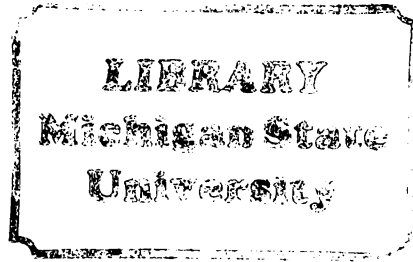




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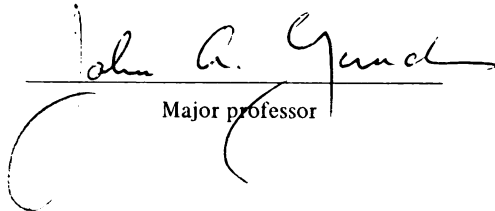
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLACE OF
INDETERMINACY IN AXEL AND TINY ALICE

presented by

Marcellette G. Williams

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLACE OF
INDETERMINACY IN AXEL AND TINY ALICE

By

Marcellette Gay Williams

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLACE OF INDETERMINACY IN AXEL AND TINY ALICE

By

Marcellette Gay Williams

The plays Axel and Tiny Alice are both provocative departures from the norms of 19th century French and 20th century American drama. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's Axel heralded the genesis of Symbolist drama. Edward Albee's Tiny Alice, though not generally regarded as Symbolist drama, has sufficient assumptions of Symbolism to pose similar problems of critical study. To the extent that Symbolism celebrates the subjective poetic response and the expression of that response as the proper concern and ultimate aim of art, so also it has engendered variance in the critical responses often concerning the indeterminacies of such literature. The question is by what method and with what criteria does one approach and analyze the communication of uniquely personal feelings in a literary work.¹

A possible answer to such a question resides in a description of a mode of being of the literary work and its corresponding structure within which the mode of givenness peculiar to the literary work is established.

Almost concurrent with the development of Symbolism in literature was the development of Phenomenology in philosophy. A

phenomenological model of reading espoused by Roman Ingarden, a student of Husserl, the progenitor of Phenomenology, provides an appropriate and effective reference for the consideration of the question.

Ingarden's theory furnishes both method and structure for a study of the relationship between the determinacies and indeterminacies of the represented objectivities, the products of intentional consciousness.² This theory emphasizes the cognition of the literary work and the attempt to conceive artistic structure in terms of the concepts of strata and phases.

I shall treat the plays as literary works rather than as stage plays.³ The latter contain means of representation precluded by the essential nature of a literary work. The difference and its effect on audience will be discussed.

To rehearse: it is the intent of this study to situate a model of reading within a philosophical and chronological frame which parallels the two plays and to study the structural and thematic significance of "indeterminacy" in the two literary texts, thereby suggesting a methodology and criteria for preaesthetic investigation and evaluation.

FOOTNOTES--ABSTRACT

¹Louise M. Rosenblatt, L'Idée de l'art pour l'art dans la littérature anglaise pendant la période victorienne (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1931), pp. 299-300.

²Roman Ingarden, The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 50.

³Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 13.

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To Keith A. Williams
and
Jonathan Keith Williams
with love

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CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL PARADIGM: AUTHOR, TEXT, READER

In 1886 the first completed version of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's Axel was published. It heralded the beginning of Symbolist drama and as such proved a striking contrast to the realism and naturalism that then presided over the French stage.¹ Its critical reception labeled it "mysterious . . . abrupt . . . wanting in action . . . unnecessarily stylized,"² a synthesis of years of authorial philosophical reflection,³ an archetypal repository for all the heroes of the Symbolists.⁴ Seventy-eight years later on the other side of the Atlantic, Edward Albee offered Tiny Alice, a drama of strikingly similar metaphysical concerns and Symbolist tenets,⁵ as his own aberration from the norm of a peculiarly American realism.⁶ It was called a "metaphysical mystery,"⁷ "liturgical drama,"⁸ a "perpetrated hoax,"⁹ "unreal in its action,"¹⁰ "affection contradicted by irony,"¹¹ and "a substantial and impressive work."¹² In the case of neither play have critics had a congenial or appropriate frame of reference or set of criteria by which to judge the works. Considerations of the plays as departures from the norm only result in descriptions of what they are not. Interviews with the authors and reports of their particular theatrical occupations can inform us of stated authorial intent yet reveal little, if anything, of text. On some rare occasion will

a critic proffer a direction of analysis which is provocative in its approach. One such offering suggested as a point of departure for the clarification of Tiny Alice ". . . that it is obscure" rather than accept such an observation as a conclusion to any analysis, but then adds, "after one accepts this kind of obscurity he can concentrate on Albee's reason for creating it."¹³ It should be acceptable to consider the obscurities, to look at the text, without a concern for the author's reason for having them there. What is clear in this critical debate is the great variance in assumptions, however uncertain, underlying the critical act. At times the focus is on the author; other times it is on the text; always implied is the reader in varying states of consciousness.

