover ultimate values, the "eternal verities" as Faulkner puts it, and assert them whether or not the society agrees with them. In the furor of a utilitarian age, many of the romances of the past seem quaint to us, but could we take their values seriously, they would offer us a scathing wholesale condemnation of ourselves. Sir Phillip Sidney in Nixon's cabinet! Christopher Marlowe and the Watergate! It is preposterous, and we discover we are the effete, the quaint, the archaic, and the cowardly. We aspire to no good thing.

Having found the values and the necessity for asserting these values, the romancer must discover or invent instances of them however strange he may find their environs. The romance, Frye explains, always contains "grave idealizing of heroism and purity."[10]

The characters in the romance tend to be allegorical and archetypal, and in Chapter II we saw Dennison and Paul suggest the dimensions of Goodman's characters: "the psychology of such 'persons' is not truly personal--or . . . more than personal"; and "as allegorical figures they are unusually full."[11] We find, then, Goodman's modifications of the traditionally airy characters of romance to derive from his insistence on grounding the intellectual (allegorical) facets firmly in experience, and to give the experiential multifarious ideological significances. The most expeditious way to consider Goodman's characters is to discover his relation to them.

It is multidimensional, as is his relation with his themes. First, the romance allows the writer to develop his fantasy and its tones modulate his theme. In one way the writer does indeed imaginatively recommend his characters' actions to us. In another, since they are so outlandish, he cannot be serious. This mixture of real and unreal is finally impossible to unravel completely. One knows that Goodman himself did not let the animals out of the zoo; one knows that he would not seriously recommend it; one knows that if somebody did let the animals out of the zoo, Goodman would applaud it. That these are contradictory does not mean that they are not true;* and in Goodman's fantasy world, even justifiable--given his perceptions about how base we have made our only world. A wholesale turnabout is in order. Goodman's themes and his characters have the same relationship to Goodman--at once the answers to real psychological and social irks, and thus manifest his ideas and his feelings. This explains the curious power they have to be both allegorical and archetypal.

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*George Dennison in his memoir in Goodman's Collected Poems remarks, "If ever a man deserved that marvelous line of Whitman's: 'Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself' it was Paul [Goodman]" (Goodman, Collected Poems, p. xvi).

In his "Introduction to the 1970 Edition" of Alexander Berkman's Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist (New York: Schocken), p. xvii, Goodman says about Berkman, "I think we have to say four different and contradictory things: If people had followed Berkman's way, there would be a better world. The fact that they did not, and presumably could not, follow it means that he was wrongheaded, he suffered from ideas. Because of him, there is more value in the world than there would be otherwise; the noble cause has been kept alive for another generation. And human beings do not know any better process than this blundering and tormented process of history. In 1892 Alexander Berkman attempted to assassinate Henry Clay Frick. Goodman's "contradictory" statements may not be so contradictory as he thinks, but certainly they reveal the complexity with which he could view a fact. They also illustrate Goodman's complex relationshp to "recommending" an act.

Goodman explains his "careless contempt for the well-known social arrangements" in the "Preface" to The Grand Piano, "for luckily I enjoyed private ills, not symbolically unrelated in my feelings to the general disaster, which energized anxiety and mourning and let me assume for a spell an attitude of simple animosity."[12] He might be writing a romancer's credo, so closely does it predict that metaphorical freedom we connect with the genre--the distillation of character towards purity, the sense of assumed importance to the characters and an air of inevitability.

But purity and values derive in part from systematic thought. And Goodman has used multifarious systems--ranging from Taoism to Anarchism, from Gestalt psychology to Deweyian and Platonic educational philosophy. This large number of persuasions complicates the switch from feeling to idea in the work, and a similar relation obtains between Goodman and his characters. An especially poignant sample is Goodman's remark about Lothar, in which he simultaneously points to the character's real grip on him and also his utter unreality.

> All week I was despondent, inventing the death of Lothiar.
> Then friends of mine said, "If the incident makes you unhappy, who don't you change it? It's your story, make it come out the way you want."
> I looked at them unbelievingly. "No," I said stolidly, as Lothair would have liked, "I'll put it down stolidly, one point after another, just as it happened. I'll get through it."
> Then I became angry. "I could no more not have Lothair killed," I said dramatically, "than I could have dated to meet up with him alive." But it is spiritless to invent without him these ethnological rituals of how men today can live in the olden style.[13]

Goodman persists in mulling over his romantic heroes and his relationship with them; and he discovers occasionally that both parties are sometimes heroic and sometimes oafish, as indeed he can laugh at his own pretensions in the passage above by repeating "stolidly" and characterizing himself as speaking "dramatically." He turns his relation to Lothar inside out in his inspection of it, and in the process apparently both Goodman and "Lothar" are changed.

A similar thematic restlessness enhances the work when Goodman shifts from ideological superstructure to another, and from the princely to the homely. Unlike allegorists, Goodman feels boxed in by any single system of perception, such as a single religion, psychology, or economics might provide. He delights in showing that what we value in one mode of thought we hate in another--so that if chastity begets modesty, it also begets prudery, sexual frustration, p nography, license, war and so forth. If we are to think of The Empire City as allegory at all, we must consider it a series of loose, shifting allegories, turning values and characters inside out, in which the significance of the characters and their actions fluctuate between noble ideal and reasonable desire.

As reflecting a literary stance, the romancer always attacks the drabness of the present; his character's purity rages at the humdrum. Goodman's main stance in The Empire City is to join the loftiest aspirations and the homely fact. On the one hand Horatio Alger might be considered a possible philosopher king and on the other hand he simply should not grow up absurdly. This mixture of the noble ideal and the reasonable desire liberates. It romanticizes the homely,

seems to bring heroic ideals within possible human grasp. And even though it is a contradiction in terms, we might discover that such a term as "empirical romance" characterizes The Empire City's tone.

Ultimately, we shall discover that when we speak of Goodman's themes, we come to realize that while there are ideas in the work, the work seems more to suggest a pattern of thinking than an idea as a theme. Harold Rosenberg attempts (and succeeds as well as any of Goodman's critics have) to explain this phenomena in the following comments which emphasize Goodman's aims as writer-pedagogue.

> The teacher does not merely show--he shows as an example. The exemplary tale turns allegory, provided the master is convinced he knows the answer. Goodman has no single answer though he is loaded with answers. [Therefore, while] The Empire City is not an allegory, but a fabulous adventure amid the commonplace, [still] it has the look of allegory, with the non-natural way of its happenings and its case of personifications: Horatio, the sharp-eyed street urchin; Mr. Moneybags Eliphaz; Mynheer Duyk Duvendak, rationalistic Father Knickerbocker; Lothair, the romantic radical.[14]

The Empire City works on the pattern of Eden lost, and to a certain extent all romances must hint this. When we consider the pattern's evocative emotional power, we begin to sense why the allegorical and archetypal significances seem to merge. And Goodman does indeed plumb the pattern for its psychological, literary, sociological, indeed theological significances.

To understand Paul Goodman fully, we must not connect his rage with the empirical fact that Eden cannot be recovered (though the sense that is the case enlarges the gloom and doom of the work), but with the idea that we do not try more heroically and sensibly to

regain whatever we can of the lost Eden. His primary hatred is for our failure to confront this symbolic fact head on. That we (and he) do not focus on this as the problem--or at least as outlining the dimensions of it--makes him think of us (and himself) as often cowardly, beneath contempt. This battle to regain Eden is of course a long drawn out losing one. And both his despair and faith derive from it. We do not fight that battle as courageously as we could, nor anywhere near as systematically as Paul Goodman thinks we ought to. That we, occasionally, do fight it at all, however, is a source of inspiration for him; and in The Empire City Goodman is at pains to demonstrate where his characters do and do not face the implications of such a universal pattern.

Goodman's well known didacticism might be said to derive from just this pattern; and, like a good teacher, he seeks in The Empire City, to make "the exemplary tale turn allegory."[15] One must find the exemplary characters and acts first--heroes. Goodman gives us personal, practicable, and general answers in The Empire City. Ultimately, the exemplary tale will not turn allegory; but there are moments . . . . For instance, when Droyt finishes telling his tale of Lefty's astonishing "success" in the business of living, the community gathers around him and Horatio/Goodman is its spokesman. He says,

> ". . . you have come to us with a marvelous story. We find it hard to believe our ears. You speak of a free artist who has an immediate off audience; of lovers who wish each other well; of a man who gets paid for a useful job that fits him; of the confidence that there will be some use for another human being in the world. All this is unlikely, yet you convince us that it is a fact. What does this mean? It means that all along the time a certain number of people are not committing an avoidable error.[16]

To Goodman, Droyt's tale of Lefty can not turn allegory as long as the "hard problem" we are left with at the end of the book is not faced by each and every one of us. The "hard problem" is stated as "The irresistible force has met the immovable obstacle: what to do?"[17] Mynheer, now acting as chairman, identifies the

> existential possibilities of the problem. They were fourfold. We could feel ourselves as the immovable obstacle: for instance, our conservative nature taking a stand in the world against the increasing encroachment on nature, that also we would not let up. Or contrariwise, we could identify with the irresistible force: our creative force finally up against it, as usual. Or we could regard both sides of the conflict with a certain nonattachment. Or contrariwise, we could identify fully with both sides and have the conflict within, and see where that gets you.[18]

Narrator Goodman blurts out his answer: "'The answer; the answer! The answer is to have yet another ounce of strength. That will solve the problem.'"[19] And the crowd applauds this answer, for

> despite their reasonable disbelief, they had come to realize that I did have still another ounce of strength, and so they unanimously rallied to me, for people care for that.
>
> And therefore, I saw, my cursed victory (of integrity) that nobody wants to win by such strenuous means and die, was no proving unnecessary. It was not such a hard matter after all to be accepted for oneself. The clench of twenty, of thirty years was loosing in my breast.[20]

Eden is and is not regained--all at once; and this, by the author and reader.

Thematically, to Goodman the unfinished revolutions in sex, education, economics, even in spontaneity are the concrete correlatives, of the lost paradise. This is a feeling which can be approached through idea or through the timely fact, but properly speaking it is not an idea itself. Goodman, Rosenberg correctly estimates, works to be rid of idea, and his values are magnanimity, honor, courage. He

writes a romance for a great society--as if we had one--and his characters are out of this world. Goodman finds homely instances of purity and celebrates them for the miracles they are. Eden is and is not regained all at once.

Character.--In examining Goodman's Empire City as a romance, we have already touched on the nature of his characters in several places. In this section, we examine certain romantic particularities: their names, our sense of their "concreteness," and their relationship to one another.

In characterization, Goodman gains the traditionally romantic overtones deriving from the characters' names and their physiological "airiness" which makes them figures more of our imagination than of our concrete grasp. Such a name as "Laura" has a literary heritage back to Petrarch, but that heritage is totally metaphorical, and like Hawthorne's Phoebe, she is connected with sunlight and airiness, but lacks a body.

One of Goodman's favorite devices for enlarging and idealizing the commonplace is to use historically and literarily significant names with the dual effect of elevating our times and effectuating our more concrete grasp of the heroes of the past. "Lothar" is from a long line of medieval royalty, and turns up on the welfare rolls in New York City--now a romantic radical. "Eliphaz" is of biblical origin, and turns up a financier who advocates the one money system as the sociolatry turns to a dualistic system of exchange--the hard and the soft money.

"Horatio Alger" is sheer inventiveness. At first we scoff at the many ironies between any comparison of Goodman and writer Alger, but upon reflection, we discover similarities: a dogged optimism, a regional writer of romance with similar questions. However dissimilar the two writers' seriousness of approach, both ask why Americans do not aim higher.

In addition to these outlandish names, Goodman's characters are "airy." They lack whole bodies--of specific gravity, mass, bulk--and they have the disintegrative quality common in cubism. With the exception of Horatio, of the main characters, perhaps the one most easily visualized is Lothar, huge, heavy, and dark. But while such words as "paw" for hand might hint this, his brooding quality is what confirms the vision, metaphorical and imagistic rather than detailed and collected. ("Paw" is a typical romantic word--a metaphor capable of suggestion but of no concrete agreed upon image, and hence its usage gives rise to "feelings," not "pictures.") In visualizing other main characters we have even more difficulty; Eliphaz and Mynheer are pure "forces." And Laura is simply--poetry.

In visualizing Horatio, we are apt to remember most vividly him on his bicycle, "flying the tricolor," red jersey, white shoes and silver spokes, and blue jeans. Such blatant symbolism becomes a kind of game in Goodman and advances the argument that he wishes to discover the symbolic in the empirical and to elevate the empirical to its symbolic possibilities. That Goodman reworks these images in his poetry may account for their taking on a gradually enlarged metaphorical significance for the Goodman reader. In Goodman there are no

aquiline noses, no dirty fingernails, no cigarette butts, no specific quality to the fabric of the clothes strewn around in the novel to give a collage of reality. Such descriptive techniques hint that Frye's accurate remark about the romance having a "subjective glow of intensity that the novel lacks"[21] applies to Goodman's romance.

In addition to these symbolic names and descriptions, Goodman seems to use the relationship between the characters to enlarge their significance and the "romance"-like quality of the work. Because Horatio is the only developing character in the work (along with Goodman himself, one is tempted to add), and because the others are considered sociological humis, one can come to see them as archetypes in Horatio's "romance!" The characters, then, loom large as "family" (objectively) and as "urge" (subjectively) in Horatio/Goodman himself. They are "models perceived" by Horatio; and in his acts sometimes become "models" acted out. And this accounts for the magnificent "reverberations" the book comes to have.

In "spoiling for a fight" at the end of the book Horatio has become at least partially Lothar--or Lothar as an archetype in Horatio is emergent. Horatio learns at first hand the "creative blow," which eludes Lothar until he releases the animals from their cages. Horatio discovers the aridity of Mynheer's intellectual methods of dealing with the world when he converses with Eros and finds that he, Horatio Alger, is treated with the same scorn by him, "'Sure, sure, a professor!' . . . 'They study what gives 'em a cheap thrill'"--as he would have shouted at Mynheer when, in the earliest volume, he was still a boy. Whether these "echoes" are systematic or not, Goodman's

intent is clear: the parallels do enlarge the scope of the narrative, and work upon our imagination in a celebration of the psychic community, which is both social and psychological, real and symbolic event, character and direction--a metamorphosis of astounding range. The tetralogy itself is a far greater work of genius than any of its individual books suggest it to be.

Seeing the work in this way forces us to consider the characters as our archetypes of spontaneity, shrewdness, growth, legitimate anger, and thought rather than as Paul Goodman's personal allegories. When we participate in Goodman's romance, he forces us to reunite the psychic and the empirical in a kind of religious ceremony which weds the well-being of the individual immutably in celebration of life itself. And this action can value simultaneously the two eternal ideals of aristocratic freedom and democratic community and didactically champion man against the now obviously deflated cowardice that pursues second best or conceives of these aims as "either-or."

In characterization--in the names, in conceiving of the characters as humors and archetypes without whole bodies, in the relationship between the characters, Goodman has modified the romance in such a way as to make it grow on its readers. His theme and character are so far unified as to assault our sense of how things might be everytime we think about the book. Examining Goodman's peculiarities as a romancer will illustrate his methods further.

Goodman's Peculiarities as a Romancer

Frye emphasizes the breadth of the genre when he places it between myth and "naturalism," the two extremes of "literary design." "In between lies the whole area of romance, using that term to mean . . . the tendency . . . to displace myth in a human direction and yet, in contrast to 'realism,' to conventionalize content in an idealized direction."[23]

This direction is manifestly important, for it matters a great deal whether we feel the author is moving from an essentially realistic vision towards a mythical one, or the other way around. Really there is nothing except a sense of direction to differentiate archetype and allegory, which further divides the "mythical" vision into having sprung from "idea" or from the "collective unconscious." Frye explains the difference between myth and romance linguistically.

> The central principle of displacement is that what can be metaphorically identified in a myth can only be linked in romance by some form of simile: analogy, significant association, incidental accompanying imagery, and the like. In a myth we can have a sun-god or a tree-god; in a romance we may have a person who is significantly associated with the sun or trees. In more realistic modes the association becomes less significant and more a matter of incidental, even coincidental, or accidental, imagery.

Keeping in mind that Goodman thought of his writing as being avant garde and of avant garde as wanting to be "not traditional," we might predict that he will go further in both directions than traditional romancers. And this can be demonstrated in his language. The language accrues to our concept of character, finally, to the characters themselves, so that it is possible for us to discover the source of that mixture of the allegorical and archetypal itself.

In order to clarify by illustration, I make use of the familiar model of abstract, mythical, metaphorical language and characters as "up," and realistic, concrete, and reductionistic language as "down."

In other words, Goodman's language and characters sway toward realism more fully than is usual in the romancer. But his tendency to associate and discover instances of "poetry" in daily events and to confuse the distinction between metaphor and simile makes for his capacity to be more "poetical" than is typical in the romancer. Goodman, like some mad cubist, goes further "up and down" the scale than others and in places that are traditionally thought to be glaringly inappropriate. He defies those very linguistic elements of the romance Frye finds its generic sine qua non.

Goodman attains the region of myth when he says of his heroine, "Now Laura, who had dawn-blue eyes, was the Glancing Day as it passes."[25] While we might wish to argue that "dawn-blue eyes" was a concealed simile, we simply cannot do so for "Laura . . . was the Glancing Day . . . ." Strictly speaking, Goodman is in the territory of myth. Further, when he has Horatio say of Laura's suicide, "The truth is dead," we can read that as a simile about her death or as a metaphor about Horatio's development itself--and connect the loss of her as an archetype to Horatio's loss of spontaneity. If we can do the latter, the book gains considerable personal significance because it works on our imaginations and intellects simultaneously.

In addition, in the more traditional directions of satirists and iconoclasts, Goodman goes toward realism from the world of the romance in his "Urban Pastoral Romance after Longus," when he

introduces Rosalind, Horatio's lover. Both have had sex before, as indeed we are told Horatio, like Goodman himself, is bisexual from at least the age of eleven on, though the details of these loves never become a case in point until The Dead of Spring, when "Horatio first noticed Rosalind. He was acquainted with her (they had even slept together and fucked several times), but he had not noticed her as one notices something out of the corner of the eye."[26]

In both directions, we see Goodman breaking the format of the genre itself in a determined and systematic way. Indeed, we remember Frye's comment that "something nihilistic and untamable is likely to keep breaking out of (the romancer's) pages," and connects its "revolutionary" qualities with "the characters, who are in vacuo, idealized by revery."[27] If we think in terms of the authors discovering their characters, we might explain the nihilism that way. Linguistically, however, what we find is that romancers have difficulty realizing a static plane between myth and realism.

Linguistically, humor and irony in the romance derives from "descending" toward realism, while poetry and reverence, from "ascending" toward myth. Speaking figuratively, we can also note the same restlessness in Goodman's statements about the work and about his writing. If (figuratively) we consider that language itself may be imagined to have a kind of aristocracy with wit and polish existing in a rather lordly manner over the plebeian language of utility, the dull and mundane, we can see a traditional Goodman move when he says, "My genius is to make epigram dull."[28] Startling in its accuracy, the statement shows Goodman trying to bring the loftiest expressions to

earth, the language in itself moving toward realism from the aristocratic rhetoric of epigram. Or, in the other direction, when he says, "I undertook the task of not giving up any claim of culture and humanity, but my characters then turn out to be far out of this world,"[29] he moves toward the mythic from the basis of the very realistic needs and morals of civilized man. Insofar as the romance is an idealist's form, Goodman gives it an empirical base; and by restlessly moving from stage to stage on this hypothetical scale (between myth and deflatingly concrete satire of the "myths" we live by) Goodman accomplishes one of the aims he identifies as those of the avant garde writer--to be "not traditional."

He blasts the format in both character and language. In character, through our legitimate confusion about what precise relation the characters have to one another; and in language, by his pervasive anti-nomianism. Who would have thought that epigram might be dull? These Goodman moves are instances of Goodman working at the edge of what he knew, and they find parallels in his social criticism's trademark of moving from fact to idea when everyone else is considering fact alone, the restless aim to bring idea and principle to earth when everyone else agrees to leave them in the clouds.

Such moves are consistent with Goodman's pervasive desire to make poetry out of what we have in our only world. Thus, he can characterize his own style (of both fiction and non-fiction): "I like the texture of the rough and slangy, the learned and periodic and the oddly accurate; it says 'me,' a scholar in poor clothes with a sharp

mind."[30] In his narrative he exhibits a ceaseless desire to surprise and often does so meaningfully by breaking the traditions of the romance.

It is quite possible for us to conjecture that breaking the literary traditions of the romance has connections with Goodman's Gestalt psychology. Even though as far as we know he never precisely linked his restlessness with established literary traditions to the postulates of that psychology, certainly the same pattern of shifting figure and ground might apply to his narration. And whatever the significance of shifting linguistic figures and grounds, parodying the tradition of the romance, has to Paul Goodman personally, he quite obviously aims to change our shopworn apprehensions of how things are, our expectations--familiar and shoddy Gestalts--by doing so. (Similar "patterns" however exist in the metaphysical poets, in surrealistic theory, and many other places, one feels compelled to add.) When Goodman describes Lothair's escape from prison, in which romancers like Hawthorne or James Fenimore Cooper would have conventionalized content in an idealized direction by describing the dark, rainy night, the vastness of the beach and stars and trees and rocks, poetically linking them with the unknown or the evil, Goodman defines a chase, a close thing, etc., in Aristotelian and Euclidian terms, and brings the verbal solidity of definition into a situation that the romancer would normally treat with awe inspiring "poetry." Goodman focuses on what the characters know and how they know it, when the romance tends toward rather dream-like beings who couldn't be properly said to <u>know</u> much of anything at all, except somehow some deep, deep urges toward unity.

The reason Sherman Paul finds Goodman's allegorical figures "unusually full, so rich is the author's imagination" is that they are by no means treated as allegorical or with the "distanced" language usually afforded such figures. They are caught in tableaux, but these are often homely, hardly thought worth a "scene" by most writers. Formally, to find Laura's death worthy of the poetry it receives shocks most and incapacitates other readers.

Goodman's aim is to surprise, the traits of the forms he has chosen to "play with" are notoriously anti-social, oppossed to the status quo as literary forms, and he aims to make them more so. Insofar as "insight" may always connect a thought to a fact, or find a fact to fit the thought, Goodman's book is crammed with such phenomena. And he uses our literary preconceptions as a ground to surprise us. In Goodman's "effort to be different, to be not traditional," in his effort to "inject confusion into positivistic clarity," and in his effort "to alter the code," Goodman uses the romance partly as a background from which to surprise us. Such a realization restricts our treatment of The Empire City as "romance" in view of Goodman's singular use of the form.

In general, we have seen that Goodman's pervasive intellectuality tempers our enthusiasm for applying the term "romance" to The Empire City in any but very qualified ways. That intellectuality, however, might lead us to think of another form--namely, the confessional--and we now turn our attention to it as another generic possibility, thus adding that much more to our sense of Goodman's range of invention in The Empire City.

The Empire City as a Confessional

Introduction

That Goodman is often a confessional writer is apparent from a mere glance at his poetry, a short story like "The Complaint of Richard Savage," his journal, Five Years, and his autobiographical novel, Making Do, but these do no more than to suggest that we might well expect some elements of the confessional to recur in The Empire City.

Indeed, this is the case, but a thorough estimate of its precise confessional characteristics is beset by theoretical difficulties. Similar elements, that of selecting and arranging events and experiences from one's life, might be said to be integral parts of some romances or novels as well. What distinguishes the three separate forms' treatments of similar material is the distance the author gives it, and the three might be thought of as occurring along a spectrum of "objectivity to complete subjectivity," so that the confessional gains its bite from the author himself having experienced it first hand, while the same element in the novel gains its strength from being a particularly powerful representation of what should happen in the book he is writing, apart from his having experienced it. Goodman's Empire City may be thought of as a "confessional" in many ways, not the least of which are the powerful statements of the narrator himself.

Frye's Treatment of the Confessional

Noting that the "autobiography merges with the novel by a series of insensible gradations," Frye goes on to explain,

> Most autobiographies are inspired by a creative, and therefore fictional, impulse to select only those events and experiences in the writer's life that go to build up an integrated pattern. This pattern may be something larger than himself with which he has come to identify himself, or simply the coherence of his character and attitudes. . . . In Rousseau--the confession flows into the novel, and the mixture produces the fictional autobiography, the Kunstler-roman, and kindred types. There is no literary reason why the subject of the confession should always be the author himself, and dramatic confessions have been used in the novel at least since Moll Flanders. The "stream of consciousness" technique permits of a much more concentrated fusion of the two forms, but even here the characteristics peculiar to the confession form show up clearly. Nearly always some theoretical and intellectual interest in religion, politics, or art plays a leading role in the confession. It is his success in integrating his mind on such subjects that makes the author of a confession feel that his life is worth writing about. But this interest in ideas and theoretical statements is alien to the genius of the novel proper, where the technical problem is to dissolve all theory into personal relationships. In Jane Austen, to take a familiar instance, church, state, and culture are never examined except as social data, and Henry James has been described as having a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. The novelist who cannot get along without ideas, or has not the patience to digest them in a way that James did, instinctively resorts to what Mill calls a "mental history" of a single character.[32]

In addition to what Frye explicitly outlines here, we might note that normally the confessional will at least imply cause and effect through its being a "mental history," which certainly implies if A, then B. The force of the form relies on our grasping those reasons that explain the confessor ever being put in the position of having anything to confess at all. Also, at least since the "romantics" and their emphasis on the individual, the form's "introspection" has often contained an emotional base for its ideas. The act of confession itself usually implies the particularity, exception, and minority of the confessor. This accounts for the general structural similarities

between such apparently diverse authors as Rousseau, Thoreau, Lawrence, Hesse, et al. The main character was "hurt" in youth and because of that and his great sensitivity, is "alienated." He retreats from society and finds a more noble way of life deriving from both his greater sensitivity and, in the end, greater wisdom. In Goodman, however, such an impasse stops short of any such regression, for he remains in the bustling urban atmosphere, and the "dramatization" of what would constitute "his" whole story (the characters of the romance) overwhelms our sense of The Empire City as primarily a confessional.

Problems

When we consider Frye's explanation of the form, we see that two elements are lacking in The Empire City. Goodman does not "integrate the pattern" for us; we must do it ourselves. (And, generally, such a pattern as does exist might be explained in other terms, e.g., the theme of the community versus the sociolatry.) And The Empire City is not a "mental history." Because the characters who arrive fully formed, such "cause and effect" as exists derives not from the way they were, but from the way they--immutably--are.