To say that meaning is the goal of reading is a fact and one which assumes an author, a text, and a reader. To say what or even where meaning resides is quite another matter, and one which requires some attention because its consideration is intrinsic to the paradigm with which literary criticism ultimately is concerned. Indeed, the function of literary criticism is itself not a clearly defined issue. We are told that its function is "to put the reader in possession of the work of art,"¹⁴ "to comment on the relationship between meaning and a person, a conception, a situation,"¹⁵ "to talk about what the poet knows but what he himself cannot say,"¹⁶ "to guard and defend the culture,"¹⁷ "to reflect more of the dynamics of a reading, reporting it as an event in time, in a particular personal or envioning content for the purpose of sharing rather than prescribing perspective."¹⁸ From the perusal of such a recitation it is apparent that

various theories of criticism posit meaning alternatively with author, text, "right" reader, or with the transaction between or among them. Clearly I demonstrate a preference for the genesis of meaning by the particular model of reading selected for this study. However, assumptions regarding the locus of meaning is such a crucial consideration that a brief review of selected models of reading assumed by current proponents of the various elements of the paradigm is very much in order.

In Validity and Interpretation, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., makes a case for the author's intention as the guide and only guide for correct reading,¹⁹ a position postulated out of his understandable discomfort with the implications of theories akin to the notion of semantic autonomy. A "banished author" had invited such phrases as "best reading" with its implicit corollary of "best reader," or "right reader,"²⁰ "sensitive reader,"²¹ "mature reader,"²² and other such honorifically qualified readers, the penultimate of whom (one dare not preclude the possibility of a reader inspired with divine vision) would be the super-critic. Such specious inventions are, of course, necessitated by the desire to escape the chaos of a democracy of readings.²³ Without an author, Hirsch argues, as the determiner of meaning, no interpretation can correspond to the meaning of the text since the text itself cannot have a determinate meaning.²⁴ To avoid the trap of what he calls radical historicism,²⁵ roughly, what a text means to us today, (whether "us" be defined as new society or author of the original text in question) Hirsch most exactly distinguishes between authorially intended textual meaning and a "response" to the



text. The former he calls "meaning," the latter, "significance."²⁶ Thus, even changing authorial responses are rendered irrelevant to concerns of authorial intention. It becomes evident fairly quickly, then, that Hirsch's construct admits the idea of the "intentional fallacy" but only as it might apply to the more mundane question of an author's artistic success, his stylistic effectiveness in conveying what he intends, but not to the authorially intended meanings themselves. He regards the judgments of accomplishment, not intention, as the object of evaluation.²⁷

It is further necessary to clarify in this Hirschian construct that the idea of meaning is obviously not all possibilities of meaning--unconscious and conscious--but quite specifically "verbal meanings."²⁸ This specification necessarily excludes psychologistic meaning experiences, any number of which could never provide access to either the author's meaning experience or, more to the point, the author's verbal meaning. Verbal meaning is ultimately defined as "that aspect of a speaker's intention which, under linguistic conventions, may be shared by others."²⁹ In addition to the individual principle of authorial will, a social principle of linguistic genres is also implied in this universe of verbal meaning. The principle which informs this universe is the Principle of Sharability, the definitive element in all linguistic norms,³⁰ and one which here squarely focuses on linguistic function rather than structure.

By virtue of the exclusivity of his own very careful distinctions and definitions, Hirsch argues that there is presently no

known normative concept other than the author's meaning which is universally compelling and generally sharable. He asks that we concur that "on purely practical grounds, therefore, it is preferable to agree that the meaning of a text is the author's meaning."³¹ To the extent that Hirsch's model promises relief from the din of voices claiming best reader status, so also it is inviting; but when critical thumbs can, in effect, merely extract authorial plums the fare, disappointingly, pales. It appears that Hirsch, too, was not satisfied with what he had "intended" in Validity in Interpretation. Three years after its publication in the essay, "The Three Dimensions of Hermeneutics," he speaks in somewhat less authorial terms: ". . . the meaning of a text is not an independent reality, but a reality that we ourselves have willed into existence. We, not our texts, are the makers and hostlers of the meanings we understand, the text being only the occasion for meaning, and devoid of that consciousness where meaning abides."³² It appears that Hirsch has re-thought or is re-thinking the ontological status of a text which admits disparately construed meanings. Indeed, meaning itself is redefined as "that which is re-created, re-spoken when an interpreter realizes a text . . . meaning is nothing more or less than the determinate sense of a text for an interpreter."³³ That this new definition now embraces those interpreters who may disregard authorial will clearly announces a more moderate pendulum apex and makes explicit the necessary distinction between intention and meaning. We are reminded of Northrup Frye's tautologically expressed idea of intention: a poet's intention

is "directed towards putting words together, not towards aligning words with meaning."³⁴ More immediately, Hirsch's new definition reiterates the query, from whence does control emanate, what is the genesis of meaning?