Yet, there are elements of the confessional in it and these are worthy of brief explanation, for when we think of it as a confessional, we are reminded of the proximity of the problem of the community to Goodman's own concerns.

One last problem worth mentioning might seem to derive from our inability to generate any sort of absolute sense of how and how much we are to associate the restless narrator with Paul Goodman himself.

But the problem is not unusual; and to get--or seek--an absolute division is impossible in most cases, and seldom worth the research even if we could know. The works of such writers as D. H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway have sometimes puzzled critics in this way; and some critics, such as Mark Schorer, have often rephrased the problem of "absolute division" in aesthetic and literary terminology. In large measure such questions are repetitions of the centuries old discussion about Moll Flanders which has asked whether in a work of fiction, the writer who assumes a character (in or out of the story, e.g., as character or as narrator) is articulating his own views; and the most plausible answers boil down to "sometimes" and "ironically."

In The Empire City, Goodman's most confessional note may be sounded when no such "nice" distinctions as the difference between Paul Goodman and the "narrator" can legitimately remain, and that is that. Since there are innumerable examples of where the narrator is clearly and directly Paul Goodman, and also plenty of instances where the character says or even seems to exist in order to generate conscious statements of Goodman's, we need not worry about the pseudo-problem of absolute identity. And, as the "Preface" to The Grand Piano makes clear, the work was started in anger--a good indication that a slug of the confessional is in it.

Parallels

The mundane concerns that the book sometimes focuses on are also symptomatic of Goodman. Certainly Mynheer, Horatio, and Lothar

are dramatizations of parts of Goodman's ways of thinking given full sway in a fictional world, and insofar as what they have to say is mainly out of the way, "weird," as it were, the work in part attempts to justify those strange visions. Given such a sliding scale from objectivity to absolute and strident conscious subjectivity as I suggest above, about the best we can do is pinpoint a few examples of where Goodman seems to be in his most confessional tone--regardless of whether he has dramatized these situations or not. In considering the work as a confessional, we might remark that in isolated places, but especially in his journal, Goodman has often seemed to suggest that The Empire City would finally correct all the nonsense about him, as well it may someday, but hasn't yet.

Goodman's Confessions

Still, for most readers, the most intriguing question about viewing The Empire City as a confessional would be: what is Paul Goodman confessing to? The reader must keep in mind that the traditional justification for such confessing is to bring the activity confessed out into the open, to gain public consideration of what is presently considered to be either private--or even non-existent--by the reading public. And, of course, any theory of "unfinished revolutions," whereby an author thinks of himself in the vanguard of progress may be especially susceptible to such treatment. Out of the way sexual matters, cranksided religious and political views are always such subjects. Goodman's Empire City contains these abundantly, and only some of the time are they dramatized.

The confusion that Horatio and Mynheer go through about whether the other one is propositioning him in the opening pages of the book is such a passage. Certainly the public response to such material would vary from the early 1940's when Goodman originally wrote it, to, say, the years after Rechy's City of Night; and the result would be to find in The Empire City a more confessional impulse than we might now ascribe to it.

Again, in Horatio's psychological disputes with himself, being rescued and "unblocked" by the figure of the "Friend Below," who later becomes Eros himself and is also figuratively another dimension of Horatio, one can envision Goodman, who himself went through psychotherapy, as confessing this--or one can choose to attribute it to Goodman's experience as a psychotherapist in charge of patients--or, both.

What we begin to see in considering the work a confessional is that the pattern is problematical: it contains at least three variables--the public, or the writer's idealized reader, and the "narrator" as he is or is not thought by either the reader or writer to be the writer himself and so forth. Goodman's method of narration obfuscates precise estimates, yet we have pointed to passages that might be considered "confessional" by some--and, "lest we neglect to add a little more confusion,"[33] we might note that there are no doubt plenty of readers who would see the whole work as the confessional of a madman.

In Goodman's own appearances in the novel, of course, a confessional note is sounded, and finally perhaps the most direct content that might be associated with the confessional impulse and its

intellectual qualities are those explanatory notes about the community itself. For instance, in "The True Theory of Our Friends," he explains that the same people keep meeting each other at meetings as well as in the alleys, because they are "more personally engaged. . . . If one of us steals off to a secluded coast that seems to us promising, he will meet another one of us walking naked toward him up King's Beach,"[34] and when he explains his identity in his group "I am a regional novelist--(and we) were shocked, humiliated, and angered to see that 'our' Broadway was, as we saw it, demoted from its unique position to become a section of the Albany Post Road."[35]

To summarize briefly, The Empire City may be viewed as a confessional and our estimate of the work in this vein must consider that Goodman does indeed feel that his "life is worth writing about." He illustrates this in two ways: by giving Mynheer, Lothar and Eliphaz portions of himself and developing their monologues which are barely concealed facets of Paul Goodman's sense of intellectuality, politics, and economics respectively; and in those numerous places in the work where Goodman himself (identified as such) is speaking, as well as those even more numerous places in the book where the narrator and Goodman are obviously the same. Furthermore, when the work becomes in fact a "history of his friends," where Goodman identifies his friends, the Trillings, the Mayes, Benny Bufano, et al., reemphasizes the confessional content of the work. But because of Goodman's theory of the participating narrator, such theoretical concerns as these would not in all likelihood concern him much.

That is, one can envision Goodman saying something like, "To a large extent all authentic writing is confessional," and pointing to such favorite authors of his as Kafka and Gide to justify his impatience for dealing with such arguments. Certainly his tendency to "personify" his favorite authors would seem to corroborate this. And in connection with this, one is tempted to say to would-be readers of Goodman, that if you are looking for a confessional, Making Do and Five Years are better examples of the genre than The Empire City. If you read enough Goodman, you will come to understand that all his writing is to a large extent "confessional," and so you can start anywhere. In short, if you argue militantly with him, then you can see him as a writer of confessionals; if you do believe him, then his pervasive tracing of his thoughts is both true for him and for us, and the confessional and anatomy have joined forces--his intellectuality is both introverted and extroverted at the same time, so thoroughly has he himself digested and inspected the "source" of his irks.

Figuratively, The Empire City may be thought of as a "mental history" of a single character--and that character is Paul Goodman. He said that his "private ills (were) not symbolically unrelated (to his) feelings (toward) the general disaster"[36] as early as August, 1941. It would certainly appear that they sometimes seemed to be extended by him as empirical effects of the general disaster, so that The Empire City's tones of weariness, Goodman's personal "tiredness," at the necessary repetition of taking the small but heroic steps toward a better world by a man who grows to be a "personality" highlight the book's stature as a partial confessional. As Goodman's

stature increases, the work will perhaps come to remind us of Plutarch's Maxim XX, "Old men of reputation and virtue should be permitted, and even encouraged to boast of themselves in order to excite the emulation of youth."

Finally, the problem The Empire City presents as a confessional is manifested in its humor. In this Goodman resembles Kafka. In Love and Death in the American Novel, Leslie Fiedler remarks that Goodman has "created . . . a symbolism as shifty and evasive as Kafka's own, as well as a technique half-essayistic, half-poetical, based on his example." Goodman also, Fiedler finds, has "specified and expanded (Kafka's) Freudian insights, and made explicit the revolutionary implications of his vision, without losing the mad humor which is his essence."[37] While one can gasp in sympathy, be overwhelmed by the world that overwhelms him, Kafka will not allow us to do it for long, before he turns the work of art on itself so that we cry and laugh--perhaps most evident in Kafka's wonderful parables and paradoxes--and Goodman has caught Kafka's tone completely, though he often says it more obviously: "If we conformed to the mad society, we became mad," says Mynheer, "and if we did not conform to the only society that there is, we became mad."[38] This is cause for weeping, for sympathy with a man in a predicament beyond both his control and design--and then for the hilarious laughter of the absurdity of the predicament itself. It is a heady satirical confessional indeed that makes fun of itself while examining the sources of its torture and retaliatory postures.

Our qualifications about seeing The Empire City as a romance or confessional are instructive. We found it too outgoing, too blatantly didactic, too intellectually self-conscious, too concrete, perhaps even too "cocky" for us to consider the romance much more than a solid base for Goodman's departure from that form. While the confessional, according to Frye, does tend toward intellectuality, it usually succeeds in integrating that intellectuality in the form of a character (generally in the progress of that character's mental history); and Goodman's Empire City does not, in any but the most figurative sense, present such a character. It is, bluntly, too full of laughter about even the confessor's posturing to be a good representative of that genre in a very serious way.

But Frye has identified a fourth form--the anatomy--which emphasizes precisely the elements of our qualifications: an extroverted intellectuality. In the next chapter, we examine The Empire City as an anatomy.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III

[1]Frye, p. 137.

[2]Ibid., p. 309.

[3]Ibid., p. 306.

[4]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 153.

[5]Ibid., p. 515.

[6]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables (New York: Dodd Mead, 1950), p. xiv.

[7]Goodman, The Empire City, pp. 277-278.

[8]Ibid., p. 64.

[9]Hawthorne, p. xiv.

[10]Frye, p. 306.

[11]Dennison, p. 500; and Paul, p. 898, emphasis mine.

[12]Goodman, The Grand Piano, pp. vii-viii.

[13]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 496, emphasis mine.

[14]Rosenberg, p. 495.

[15]Ibid., p. 499.

[16]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 578.

[17]Ibid., p. 587.

[18]Ibid., p. 588.

[19]Ibid., p. 588.

[20]Ibid., p. 589.

[21]Frye, p. 304.

[22]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 355.

[23]Frye, p. 137.

[24]Ibid., p. 137, emphasis mine.

[25]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 57.

[26]Ibid., p. 343.

[27]Frye, p. 305.

[28]Goodman, Five Years, p. 135.

[29]Paul, p. 925.

[30]Goodman, Speaking and Language, p. 238.

[31]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 198.

[32]Frye, pp. 307-308.

[33]Goodman, The Grand Piano, p. vii.

[34]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 67.

[35]Ibid., pp. 111-112.

[36]Goodman, The Empire City, p. vii.

[37]Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), p. 492.

[38]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 407.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPIRE CITY AS AN ANATOMY

> The novelist is a different kind of writer from the fabulist--his talent includes listening to his audience while it listens to him, and yielding to it for the sake of the story. The novelist is the most compliant among the artists; no meaning in his tale stands higher for him than its power to catch him hearers. Goodman is eager to be listened to too, but on his own terms, not at any cost. It is not from the novelist that he has derived the measure of his ingratiation. His affinities are with philosophers and poets, particularly the seekers of the absolute and of intoxication: Rilke, Kafka, Cocteau, Mallarme.
>
> The Empire City is not a good novel but it is a great book.
>
> -- George Dennison[1]

> Oh the days have vanished quickly by
> during which I made a library
> of useful thoughts for the Americans
> and became a famous man.
>
> -- Paul Goodman[2]

Introduction

Frye's fourth genre, the Menippean satire or anatomy, has characteristics that resolve many of the problems articulated in the last chapter. When we considered The Empire City as a romance and as a confessional, we noticed the difficulties attending any clear cut estimate of the origin of "felt ideas," and remarked the shifting significances narrator and character alike seem to attach to the events of the work itself. In Frye's treatment of the genre, he says

it "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes,"[3] precisely the terminology we need to characterize Goodman's work.

Although our analysis of the romance and confessional emphasized that the characters of The Empire City might be considered as parts of Goodman himself, we found that they were too consciously drawn to fit the romance exactly, and we noted that Goodman seemed to examine his characters' process of thinking rather than narrating and dramatizing the specific events that made them think that way as we might expect in the confessional. Frye says the anatomy ". . . resembles the confessional in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and [it] differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and [it] presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent."[4] While thinking of The Empire City as a romance and confession does clarify aspects of Paul Goodman's fiction, analyzing it as an anatomy is even more successful in explaining the work's most flamboyant peculiarities.

Frye's Treatment of the Anatomy

> At its most concentrated the Menippean satire presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern. The intellectual structure built up from the story makes for violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative, though the appearance of carelessness that results reflects only the carelessness of the reader or his tendency to judge by a novel-centered conception of fiction. . . . In the Menippean satires . . . the name of the form also applies to the attitude. As the name of an attitude, satire is . . . a combination of fantasy and morality. But as the name of a form, the term satire . . . is more flexible, and can be either entirely fantastic or entirely moral. The Menippean adventure story may thus be pure fantasy, as it is in the literary fairy tale. . . . The purely moral type is a serious vision of society as a single intellectual pattern, in other words, a Utopia.[5]

Among the large number of anatomists Frye lists, Rabelais, Robert Burton, and Thomas Love Peacock provide his most frequent examples of writers using the genre, "allegedly invented by a Greek cynic named Menippus, [whose] works are lost. . . ."[6]

The briefest of considerations, however, suggests no particular formal resemblances between, say, Rabelais and Peacock, or Apuleius and Burton. Instead, one does find similar instincts, attitudes. One reason the anatomy has not received much attention as a form is that its intellectuality and subject often overwhelms its narrative design, so that they are often read as representing the "spirit of the age," or as Frye points out, "Examples of Prose Style."[7]

The anatomy is often overwhelmingly intellectual. The form itself emphasizes the narrator's thinking processes and this is certainly the common denominator of Frye's following list of the genre's characteristics: ideas as characters, caricatures, ironic use of erudition, digression, and an encyclopaedic magpie instinct.[8] Because the contents of anatomies vary with the intellectual preoccupations of their authors, the form is apt to remain fairly opaque to comparative criticism conceived formally. It does not make much sense to compare Peacock to Rabelais in terms of form. The one formal consideration deep in the roots of the anatomy is the mixture of prose and verse; and formally, it might be considered to reflect the genre's early impetus toward unifying different ways of expression--or different kinds of "knowing." In terms of content, if one did compare a variety of anatomists, one would find similar situations and attitudes: the cena, the appeal to past authority sometimes used

ironically, the seriocomic defense of drinking and the tangible things in life, which ties in with another common denominator noted by Frye--"the ridicule of the philosophus gloriosus."[9] But this has a curious twist. Since the anatomist is himself the collector, the historian, the chronicler of ideas, he is at least the literary cousin of the philosophus gloriosus.

The Anatomist's Intellectuality and Concern with Education

His learning tends to make him wary of the present ways of thinking, and this, he often conceives to be in direct contradiction to either the best thought of the past or to his own magnificent common sense. The anatomy is often antiquarian in content, but not in tone since the classical content is often taken out of context and subordinated to the anatomist's own idea or purpose.

If the anatomist appeals to the veracity of the ancient verities, the work turns toward being a common-place book, a collection of antiquity, perhaps emphasizing the poetry of the ancients. If on the other hand, he appeals to common sense, it tends toward offering humorous concrete examples of hopelessly vague theoretical statements, as in Rabelais, where wine and women offer examples of various theological and legal problems and principles. Since there is no reason why the appeal to common sense and to antiquity cannot be the same, the anatomy may employ, as Goodman's Empire City demonstrably does, two distinctly different means to achieve a single end. Goodman uses both learning, erudition and principles of the past, and earthiness, down-home examples, and the concrete in defiant contrast

to our normal ways of approaching experience. And this trait explains the critical troubles Paul Goodman's Empire City has had more clearly than the characteristics of any other genre we have examined.

The Empire City as an Anatomy

The largest critical complaint is the book's lack of a single unifying tone. It is manifested in the work's simultaneous mixture of the poetry from the past, of apparently hopelessly mundane explanations and definition. To have a quote from Gide or Rilke or Kant near to an Euclidean explanation of what a chase is--this is baffling to most readers. We expect the author to synthesize such material himself, and Goodman does not--at least not in the comprehensively logical and final fashion of the novel, not in that penultimate sense which leads Frye to remind us, "Henry James has been described as having a mind so fine that no idea could violate it."[10]

But there are poetical syntheses for the reader to discover. For instance, if Kant's thought that "you shouldn't wrap infants in swaddling clothes so that they can learn to use their powers" is a good example of what Goodman might mean by "coming across," a political counterpart of this is Lothar's politics, in which, "They [Lothar's group] felt that if this issue could be carried through, the entire system would collapse."[11] But such clarity of purpose and achievement can only be done by people who know down to their feet what they are doing--that is, the difference between a chase and a close thing.

Such connections can be made by a participating reader; they fit in remarkably well with Goodman's themes of alienation and impasse,

of unfinished revolutions in sex, education, economics, and elsewhere. But such syntheses as this do not exist concretely on the page--rather, they must be worked out by the reader. And this gives Goodman's work its prophetic effect, its capacity for generating seemingly endless new insights, and its parallels with surrealism. The ideal anatomist, like Rabelais or Burton, knows intimately the discipline he criticizes, but he dissociates himself from taking what is said about it by most of its practitioners very seriously, turns the accepted wisdom of the enterprise itself against itself in what Frye calls an "avalanche" of the enterprise's own jargon. It is like going to a faculty meeting.

Goodman's relation to the educational institutions is just this, and the anatomy often turns defiantly upon the very sources of its erudition. Rabelais, on the church and law; and Goodman, on Columbia. And always with the idea of saving itself from itself through its own tenets. The arrogance of learning is obvious in all anatomists: Goodman, in Five Years, remarks "When the devil quotes scriptures, it's not really to deceive but simply that the masses are so ignorant of theology that somebody has to teach them the elementary texts before he can seduce them."[12]

Since such works are obviously "educated" and their authors see folly as resulting from mental attitudes, it is not surprising that we find them interested in "education." In a sense the anatomist is separated from his education by having learned so well and always is miffed about others who have not remembered what he has. This is the source of the most superficial air of genius the anatomy has about

it. But this can be treated humorously; hence in Peacock's Nightmare Abbey, we find his main character, Scythrop,

> was sent to school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him; and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head: having finished his education to the high satisfaction of the master and fellows of his college, who had, in testimony of their approbation, presented him with a silver fish-slice, on which his name figures at the head of a laudatory inscription in some semi-barbarous dialect of Anglo Saxonized Latin.[13]

The anatomist has through his learning and its application learned better than to attempt generalizations about learning for all. Peacock reveals two different and sometimes opposed views: that Scythrop should not have to undergo the torture of learning, nor his masters, for that matter, the torture of attempting to teach him (the upshot is no Latin for Scythrop); and that once having committed Scythrop to "learning," they should have "taught" and he should have "learned" proper Latin (an eloquent Scythrop).

This compares with the tenor of Goodman's characterization of Horatio by implication in muted contrast with the "rest of us." Eleven years old, Horatio

> was at the acme of human powers, close enough to original desire . . . not to be befuddled by associations of ideas, not to be resigned to second-best choices, to painful substitutes for satisfaceion that get you into even hotter water than if you stuck to what you really wanted.[14]

And he can benefit from the fact that he

> happened to have no parents to set him the example of correct economic behavior and how to be anxious. He was brought up in his dependency as an equal by his brother and sister who lived on the dole, the relatively solid income of our Empire itself as a whole. And when it came time to go to school and be systematically retarded like the rest, he tore up the records,

> roamed the streets, and learned to read and write from the headlines in the newspapers. An escaped child, a lumpen aristocrat, our heir.[15]

If Peacock's and Goodman's voices seem paradoxical, that Scythrop should learn proper Latin, but probably he shouldn't learn it at all, that Horatio's advantage was "given to few to begin his education from under the ground up" (literally, the sewers and aquaducts of New York City), the paradox is easily resolved by conceiving of education as pertinent to the talents and desires of the student himself, so that something less dangerous and more noble than mere drinking will be (as Peacock says), "the only piece of academical learning that the finished educatee retains."[17] The anatomist's common complaint with the world is that it doesn't know whereof it speaks.

We might think of this in terms of utopian ends and means. The anatomist finds foggily stated ends and hopelessly befuddled means. He must believe that he has an intellectual corner on the market of doing things sensibly, and in principle this derives from both his erudition and his earthy good sense. Everywhere, the work will point toward Aristotle's famous dictum from the Ethics: "It is the mark of an educated man and a proof of his culture that in every subject he looks for only so much precision as its nature permits," as well as such homilies as "if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well." In theoretical statements he will find the world's notions capable of diverse and humorous interpretations; in concrete matters, the "world" is nearly bestial, unable to conceive of the connections between a sensual event and its possible theoretical implications. The world's

follies are not cases of "thinking" or "examining"; they are cases of neither.

Thus, there is an air of defiance and definitive how-to-ness about the anatomist, but he is apt to be restless, in part because his erudition leads him to recognize his own incapacity to finish the job he started. Rather than giving a history of a mind as a writer of the confessional would do, he tends to present patterns of thinking. There is always the air of "well, if you wanted to think about this, this is where one might start." Goodman's social criticism's common sense approach to problems only the experts handle is often couched in such language--"it seems to me," "at first it appears," etc.

The anatomist is apt to quarrel ceaselessly with the already accepted language either on the basis of the present, that it can be shown to have other meanings, or on the basis of the past, that nobody in his right mind thought that . . . ever.

In principle, the anatomy cannot really be finished because the antiquarian's work is never completed, though he can point to what he has learned so far. We might think of his typical quarrel with the world as consisting of two agruments: that the necessary precision is lacking (either there is more or less precision than is needed); or that the things it does follow through on enough to be considered having done well were not worth the doing in the first place.

This has obvious similarities with Kafka's tone! In short, with the given that the thinker's can't do, and the doer's can't think, the anatomist is apt to discover evidence that tends to suggest neither

can the thinkers think, nor the doers do; and the problem is how to get man to see what he is doing or thinking at all. The Compleat Angler exists because there are so many "incomplete anglers" in the world. What is lacking is method, approach, the spirit of the endeavor.

We cannot excape the pervasive intellectuality of the narrator at all; it explains everything else in the form. "The novelist," says Frye, "sees evil and folly as social diseases, but the Mennippean satirist sees them as diseases of the intellect, as a kind of maddened pedantry which the philosophus gloriosus at once symbolizes and defines."[18] The antidote to such madness is obviously the better, the right ideas, and the anatomist dishes out large doses of these.

This is perhaps best illustrated by considering the form's relation to the novel. In ordinary fiction, the sociological, the psychological, the economic, pedagogic elements which go into the making of the characters must be inferred from the imagery, symbolism, represented events and the like; in the anatomy generally, and in Goodman specifically, these are stated openly and hence laid open for discussion. Conversely, whereas in the novel, ordinary discussions of psychology, sociology, education, economic factors, have no concrete embodiment but remain abstract, in an anatomy--such as The Empire City--they are built into the fictional world and into the characters, and therefore come into active interrelationships. The advantage of this strategy is that the ideas can be represented as developing, changing, contradicting themselves--in short, as being alive. (In Goodman's treatment, what is field in the novel is figure in the anatomy.) And

what is manifestly important about considering Goodman's work in this way is to show him not without formal precedent in precisely such writers as Peacock and Burton.

The anatomist's intellectuality, then, determines the nature of the characterization, recurrent situations, and the often observed technique of cataloguing and the formal mixtures of prose and verse.

Caricatures

> The Menippean satire deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes. Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behavior.[19]

Unlike the romance, the anatomy ". . . is not primarily concerned with the exploits of heroes, but relies on the free play of intellectual fancy and the kind of humorous observation that produces caricature."[20] This certainly promotes the feeling that the narrator of The Empire City constructs situations and events only to talk a bit further himself. To illustrate through scene. And to illuminate through narrative. If we look to Goodman for the amazing assortment of fools that Frye suggests are common to the form we certainly can hit upon a few, and in some sense intellectually, the whole fabric of society is treated as a caricature when Goodman's humorous observation includes wholesale reductio ad absurdum explanations.

Narrationally, there are two operating principles: the distance that allows for the character's remaining a personification; and the representational quality of his folly, so that a character can be allegorical for all preachers with similar follies.

The Empire City is brimming with such fools. An absolutely sterling one is Minetta Pitcher--herself somehow representative of many of the minor characters whose disabilities in their early appearances in the novel somehow are transformed by the end. Like Antonicelli and Lefty, at first she is at odds with both her job and herself.

Miss Pitcher in The Grand Piano is the Alger's social worker, the very one, Goodman tells us, who caused "Sadler of Chicago" to generalize that "the maladjusted take care of the maladjusted and they say it don't stink."[21] Suggesting perhaps the anatomist's typical preoccupation with words themselves, Goodman dramatizes her "problem" through explaining that she remained fixed on the sounds of words,

> indissolubly associated with forbidden sexual and physiological ideas. And soon these were a formidable list; the word, "whole" of course, everything connected with tubes, oil, lubrication; words like "constitution" or "stay" or "support." Magnetism was taboo; the word "taboo" was taboo. Fruit, seed, planting, fertile were all concepts to be avoided in any context. You can see that this made communication pretty difficult for her. The word "communication" was absolutely taboo.[22]

Later, she marries Harry Tyler, and gets well enough to be recommending that Horatio go to her "cat house" and to join the P.T.A. when he goes crazy in The Holy Terror. But throughout, she remains a caricature, first of the petrified social worker struggling with her own adolescent sexual blockages, carrying on absurd and disjointed conversations, and later, as a cheerful motherly figure for Horatio and other crazies to turn to for help. In the latter role, she can articulate some of Goodman's own notions about psychotherapy. Since he doesn't tell us how she became cured in any specific way, perhaps

we are to surmise that this is a paradigm of her own cure as well. She tells Horatio,

> Some lad comes in who can work up a little excitement if he does so and so or such and such, or if somebody does it for him. Good, we set him at it. This is what he can do, age four and a half. If we create the proper permissive environment for that, soon he goes on to what he can't do, age six. In a few weeks he has mastered the curriculum.[23]

A number of such minor characters in the work are important in the various community meetings where they can argue diverse, even sometimes crazy ideas about what to do, how to live, how to cope with "this our only world."

However, even some of the major characters are also of this ilk. Except Horatio, each of the four main characters has in mind or represents a part of an utopian vision: Eliphaz of a mystically pure economics; Lothar of the radical reformist; Mynheer of the intellect; and Laura of the glancing day, spontaneity itself. They too are caricatures, but huge ones, something along the lines of, say, Flem Snopes or Eula in Faulkner's The Hamlet, except that rather than focusing on the physical manifestations of rapacity as Faulkner does with Flem, or on the elements of female voluptuousness as he does with Eula, Goodman focuses on his characters' ideas--mental attitudes. That Goodman's characters can be said to clash superficially is to be expected since their attitudes are set.

Goodman's treatment of Lothar is similar to his treatment of the other major characters. Lothar's actions cause great havoc. His freeing the animals in the zoo constitutes a major scene and his various escapades with representatives of the establishment--the army,

the draft board--allow Goodman to get down imaginary interviews that stress the impasse of the radical reformist and the establishment. They simply do not talk the same language.

In fact, Goodman offers all the main characters who want one a monologue. Not surprisingly, Mynheer's and Eliphaz's are the longest. This might lead us to speculate that Goodman's own relation with Lothar is the strongest since he narrates and describes that position, while letting the other characters speak for themselves. By nature, Laura, the glancing day, and Horatio, the "developing boy," will not themselves have much to say in any final sense because they are caught in the innocence of the moment. They do not recognize the past and they have no real sense of the future.

But Goodman's treatment of his characters is sometimes cavalier, he upstages them himself. They are caricatures, and this is most clearly demonstrated by Goodman's God's eye view of everything.

Of course the characters do disagree with one another. Horatio, because he operates in both a mental and a physically real world, knows that Lothar is crazy to think that burning candles instead of using electricity will stop the capitalist system. But in principle Lothar is right. A real boycott of electricity would raise havoc with the capitalist system. It simply will not happen via one individual's determination. But that is not to say that he is wrong about the results if it should happen on a mass scale. Nor about the fact that it should and does exist as a possibility. Contrasting Horatio and Lothar in this way, we can see more clearly the principle outlines of Goodman's main characters who represent various ways of thinking,

embody various mental attitudes, and as such, are caricatures--part of the time.

The anatomy is apt to focus on a writer's relation with his demigods, and clearly, from the passages in his journal, this is exactly what Goodman does. On the one hand he knows they are imaginary; on the other hand, he pretends to believe in their reality so that he can discuss Lothar in the following terms as well:

> Lothar is in a way Adam. But he would consider himself an Adam-seeker. Yet to me he seems to be Adam himself. Is this something Adam does, seek Adam? I shouldn't have thought so. It is a mistake for me to seek and woo him as I do; Adam will come to his lover, if he is there and if the circumstances are practical.[24]

Even such a passage as this hints the anatomist, for it is his special province to deal with numerous separated realities as apparent wholes in stylized characterizations--the "stylizing of characters," Frye says, "along humor lines."[25]

Humors

We have already discussed this concept briefly in Chapter II and pointed to the principle of unincremental repetition as leading to the literary imitation of ritual bondage. The "humor" (as a character) is in ritual bondage to his personality traits; he will continue to deomnstrate the symptoms of that personality type, that way of looking at life. Historically, the term's heritage includes application in alchemy, theology, psychology and literature.* In connection with

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*It is worth remarking that this psychology is still used by some modern educators. The "Waldorf" or Rudolph Steiner schools have used it in Germany, England and America. Philosophically, it works well with theories of transmutation as the medieval alchemist and the

literature, it has often been thought of as the embodiment of a single principle and therefore may seem "quaint" and perhaps a little "mechanical" to our vastly "sophisticated" age. Nevertheless, its more serious application in the other fields has connoted "essence"; and we might best think of it as the accomplished parameters of personality. Thus, while the humor might be said to develop in literary works, fate might be said to guide its development.

Perhaps this sense of inevitability and of development is the most interesting of the humor's characteristics, for it is both an attitude and a type, or the emerging and already emerged "personality." Psychologically speaking, if you are "melancholic," you will be "melancholic," though some interaction with "cholerics" may change that slightly. Primarily, the humor, considered psychologically, seeks to explain the emerging personality, but has the humane capacity to view this process as simultaneously dynamic and an "accomplished" fact. It is thus a typology, which, qua typology, is peculiarly flexible. This may explain its interest for literary and aesthetic application, where a work of art must be thought of as "aiming" and "accomplishing," or where characters can be thought of as developing and already immutably developed. Its use in the anatomy is emphasized by Frye; and perhaps this is part of the reason "anatomies" tend to contain

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modern anthroposophists well know. Educationally, its value may lie in its emphasis on expectations and its peculiar "back of the head" sense of transmutation, the equanimity with which it can view growth, for it enables the teacher, via the typology, to feel both capable and amazed--a combination our modern deterministic psychology and sociology is apt to lack. In view of these "humane" attributes, it seems a wonder that it is not more discussed in modern "psychologies" of education.

disfigured, gigantic, and the outlandishly "mixed" figures. (I am thinking of Apuleius, The Golden Ass, Gargantua and Pantagruel, and Democritus, Jr. of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.)

In any event, Goodman also states in the "preface" to The Grand Piano that his characters are "sociological humors," by which he seems to have meant that they characterized ways of looking at society and at "life." Since humors' perceptual systems reify themselves endlessly, can these also be seen as "ways the world" is. Perhaps this is more easily demonstrated in terms of time.

We can understand such characters most clearly when we think of them as having two different "temporal" states, and these are most easily demonstrated by reference to the reader's sense of them as either "emerging" or "emerged" characters. Frye explains such a character as follows:

> He is obsessed by his humor, and his function in the play is primarily to repeat his obsession. A sick man is not a humor, but a hypochondriac is, because qua hypochondriac, he can never admit to good health, and can never do anything that is inconsistent with the role that he has prescribed for himself. . . . The principle of repetition as the basis of humor both in Jonson's sense and in ours is well known to the creators of comic strips, in which a character is established as a parasite, a glutton (often confined to one dish) or a shrew, and who begins to be funny after the point has been made every day for several months. Continuous comic radio programs, too, are much more amusing to habitues than to neophytes.[26]

We might, then, divide the reader's reaction to such characters into two different stages: first, before he is well acquainted with the character's dimensions and believes that change is still possible; and secondly, when it becomes absolutely apparent that the character is what he is and the reader's interest lies in seeing how each new

situation will bring out the inevitable characteristic. (Clearly, at least one of Lawrence Sterne's programs in Tristram Shandy is to dramatize this in the story being told by the as-yet-unborn baby.)

In reviewing Goodman's passage about Lothar, it is worth remarking that Goodman--sadly in need of "heroes"--considers "Lothar" to be "Adam" in contrast to his (Goodman's) day to day dealing with people in New York City. But it is also part of Lothar's character qua "Lothar" to think of himself as seeking Adam; and it could be no other way. Within the context of Goodman's imagination, "Lothar" can be "Adam"; but in order to be "Lothar," he cannot think he is. In such a figure, aristocratic, hierarchical, essential qualities are merged with democratic principles. "Lothar" already fully formed in Goodman's imagination comes to be Adam. "Lothar," (who, of course, does not himself recognize his literary parameters), "seeks" Adam.

Insofar as The Empire City is both a "romance" and an "anatomy," thinking of the characters as humors and as archetypes is instructive, because we can think of the characters as Goodman's (and by extension, our own) emerging, inner, possible, tentative "selves" and as hard, coagulated, fully formed types--which, when taken altogether, because an anatomy aims for inclusiveness, might be thought to comprise the world views possible. (This is a statement about the formal implications of the anatomy, and not about Truth.) Goodman's view of Lothar seems to suggest both the developing and the developed character; and if we look at the passage long and hard, we may come to think that Goodman himself became a kind of native American type--if not "humor"--a subject considerably too large for treatment here, but one which is

somewhat corroborated by Goodman's own complaints of living into a destiny already formed in Five Years: "The problem is to say something that is not my party line."[27]

In The Empire City, Goodman created archetypal caricatures, or--humors. And their capacity to function as humors explains the marvelous mixture of "subjective" and "objective" treatment they receive from Goodman, for they are finally both emergent and emerged, aspiration and accomplishment, all at once.

A Recurrent Situation: The Cena Heritage, Definition, and Dimensions

The anatomist's preoccupation with intellectual matters leads him to emphasize his characters' discourse--often at length. The dialogue is the most important element of the "cena"; but a common vehicle for these dialogues is the dinner table, and in some anatomies (for example, Gargantua and Pantagruel) the feasting has sometimes obscured the conversation altogether. Considered in its widest dimensions, then, the "cena" might be thought to deal with nearly any dialogue, especially those between caricature-like figures--ranging from those between two people to full blown symposiums--in conjunction with activities ranging from chatting over a beer to veritable orgies (as in Petronius, Apuleius, et al.). But some sort of discussion is the common denominator of the "cena."

Because the characters represent mental attitudes rather than realistically fluctuating and tentative people, they are apt to reiterate their principles rather than to argue them seriously, and so the discussions may "get" nowhere as they talk and drink and feast on

into the evening. Nevertheless, the reader who hopes for final answers is apt to be disappointed; the joy is often in the working out, the doing, the means, and the process, the wine inspired wit, the talking--not in the attainment of any clearly articulable ends, principles, final answers, etc.

Frye focuses on the tradition and on the conversation in the following way:

> . . . the short form of the Minnipean satire is usually a dialogue or colloquy, in which the dramatic interest is in a conflict of ideas rather than of character. This is the favorite form of Erasmus, and is common in Voltaire. Here again the form is not invariably satiric in attitude, but shades off into more purely fanciful or moral discussions. . . . Sometimes this form expands to full length, and more than two speakers are used: the setting then is usually a cena or symposium, like the one that looms so large in Petronius. Plato, though much earlier in the field than Menippus, is a strong influence on this type which stretches in an unbroken tradition down through those urbane and leisurely conversations which define the ideal courtier in Castiglione or the doctrine and discipline of angling in Walton.[28]

Such chats may include anything from the merely clever to the drunken harrangue to the closely reasoned, but the air of leisure will generally pervade such a scene. Apparently, the idea that the bar is a last community enterprise is not a new one, only--perhaps--a more true one historically; and certainly our definition of the "cena" cannot fail to emphasize the generally boisterous atmosphere the device often inspires. "Drinking," a character in Peacock says, "is the only key to conversational truth."[29]

These two elements, then, of conversation and food and drink are to be construed as the essentials of the "cena." It may be worth our while to consider the archetypal implications of these two

activities before going on to discuss the range of application Goodman found for the device, because archetypally seen, Goodman's use of the "cena" constitutes an important underscoring of several major themes in The Empire City.

In such a view, the combination of dialogue and banquet would thus emphasize the coming together of the community--literally, sharing food and thought--whether this is thought to be a metaphor for discussions with himself (as in Horatio's discussions with Eros) or seen concretely (as in the gathering of the "family" around the table--Horatio and Lothar speaking together before dinner, Eliphaz, Mynheer, and Horatio chatting together in front of the fire and so forth). If the connotations of the word limit our sense of the contrived and the purposeful about the colloquy and "dialogue" respectively, these elements are replaced by the sense of "ambling," "spontaneous," "discovery," and sometimes wine inspired "wit." To the extent that we sense Goodman working desperately in celebration of "community" and using what Frye calls the "cena" to do so, we can more completely understand the power of the "presence of the absence of our friends" theme in The Empire City, for while natural "death" eliminates a complete community banquet, early and "unnatural" death (as Goodman perceives to be the case about war caused "deaths" of Arthur, Laura, and in considerably more metaphorical fashion the dualistic economy that "kills" Eliphaz) is an affront to achieving what "community" we can. "Nature," "fate," "the human condition" may mitigate our chances at the "Eden" that would be provided by the banquet of All, but institutionalized violence, hypocritical economics, "planned"

obsolecence and the like are to Goodman the products of human invention and in principle admitting of change. Thus, the cena, as a repeated literary device, comes to have a thematic importance in the work; and the celebration of community via talk and sometimes the sharing of food becomes a pervasive and archetypal ideal in The Empire City.

The last great scene in The Holy Terror is a community meeting held in order to discover "what to do against it," how to live sensibly, and each of the characters advance their ideas. If we hold that the implications of the cena extend to any two people trying to discover the other's reality through leisurely conversation, then we can include the first scene of the book, where Horatio is confronted by Mynheer and the two make a tour of the city, and argue more or less plausibly that The Empire City starts and finishes with cena-like scenes--that this structurally underlines Goodman's theme of searching for community through discourse. However, we need not make that argument in order to substantiate the prevalence of three kinds of cena situations, dialogues about principles, the family discussions and ethnological rituals, and the full blown "community" meetings. In the following I have treated most fully that scene which is most directly connected with "education," but in principle all the cena scenes have that as a background--how to live and how to love are seen by Goodman as educational problems--as are psychological blockages etc.

Dialogues About Principles

Certainly the dialogue most germane to this dissertation is that between Eliphaz and Mynheer and later, Horatio. Goodman refers the reader to it time and again in his later writings--as if, from it, one could invent a whole curriculum. Goodman treats it as if it contained the principles and aims on which to conduct an "education," which may be underlined by the fact that although Mynheer lost the first lesson plan he wrote, the one Eliphaz first saw, he explains to Eliphaz who wants the "original," "what difference does it make? This one's just as good."[30] Primarily, Mynheer's approach is based on finding out the needs of the students and guiding them toward "growth" from those needs. Since one starts with the fact of those "interests" and deals in the real world rather than the artificial environment of school-room and pre-ordained "lesson plans," any plan built on the fact of the moment could in principle be workable. Goodman's hatred for regimentalizing lesson plans is well known and his argument with them has always been that they subordinate the "facts" the child and the real world constitute. The cardinal direction of Mynheer's lesson plan is from fact to abstraction about observed phenomena--an exploring of New York City and a variety of disciplines. Since "facts," "interests," and "needs" admit of alternative "satisfactions," "directions," "abstractions," conceivable lesson plans spawn profusely; and the "original" is no better nor worse than the one Mynheer is capable of dreaming up right now. The parallels with Deweyan principles of taking the child from "where he is" towards "growth" are

unmistakable in Goodman, and are perhaps echoed even more forcefully in our consideration of the lesson plan's "aims."

Mynheer's lesson plans have the fundamental aim rendered in verse, to "Make us at home again by tempering so/ experience to our powers that we may grow."[31] Principles and counter principles are developed, hence Mynheer can generalize about Eliphaz's objection that some homes are not worth the having. "The aim of education is to make us feel at home, and who wants to feel at home?"[32] Preceeding from the idea that, "the reason people don't feel at home is that they can't cope with the problems," Mynheer develops "three simple preliminaries: 1. learn to be at home with what we have; 2. temper experience to the growing powers; 3. cultivate nonattachment."[33] He goes on to argue, "Instead of bringing imitation bits of the City into a school building, let's go at our own pace and get out among the real things," and to Horatio's gleeful remark that such bands of children would "make trouble and stop traffic," Mynheer replies wryly, "I'm talking about the primary function of social life, to educate a better generation, and people tell me that tradesmen musn't be inconvenienced. I proceed." And "proceed" he does, to articulate that "fundamentally our kids must learn two things: Skills and Sabotage," for "In The Empire City these two attitudes come to the same thing: if you persist in honest service, you will soon be engaging in sabotage."[34]

Goodman has of course reiterated these arguments in many places, notably in his defense of "utopian thinking," in Growing Up Absurd, in fact, more or less in all his social commentary; but it is

worth our keeping in mind that he first seems to have articulated it in his fiction. The date of The Grand Piano is 1942, perhaps substantiating Theodore Roszak's generalization about Goodman that "not only do novelists make better weather vanes than our social scientists, they calculate the human costs with more precision."[35] And it reminds us that with such exceptions as Friedenberg and Reisman, academic sociologists took over twenty years to come close to grasping such views as Mynheer casually relates here--many have not yet grasped them. The problem with such proposals, Goodman argues in Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals is that they are too practical; their simplicity offends those of us committed to "complexity."[36]

Horatio has both literary reasons and, I suspect, to Goodman, personal characteristics (certainly the social one of freedom already achieved) which will not allow such proposals to apply to him, but he does see the genius of them and remarks at the end of Mynheer's presentation of his curriculum:

> "It could be done! O' course it don't compare with the kind o' life an' activity that I go through every day, on my own; but it compares favorable with what those other kids 'v got, I mean the ones chained in a school an' the ones on the hook. I'm a special case an' you can't go by me, but I like it. Not for me."[37]

Family Discussions

The principle of interaction through dialogue is so thoroughly a central Goodman notion that the cena atmosphere overwhelms the book, whether between members of the social community or of the personal one--as in Horatio's discussions with the "Friend Below." By the time we come to The Holy Terror and the sociolatry prophesied by Eliphaz

surrounds us, Goodman turns to a limited community, the family of Horatio and Rosalind, Lothar and Emily. This smaller community may well imply retrenchment on the aim of establishing a wider one, and Goodman focuses on such basic "ethnological rituals" as "Conversing," "Dancing," "Eating," and so forth. The Algers are stumped, and in light of the disastrous aspect of the fifties, they must retreat to the basics of life itself. Lothar, Goodman narrates,

> . . . was a changed man. These days he was willing to let people be happy in their own way, not necessarily his way; or even, what is harder, to let them be unhappy in their own way, so long as it was not some stupid non-way, some systematic deviation from common sense.[38]

Accordingly, Goodman examines the way they talk to one another:

> When Emilia and Lothario disagreed, one would say definitely to the other, "No," and proceed to make their difference precise. And as soon as they would come to an agreement, they would at once say, "Yes," and agree. They did not say, "Yes, but . . . ."[39]

Furthermore, that conversation itself is nearly impossible in light of the sociolatry and the inroads it has made on their original desires, and since this, to Goodman anyhow, implies no real speech, the use of the cena is reduced to basics, truncated, and even wistful about a time when real speech did or will exist more widely. So foreign, thinks Goodman, has the notion of real speech become to his readers that he forcefully emphasizes its existence in a parenthetical comment about Horatio and Lothar: "They were really conversing, which I express by 'the one man said' and then 'the other man said.'"[40]

Such is not always the case with family discussions in the work; indeed, one remembers spirited discussions between Eliphaz and Emilia, transactions between Eliphaz and Arthur, in contrast to these

chapters in The Holy Terror, which seem to be a curious kind of discussion of how and what to discuss if one had a mind to discuss at all--a structural anthropology rather than the activity itself--or how to conduct a symposium, a mini-event, family discussions which struggle to articulate the first principles of remembered live talk. The disemboweled cena, groping for real meaning, at this time was but a parody of its former self.

Fullfledged Community Meetings

The fullfledged community meetings provide even more examples of Goodman's use of the cena in his anatomy. Perhaps one of the funniest, certainly one of the easiest to capsulize, is in "Lothar's Politics" where in order to "determine the just profit of monopolies and pay this just profit," everyone is given a chance to advance his theory of what that just profit would be, and the participants come up with arguments for "Minus One, Zero, One, Two, Four and Six Percent," and are working their way toward making it "a smooth series," adding Three and Five, when the arrival of the grand piano intrudes upon their meeting.[41] The arguments themselves reiterate Frye's observation that the anatomist often ridicules the philosophus gloriosus, and the numerous scenes of community meetings and the wide range of opinions given voice, defended on principle, also remind us of the second "passion" in Goodman's "patriotism" explained in Five Years:

". . . in a social group, I cannot tolerate for anybody to be disregarded, allowed not to have his say; everybody must belong and have something to which to belong. So I am thunder-struck at how people carry on without thinking of our country."[42]

Of the many such scenes, perhaps the two most important to grasping Goodman's way of thinking are "Our Meeting, 1948," and "Our Village Meeting" that ends Book Four: the first, because it, among many others, articulates most clearly what Goodman sees as the "hard problems"; the second, because in it the characters not already killed off by the sociolatry reiterate their principles, their ways to survive.

Goodman's pervasive use of the cena finally may have the effect of overwhelming the work; and this is anything but contrary to Goodman's aims in the book. The Empire City is brimming with short sketches in which, although a dramatized discussion is not taking place, the reader feels that there is or has been one going on. For example, Goodman's narration of the abstract principles of N.I.B. ("the National Industrial Boycott") includes "the opening clauses of their charter," which sounds more like Paul Goodman than a charter--"We call ourselves N.I.B. because as yet we are tentatively nibbling at the present system. But if we find the right technique we'll take a good bite."[43] The narration of the charter of N.I.B. is not strictly speaking a cena; but it does come to have the air of one, and indeed this impression may be strengthened by the fact that S.P.V. ("the Society for the Propagation of Vice") consists of the same people, is "a development and refinement of N.I.B."[44] and does hold a community meeting. Goodman's narration description of S.P.V.'s purposes emphasizes the relationship between N.I.B. and S.P.V. as follows: "whereas Lothar's friends made a frontal attack (pardon the expression) on the social behavior, S.P.V. went behind (pardon the

expression) and undermined the impulses that prompt each one to get up at dawn and go to work."[45] Typically, then, Goodman's narrative tone itself has the characteristics of the informal essay and so the entire work can also be thought of as a dialogue between Goodman and the reader. Nowhere is this so obvious as when he introduces Horatio to us in The State of Nature as "our boy,"--"as if," Sherman Paul shrewdly remarks, "reading the first book had entitled us to entrance into this community ourselves."[46]

In addition to the pervasive tone of setting out to find out what can be done, in addition to Goodman's tendency to start with those first principles he thinks everyone should agree on and thus setting the community-cena tone of the work, he also refers us to the historical "community" of writers and artists as if they were realistically a part and parcel of the social fabric of the book. Poetry and prose are wound together formally, and in principle Kafka may argue with Kant in the work, enlarging on the sense of discussion, of the cena in Goodman's anatomy, and the principles thus finding expression are redundant only in the sense, explained long ago by Seneca, that ". . . something that can never be learnt too thoroughly can never be said too often; with some people you only need to point to a remedy; others need to have it rammed into them."[47] To the narrator of The Empire City, ideas, quotations, and sources are as real as his characters. Such offhand inclusion as does occur implies his learnedness; and the pastiche gains power because it combines the "remembered" with the "applicable," and thus seems literally to be a

learning of that which one does not know he knows--an intellectual counterpart for "making do" in the cena.

The Magpie Instinct

Historically and formally, the anatomy is connected with the "magpie instinct." The Empire City contains not only literary references and quotes, but references to all the arts.

Catalogues, Categories, and Definitions

Both the anatomist's intellectuality and his penchant for satire conduce to what Frye calls variously "his exuberance in intellectual ways, by piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme or in overwhelming his pedantic targets with an avalanche of their own jargon,"[48] "a kind of encyclopaedic farrago," "great catalogues," "encyclopaedic compilations," and so forth. Frye also contends: "the magpie instinct to collect facts (produced in the line of duty by Erasmus and Voltaire) is not unrelated to the type of ability that has made them famous as artists"; and "the display of erudition had probably been associated with the Mennippean tradition of Varro, who was enough of a polymath to make Quintillian, if not stare and gasp, at any rate call him vir Romanorum eruditissimus."[49]

Goodman comes nowhere near to competing with Burton for quoting or to Rabelais for cataloguing but the spirit is sometimes similar. There are, we think, two central directions implied in anatomies of the past that are worthy of our consideration: cataloguing and quoting, as well as a theoretical result emanating

from these activities themselves, namely, the fact that such wide collections themselves may bring a writer towards some sort of meta-view as indeed his cavalier use of them for his purposes might be evidence for such a view, articulate or not--as a boy's pockets may be said to contain what he believes might come in handy. (We discuss the possible implications of this metaview in epistemological terms in the last chapter.)

Formally, of course, the anatomist's erudition is argued by the use of both prose and verse, with an emphasis on the content that elevates the prose the anatomist quotes and subdues the verse. The anatomy resembles nothing so much as some grandiose rag-bag of cleverness, collected from the ages, and often uttered forth in celebration of the variety of life itself in a rollicking prose.

Goodman's prose is hardly rollicking, but his tendency to include events and utterances, from real and literary life, his tendency to catalogue and collate in his narrative certainly argues further for seeing The Empire City as an anatomy.

In Goodman we find a number of catalogues; and, like other anatomists, his use of the method may be thought to establish the parameters of what we can talk about. Often there are a number of definitions, to force our reconsideration of what a given activity or phenomena means, and these reinforce our sense of Goodman's interests in language per se. The anatomist's antinomianism is double-edged. The avalanche of terminologies has the effect of making our habitual terminologies seem poverty stricken; and his definite enumeration of how many types of one kind of thing there may be sometimes can have the

tone of getting back to first principles. If, then, to Goodman we are often not silent about that which we do not know, the astounding thing is that we are silent about that which we manifestly do know. Terror and comedy abound in such a view. And yet joy is not impossible at all. Look at what we do know. As Goodman would say, "it's not nothing."

In getting down to first principles, Goodman includes such definitions as

> To Beat the Bush is for A to go to L,M,N, and O in the hope that B is at L or M or N or O. To Beat About the Bush is for A to go to L, M, N, and O in the knowledge that B is a K. But a Wild-Goose Chase is for A to go to L, to M, to N, to O when B is not at the end of this series of places.[50]

The implied arrogance of such an inclusion notwithstanding, it is worth emphasizing the parallels these activities have with the approach-avoidance behavior of various characters, especially Mynheer's son, Droyt, and Arthur on the prowl for sex. To look at them, one cannot tell what they are after, nor by implication do they themselves know, nor in principle does Goodman think Americans know what they are after.

Goodman goes further in this vein when he has Lothar surrealistically label the bars of the cage he has just escorted Mynheer to after letting the animals out.

> "This bar," he said, "is Liberty.
> And this bar is Education.
> This bar is the human Standard of Living
> And this bar is Justice.
> And the man," said Lothar with a choking voice,
> "is held in this cage incommunicado."[51]

The Empire City is not a favorite with high school principals, or certainly would not be if the sociology of school administration did not so decisively preclude their reading of novels, avant garde or otherwise.

In expanding meanings, one only has to remember Goodman's suggested interpretations of the story in the New York Herald Tribune. He examines the story for its possible meanings and finds that none of them fit any reality known to anybody.[52] In short, if we think of cataloguing as a restless search for definitions that fit, we find that it is the fabric out of which The Empire City is woven, nothing being quite so important to the work as what the narrator will agree to call something. Definitions and implied definitions are found throughout the work as we have seen in Goodman's list of human activities as chapter titles in Book Four, and as he there discusses how to go about such matters as eating, dancing, etc.

Perhaps the most important catalogue for the theme of community is Mynheer's demonstration that a full blown community, "a suburban community, . . . weighted heavily toward the children and boys and girls," requires 22 roles multiplied by a factor of three. The roles are listed from "1 nursing mother: matrix of affection and elementary satisfaction" through to "1 stranger to the society: infinity of misery."[53] If the inclusion of such catalogues and definitions can be attributed to and justified by the work's stature as an anatomy, this is even more obviously true of Goodman's thorough-going desire to include the masters of the arts--those masters that he feels a special affinity with, or, for that matter, those who seem handy.

Quotation and Sources

A glance at the list of who and what people--historical and contemporaneous--Goodman refers to directly or indirectly in The Holy Terror suggests the scope.

Literary-Historical Figures:

Goethe
Aristotle
Noh dancers
Blake
Confusius
Brahms
Haydn
Gabrielli
Beethoven
Bach
Horace
Whitehead
Robert Creeley
Eddington
Kant
Lao Tse
Jonathon Edwards
Papa Ubu
Berg
Carlyle
Agee
Kafka
Prof. Carlson of Chicago
Anthon
Kaganovich
Aesculapius
Alcestis
Madison
Franklin
Washington
Jefferson
Chuang Tze
Proust
(Richardson's) Clarissa

Friends:

George Dennison
The Trillings
(these are only the ones identified by name, but there are others referred to obliquely.)

Publications:

"Partison Review"
"Commentary"
"The New Leader"
"Congressional Record"
"Herald Tribune"
"Newsweek"

One effect of the multifarious quotations, the avalanche of erudition is to establish the cena-symposium air between the reader and Goodman. Everywhere he is referring to some learning that he finds

important to the matters at hand in The Empire City. Sometimes it has been digested and is merely recalled and sometimes the quotations are quite exact. But Goodman's restless appeal to all manners of knowledge is not often found in American letters, as is suggested by Maxwell Geismar when he noticed

> . . . the lack of intellectual background [versus] the freedom of knowledge and of speculation . . . [that] seems to mark the big Europeans as almost a native instinct. . . . If the American often reflects with barely half the result of the European, whom he often surpasses in talent, it is rather the deficiency of cultural thinking which hampers his work. In our splendid national sense of doing, we have felt no urgency to discover what we were doing.[54]

We must next consider this urge to quote from diverse sources in two ways: the effect of single quotes; and the theoretical implications of the whole potpourri--barbecue qua barbecue. First, as we might expect, the characters persisting in such performances are Mynheer, Eliphaz, and the narrator--all of whom have the necessary "knowledge." Mynheer, because he represents the intellect; Eliphaz, because he is old and wise; the narrator, because The Empire City is, after all, his book. They are, of all the characters, most interested in setting forth principles. As a radical reformist, Lothar works toward actions of protest but doesn't often himself explain them in terms of principle; and it is nearly fair to say of Laura as a character that she doesn't think at all.

Of the multifarious quotations Goodman includes that deal directly with education, certainly one of his most acid attacks and one central to his concern that we distinguish between the natural givenness of environment and artificial givenness of social institution is H. C. Dent's argument in Education in Transition that Hitler,

> without meaning it [had] been a great friend to Britain in more than one way. Among other benefits he has conferred upon us, he has compelled us as a people to take adult education seriously. . . . They crowded into classes to learn about war gases and how to combat them, about first aid and home nursing, about firefighting and the duties of a civilian in the case of invasion or an air raid.[55]

And Goodman juxtaposes, from The Education of Henry Adams, "So long as the rates of progress held good, these bombs would double in force and number every ten years."[56] But finally, the quotations in The Empire City are too massive and diverse to allow us the necessary scope for a detailed examination of them in this paper. We can simply point to the numerousness of the quotes, to the various characters' knowledgeableness, to the restless narrator himself helping out with timely quotations in the narration, the headnotes, the dialogue, the descriptions, and so forth. More instructive for our purposes here, though, is considering the implications and tone of such quotations included in the work.

First, the collection of quotes implies a great deal about the narrator, and the tone he introduces them with implies his own suppositions about his audience. The Empire City reflects precisely as well-read and somehow casual man that Paul Goodman fancied himself, and Certainly, a sense of urgency at getting the points across does come through the work. Goodman, like other anatomists who seek to overwhelm their opponents with erudition and also, by such erudition, remind their fellow men of first principles eloquently stated, is writing the work as a violent attack on Slick and collective "dumb" but also as a means itself of reinvigorating our sense of culture, beauty, history, truth.

Goodman demands that we approach these quotes as he might be thought to have approached them when he first discovered them--or as he mulled them over for possible application. Like the "emerging" and fully "emerged" characters, the quotes might be thought of both as reflecting Goodman having just learned something and trying it out--and, paradoxically, as comprising a sort of ideologue's second nature, landmarks familiar to him in his on-going conversation with the unknown. Somehow, there is an air of both discovery and well-known "fact" about the way he uses them. To a large extent, of course, whether these seem fresh or old-hat depends on the reader's previous knowledge; but to a certain extent Goodman can modify the effect of the quotations he uses by his acceptance or rejection of their original context. That is, Goodman often finds a new application for a statement, which application may "refresh" the statement. (Norbert Weiner's remark about computer noise is used by Goodman to explain the "standard novel.")[57] The narrator of The Empire City is a restless collector of memorable phrasings of parts of his truth.

As a history of thought, the work focuses on very near history, suggesting the patterns of modern thinking and sometimes its sources. As a history of historical thought, it is a hodge-podge and we are meant to cull from it what connects with our truth--all of which is not to say that Goodman's inclusions are not manifestly important to the story he is telling. To identify The Empire City as a partial hodge-podge, though, is to point towards what some readers have found to be its weaknesses.

Weaknesses and Defenses

The massiveness of the list that would be provided by the whole of The Empire City may point to two cardinal weaknesses some readers have found in Goodman. These are best defended by reference to the work as an anatomy. Two possible complaints are that Goodman is a kind of desperado and that he aims simply to shoulder his way into literary fame by reference to the "big boys" in European literature. As conclusions about Paul Goodman, these are, we think, absurd. As indicating the direction of his limitations, they may be useful.

Desperado.--Goodman aims to sound desperate, for he believes we are denying the "nature of things" and that such a denial will be catastrophic. In order to substantiate the urgency of our plight, to create a literary tone of emergency, Goodman "hurries" his prose, presents the helter-skelter avalanche of earlier thinkers on relevant subjects. Agreeing with Goodman about the urgency, we find his tone justified; but we do wish to note that other readers--either because they are more sanguine about the emergency or because they have a taste for a more leisurely prose--have found that same tone unjustifiable.

One of the many possible defenses of Goodman's tone lies in the anatomy form. Indeed, the hurried and helter-skelter references are entirely consistent with that form; and its most successful practitioners have been men who wanted to say something directly, but who also wanted the best evidence they could gather. Rabelais fairly spews his truths at us. The sheer "heft" of Bruton's Anatomy of

Melancholy may suggest emergency. And the form has been uncommonly well suited for nay-sayers, who found the world to be going to hell in a hand basket.

Literary Pretensions.--As we saw in Chapter II, Kingsley Widmer thinks Goodman has "absurd literary pretensions."[58] One instance that he might cite would be Goodman's continual quotation from the masters. This habit of Goodman's is less effective in his short stories than in the huge Empire City, simply because the method seems sloppier in shorter works. But in the longer work, where the narrator's character is fully developed, we come to appreciate, even expect his intellectuality.

Again, a defense of Goodman would emphasize his fidelity to the form of the anatomy. The anatomist--of all writers--has a duty to cull the best he can for his uses. There is no question but that sometimes Goodman is arbitrary and perhaps more assiduous than some readers have the taste to appreciate in working the sayings of the great and famous into his conversation. But since one theme of the work is that "we" do not know our elbow from a teacup, even Goodman's arbitrariness may be thought of as furthering his aims.

For us, the emergency justifies the hurry; the identification of our problems as those that have confronted great men lends a grandeur to the mundane not usually found there. It will take a generation of critics and literary historians and time to estimate Goodman's "literary pretensions."

And, to conceive of The Empire City as an anatomy is to achieve the best aesthetic distance for explaining those matters that have puzzled its readers the most.

The Mixture of the Three Genre Reconsidered

Finally, though, a more balanced approach would emphasize elements of all three genre: romance, confessional, and anatomy, for while the anatomy is manifestly the best genre for explaining Goodman's peculiarities as a romancer, The Empire City is anything but a pure anatomy. Let us briefly consider the mixture of the three forms, for by considering the characters of Goodman's romance as also being characters in his anatomy, we begin to sense how completely he has demolished the inner-outer, subject-object bifurcation. By looking at precisely those elements of the traditional genre Goodman demolishes, we can qualify his uses of those forms and by combining these qualifications, come to estimate one plausible source of The Empire City's powerfulness.

The loose allegory that we found prevalent in the romance (the characters as Jungian archetypes) may turn into Freudian analysis through the confessional, and "sociological humors" in the anatomy. As having affinities with those beings' collective unconscious in the romance, they are at once personal and social realities, as parts of Goodman himself they are demonstrations of Goodman's plight in the confessional sense, and as pure principles in the anatomy intellectually conceived, they are free to state their cases as persuasively and as bluntly or poetically as they wish. In addition, we may think of them

as parts of the community Horatio is in search of, even as possible parts of Horatio himself, so closely does Horatio seem to be Goodman's alter ego by the time we finish the tale.

Another way of conceiving of the generic mixture is to re-emphasize those facets of the genres that Goodman delights in tearing asunder. For instance, if we think of the romance as presenting characters which are archetypal, we can expect a romancer to avoid any very solid analysis of them. This much Goodman does in his characters' actions but not in regard to their psyches. If in the confessional we know we are being argued with and however much our feeling for the work is heightened by our imaginative grasps of the author's reality and the reasons for his actions, we also know, as in fact Goodman does also, that for the most of us his ways, his notions are highly impracticable. In the confessional the author and the reader make compacts to pretend that this reality might be shared.

These qualifications--that the romancer does not analyze--reduce his characters to our realistic level or below; that the confessional writer knows the impracticable qualities of his personal predicament as a public possibility--these give both of those genres their claim to imaginative transport. But if the romancer explains his characters in the way the confessor explains his actions (a detailed rendering of the awfulness of society, its cruelties to him, etc.) and if the confessor argues persuasively for the practicability of his ideas, we are caught in a double voice. Those aspects of the work thought to be "just his opinion" in both genres suddenly are transformed into the possible.

Quite literally everything is up for grabs--reality itself. This occasionally happens in Goodman when we read the work as a romance or as a confessional. Were we better readers of him as an anatomist, it would happen more often and more devastatingly.

That we can consider The Empire City as challenging other "realities" means in philosophical terms that we have discovered an "epistemology." In the next chapter we identify Goodman's epistemology and suggest briefly some of its literary correlatives.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV

[1]Dennison, p. 498.

[2]Goodman, "In the Jury Room, in Pain," Homespun of Oatmeal Grey, p. 60.

[3]Frye, p. 309.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 310.

[6]Ibid., p. 309.

[7]Ibid., p. 307.

[8]Ibid., pp. 308-313.

[9]Ibid., p. 309.

[10]Ibid., p. 308.

[11]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 51.

[12]Goodman, Five Years, p. 62.

[13]Thomas Love Peacock, Nightmare Abbey (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 3. The narrator's phrase, "a little learning" echoes Alexander Pope's line, "A little learning is a dangerous thing," and thus may establish the narrator as "learned."

[14]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 13.

[15]Ibid., p. 149.

[16]Ibid., p. 121.

[17]Peacock, p. 65.

[18]Frye, p. 309, emphasis mine.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., pp. 309-310.

[21]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 109.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 525.

[24]Goodman, Five Years, p. 216.

[25]Frye, p. 312.

[26]Ibid., p. 168.

[27]Goodman, Five Years, p. 135.

[28]Frye, pp. 310-311.

[29]Peacock, p. 65.

[30]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 126.

[31]Ibid., p. 124.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., p. 125.

[34]Ibid., emphasis mine.

[35]Roszak, p. 182.

[36]Paul Goodman, Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals (New York: Random House, 1968). This is a major theme of the book.

[37]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 128.

[38]Ibid., p. 444.

[39]Ibid., p. 438.

[40]Ibid., p. 432.

[41]Ibid., p. 432.

[42]Goodman, Five Years, p. 197.

[43]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 49.

[44]Ibid., p. 94.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Paul, p. 903.

[47]Seneca, Letters from a Stoic (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 75. Selected and translated with an introduction by Robin Campbell.

[48]Frye, p. 311.

[49]Ibid., pp. 311-312 (rearranged for emphasis).

[50]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 209.

[51]Ibid., p. 239.

[52]See The Empire City, pp. 501-508.

[53]Ibid., p. 308.

[54]Maxwell Geismar, Writers in Crisis: The American Novel, 1925-1940 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

[55]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 224.

[56]Ibid., p. 224.

[57]Goodman, Five Years, p. 204.

[58]Widmer, p. 189.

CHAPTER V

PAUL GOODMAN'S EMPIRE CITY:

GENRE AND EPISTEMOLOGY

> My character and destiny make more sense than my day to day and the life I lead. The meaning of The Empire City is not in its power of effect, but in its attitude, its way of being in the world. (Of course, it is just my way of being in the world that people reject.) To me at least, the endearing trait of the book is that it is always in there pitching, although in a confused game.
>
> -- Paul Goodman[1]

Introduction

We have seen that the difficulties novel-centered fiction readers are apt to have with The Empire City are actually instances of Goodman being faithful to the form of the anatomy. His hatred for "standard novels" is more easily understood when we consider what his use--whether or not he would have identified it as such--of the relatively rare form of the anatomy might mean to him and to us as fiction readers and educators.

Insofar as a literary genre can be said to contain a "philosophy," Paul Goodman's use of the anatomy challenges the standard novel on the grounds that ultimately it promotes a second rate way of knowing, as if our society itself has had enough of standing just behind and a little bit above "reality" as (in a third person novel) we might be thought to follow a character "walking down the Edinburgh

road." No matter how thinly conventional fiction disguises its ideas, to judge from The Empire City Goodman's primary hatred is for the disguise. He opposes novelistic realism because for him it is an incomplete "realism"--lacking ideas in its texture.

The romance and the confessional aspects of Goodman's Empire City guarantee that its psychology and subject matter are his; but its characteristics as an anatomy connect that psychology and subject matter directly to an environment enriched by the direct and immediate enunciation of historical ideas. In this final chapter, we consider the philosophical implications of the texture of The Empire City.

Our aim is thus to identify Goodman as a contextualist and to suggest ways in which The Empire City is compatible with that epistemological posture. While reasons other than this for his writing an anatomy might be advanced and might indeed be true, our points are simply that in choosing the anatomy form, Goodman chose the form best suited to his contextualist persuasions; and that while the content of The Empire City specifically and Paul Goodman generally affords us ample evidence for his basic agreement with the contextualists' assertions, to have seen The Empire City as an anatomy underscores this agreement. Primarily, we wish to draw attention to this compatibility rather than to "prove" it.

We do not have to read The Empire City to know that Goodman's general posture is that of a Deweyan contextualist. Gestalt Therapy, Growing Up Absurd, Community of Scholars--all of these tell us as much. Our concern, then, in this chapter is to consider how the salient characteristics of that epistemological position might be reflected in

Goodman's anatomy, The Empire City. In demonstrating one of our great maverick book's bona fide literary heritages, we are struck by the parallels between the characteristics of that form and Goodman's contextualist epistemological persuasions. His consistency in this regard, we believe, is reflected in the active intelligence of the narrator, the conversational tone, and what might be described as the intellectual landscape in the work. But before drawing attention to the possible parallels between The Empire City and Goodman's epistemological stance, let us consider briefly the sense in which we can say that literary form makes a statement and the general tenets of contextualism.

Literary Form as Statement

Insofar as a literary form may be thought to make a statement about the world, we usually think of that statement as being the author's personal statement about his way of being in the world. When we reflect on this, we might ask what other way it could be? Certainly we don't wish for an author to make statements via his form about a way that is not his way. Of course, there is inevitably a good deal of generic juggling before we are convinced that we have found the author's form. (For instance, satire--as both form and attitude--may negate the original form.) The Empire City is hardly "pure" romance or confessional, or, for that matter, anatomy; but the anatomy has described its peculiarities more successfully than these other forms do. At any event, when once we do settle on a form as explaining a work, we expect that the form will more or less congrue to the author's truth.

When we say that literary form makes a statement, then, we must mean that it makes a statement in comparison to other literary forms the author might have chosen, and not that it does so irrespective of this comparison. (That "genre" means "kind" buttresses our argument, for inherently in the notion of "genre" lies the distinction between forms of literature.) Furthermore, we must emphasize that such a statement as literary form may be thought to make deals with the author's truth rather than with "Truth" although we may or may not be convinced that these are ultimately the same. Insofar as such a "formal" statement reflects a world view, it also implies an epistemology, to which we now turn our attention--emphasizing as we do, that we got here, via a consideration of Goodman's literary form.

Contextualism: A Very Brief Review

A major question in epistemology, from which unbounded educational significance derives, is "does knowledge reside in the knower or the known, the organism or the environment?" The contextualists' answer has been "neither" and "both."

The aim of contextualist epistemology is to erect a balance between the two major western epistemologies of nominalism and empiricism. It opposes their bifurcation of "knower" and "known" by arguing that "learning" and "knowing" demand the interaction of organism and environment. This interaction can be seen as a giving and taking on both sides and often has found parallel with aesthetic theories: about the necessity for the organism to discover the proper

distance from which to approach a work of art most productively; and about how that activity may entail a necessity for the organism to look to the ever-changing-ness of the environment itself as living. In this metaphor, contextualism's parallels with Eastern theologies are obvious; but contextualism is not thereby forced toward deifying the moment, the Tao, or any other part or whole.

The characteristics of contextualism may be briefly summarized by our consideration of what it values. It views "knowing" as an on-going, fluid activity, characterized by an endless progression of generating idea from fact and testing idea against fact. This activity is "knowing" and is a paradigm for "knowing." The "movement" between what to nominalists and empiricists remain two separate and distinguishable ways of knowing is, to the contextualist, "knowing" itself. But "movement" itself is a suspect term, since the word "movement" implies two separate "planes" of knowledge, and the contextualists' concept is that what we call movement here is ultimately integrated and therefore best characterized as an on-going activity. In order to illustrate their sense of "knowing," contextualists tend to focus on those experiences which can be characterized by their quality of all-at-once-ness. Furthermore, in order to heighten the sense of no ultimate distinction between the activity of and the organism's interaction with the environment and knowing, they have tended to revere spontaneity and discovery, for in these qualities and moments, the integration of the two "planes" is a dominant feature. Already we see that they are plagued by a necessary search for expression.

We might conjecture that both nominalism and empiricism are more firmly embedded in the language than this relatively new epistemology, and that if this were found to be true we would have a reason for the contextualists' preeminent problem--that of keeping the balance and not being swayed into either the nominalists' or empiricists' positions. But while such a reason might illuminate their difficulty, it would hardly solve it, for ultimately they aim to express in a linear mode (writing) that which they say is characterized by its non-linear qualities--all-at-once-ness, spontaneity, discovery, and so forth.

This balance between nominalism and empiricism is precarious and the contextualists' difficulty one of expression. When John Dewey speaks of "learning by doing" or "knowing how to . . ." or when Goodman experiments with hyphenated words and gerunds, some readers have missed their intent. "Knowing how to . . ." to Dewey is <u>not</u> the same as "whether one can," but rather the integration of idea and the material world in an on-going activity. Goodman's insistent use of strange orthography, although it appears to John J. Enck to create "solecisms-beyond-strict necessity,"[2] aims to do precisely the opposite: to present the organism and the environment, knower and known instantaneously, and thus to represent an epistemology integrating the metaphorical bifurcations of space (planes of knowledge) and time (any process takes time and, like a sentence which contains idea and example, when partitioned, may be envisioned to be "at" some plane "at" some time). If their best illustrations are the "special" moments of aesthetic experience, blazing insight, the all-at-once quality of

quivering paradox, their aim is also to make these moments less uncommon than they are by showing us that in principle they form the parameters of everyday experience.

To contextualists such as Dewey and Goodman, in the last analysis, learning and environment are indistinguishable. Ideas, objects, processes, blend into a unified fabric of activity, which, when it is rich and structured by the continuing interplay of organism and has its total environmental field ("adapting" for Dewey, "making do" for Goodman) constitutes the best of what can be meant by education.

In these active moments, ideas are rooted in experiential fact, and the concrete empirical world is "alive" with idea, so that Goodman's favorite Kantian sentence, "We relate concept and experience in order to have a world,"[3] identifies an activity.

The Compatibility of The Empire City and Contextualism

Our contention is that to read The Empire City as an anatomy is to allow us to infer more forcefully than we might otherwise have been able to do Goodman's contextualist posture. That, in principle, the interaction between organism and environment, or between knower and known, or between idea and fact is reflected in The Empire City's form.

As we have seen, the objections to considering the work a romance are its literalness, its outwardness, its satirical handling of that form, its direct enunciation of ideas, what might be summarized as its specific gravity--or to continue the metaphor, its being

intellectually "super-saturated." These qualities also point toward its function as a statement of Paul Goodman's contextualism. Our complaints with the possibility of dealing with The Empire City finally as a romance are that it is too concrete.

In examining that form we commented on the direction of the narrator, and in this chapter we revert to speaking of direction and "movement" for the sake of clarity rather than trying to use the contextualists' rather more bizarre language of doing, living, etc. But our vision is that of a functioning activity, a "doing" done by Goodman partially in the interest of inspiring "doing-ness" and so forth.

Primarily, Goodman's Empire City is dominated by the presence of his narrative voice, and the characteristics of that narrative voice have strong epistemological implications. Goodman attempts, and, we believe, succeeds significantly in transferring the contextualist values and criteria for "learning" of all-at-once-ness, spontaneity, movement between idea and fact, activity between organism and environment onto the pages of the four books that comprise the work.

The narrative voice itself is clearly "making do" in the telling of the tale--using everything it finds in its environment for that task. The narration is a mind in motion. While this might be said of other narrators (for instance, it might be thought to be reflected in Faulkner's "not this, but that" rhetorical constructions), other "thinking" narrators have generally avoided the specific and concrete identification of the sources of their ideas, and rarely do we see so many thinkers named in the texture of fictional narrative. Goodman's

tendency to make metaphor literal, to connect the abstraction and the concrete example of it, to pass through a variety of conversational tones (first describing, then illustrating, dismissing some readers angrily, alternately pleading, arguing, and conjecturing with us), and to treat with these various "voices" a variety of interests marked by their breadth and sheer number--all these emphasize the motion of that mind.

Clearly, this "moving," this apparently "spontaneous" application of fact to idea, evoking idea (abstraction) from description (fact) and their connection with an idea represents the interaction between organism and environment. Whatever goes on the page ultimately comes from the writer's "mind," and the distinction between Goodman's Empire City and other "fiction" is that Goodman's restless connecting of idea and fact is more prominent, or as George Dennison puts it, Goodman creates a "voice which assimilates philosophic content to the excitement of narration."[4] Isaac Rosenfield explains that to Goodman "the act of writing . . . has become a literary object, and so has the disposition of the self toward that act, with the result that new materials have been raised to the level of art."[5] Goodman's contextualist posture is revealed in both the subject and form of The Empire City.

As a subject, his contextualist persuasions are obviously articulated when he says of Lothar's own epistemological procedures,

> he repeated always the saying of Confucius, that he had himself invented in a terrible moment and therefore knew that it was the sober truth: "I cannot associate with birds and beasts as if they were like us. If I do not associate with people, with whom shall I associate."[6]

Lothar knows this abstraction because he experienced it. To the reader it is true, both as book learning and as experience. It has been verified. To Lothar it is discovered--an old idea, learned. One, Goodman, the moralist, might add, too often forgotten.

The Empire City's form reflects Goodman's contextualism also. In principle this might be shown by the large number of paradoxes and their various levels of expression, in the fabric woven of idea, even history of ideas, and experiential fact. The form of the work has the effect of grounding idea in experience, and from experience, extrapolating idea.

In a paragraph remarkable for its apparent discovery of a concrete illustration, Goodman explains Arthur's prowling for sex in a quasi-philosophic tone, meandering from general to particular.

> . . . Even if all his disguises were successful, impenetrable, they were useless in actually making love, but it was toward this end that he was aiming. For in the acts of love, beneath all disguises and changes of voice, it was evident who Arthur was. He tried to falsify his practices of love, but it cannot be done, for one is soon embarrassed by uncontrollable revelations of both a positive and negative kind.[7]

The passage has a generally moralizing and somewhat abstract tone to it, but it could stand as relatively congenial if a little murky prose. But Goodman does not stop here. Rather, he brings the whole narrative to a stop by giving a concrete--a downright physical example when he continues: "For instance, you either get a hard-on or you don't."[8]

While this may be offensive to some readers, there is no question but that the whole paragraph reflects Goodman's predisposition

to relate idea to experience which might easily be seen as contextualist. This basic pattern--whether expressed in dialogues between characters, in Goodman's endless search for the right words to describe a situation, an emotion, a context, in apparently contradictory ideas arising from the same facts--pervades The Empire City.

Concluding Remarks

At least one of the programs of The Empire City is to construct a form capable of carrying the contextualist posture to a literary realization. It is not farfetched to view Paul Goodman's educational and social writings as attempts to devise and argue for the construction of environments in which the acquisition of a contextualist habit of mind is an integral component of the environment itself. The Empire City presents that habit of mind and, read as an anatomy, can come to seem an "environment" that promotes such a habit of mind.

It is, perhaps, this thrust--the pedagogy of a contextualist epistemology that is the most important single educational plank in Goodman's lifelong social program--subsuming even notions like "freedom" and "self-motivation." If this is so, then any adequate construction of Goodman's educational theory must begin with his commitment to a contextual epistemology, since that lies so close to the heart of the making of an education. This is--in terms of content and form--what The Empire City, fundamentally, is about.

Partially its subject, more importantly, a concrete demonstration of contextual epistemology in motion--literally, a making do, a coming across--Paul Goodman's anatomy, The Empire City, as Horatio

Alger says about his notebook, ". . . will keep exploding' away like a grain o' radium, with a half life o' five thousand years!"[9]

Finally, we agree with Goodman that it is "likely that [his Empire City] will have become a standard classic without [his] ever having been accepted as one of the writers."[10] Both The Empire City's ephemeral shortcomings and its inevitable recognition derive from his use of the anatomy form to demonstrate a contextualist texture--an activity of knowing.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER V

[1]Goodman, Five Years, p. 186.

[2]Enck, p. 92.

[3]Goodman, Speaking and Language, p. 80.

[4]Dennison, p. 498.

[5]Isaac Rosenfield, "Stories with Infinite Interiors," Kenyon Review, VII (Winter, 1945), pp. 711-712.

[6]Goodman, The Empire City, p. 444, emphasis mine.

[7]Ibid., p. 93.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 39.

[10]Goodman, Five Years, p. 213.

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