Murray Krieger responds in almost canonical rhetoric in his Theory of Criticism which celebrates the literary work of art as self-referential. His particular paradigm is brilliantly illuminated by the Work made flesh, before which the submitted reader kneels in adoration waiting to be "overcome by it, surrendering his own contexts to it,"³⁵ and being rewarded with a "new way of seeing that expands his normal capacities, renders them more precise, and permits him to face up to a new consciousness of 'reality.'"³⁶ While it may be true that the promise of a bestowal of such beatific visions has its own seductively aromatic incense, one need only recall that our context here is reading, with its concomitant expectation of meaning, not ritual with its promise of transcending reward. That Krieger imparts such essential import to the literary work is not in itself objectionable or problematic, but that he posits the mode of existence of the literary work in the realm of faith frustrates us with its implicit corollary charge of heretical to any reading consciousness which is less than totally submitted. At times Krieger's tones are almost patronizing in his understanding of a reader's "rage for pure, unimpeded experience that resists the intervention of cool rationality."³⁷ And lest a reader feel he has no way to grace, Krieger presents the theorist "as thrusting himself between reader and poem with

a priori principles that preclude the open innocence of a free empiricism, imposing his discursive continuities and overrunning incoherence."³⁸ The literary theorist/critic (who does not fear the autonomy of the text), then, and not the author is really the priest of the metaphor. To the author falls "a repetition of genesis in the finite mind since, by lifting up anew the language that ties him the poet takes on the incarnating power, the power to turn words into living substance, into breathing flesh itself."³⁹ The author is the divinely inspired writer of scripture. The distinction between critic and poet and the responsibilities and importance of each is very clearly drawn:

It is the critic's responsibility, then, to create the ideas that must be made available to the poet. These the poet can only combine: they are his received materials, but their creation is not under his control qua poet. The critic's task is "analysis and discovery," the poet's is only "synthesis and exposition."⁴⁰

It comes as no surprise that in this model the meaning resides in the words which remain only marks on a page "awaiting the mind that brings them to meaning."⁴¹ Krieger's phrasing here is crucial; the mind neither brings nor construes meaning, but rather brings the words to meaning; it is the readerly act of transubstantiation. Both the mimetic and expressive theories collapse in the path of this new poetic that gives the poem the power to totally reconstitute its meaning. For Krieger the question is not the poem as mirror of reality or the poem as mirror of the lamp because in either case the poem is a mirror; rather, the new poetic makes the poem itself into a lamp, "itself the expressive source of meaning."⁴² In his haste to garb

his "guardians and defenders of culture (who) shepherd its newest forms"⁴³ in clerical attire, Krieger appears to have ignored the fact that they are first of all readers who do indeed engage the text directly--and rightly so. It is simply not the case, even in this model, that a divinely bestowed compendium of literary theoretical assumptions constitutes the sacrament of Holy Orders which in turn allows the unapologetic, direct, intimate engaging of a literary work. To shroud a theory of literature (criticism) in ecclesiastical (ir)relevancies may make it a fixed form "resisting the flow from past to future that denies the present as a possible category of thought"⁴⁴--to use Krieger's own Keatsian analogy--but it contributes precious little to ontological considerations of meaning which acknowledge the act of reading.

If in his flight from the confusion of right, best, mature, and sensitive readers Hirsch sought refuge in authorial will; and if, in his escape from intending authors and egalitarian readings Krieger retreated to the literary work as scriptural covenant, then we should wince no more (or no less) when in his eagerness to expound his belief that "reading is an activity, and that meaning, insofar as it can be specified, is coextensive with that activity,"⁴⁵ Stanley Fish affectively engages the mind itself in the act of making sense. The metaphor employed here is the broader and more powerful one of the good physician, specifically, the dialectician. Fish argues that the success of the dialectical presentation is dependent on its own abandonment, its self-consumption, as it were. The reader "(or at

least his inferior self) is consumed as he responds to the medicinal purging of the dialectician's art, and that art, like the medicines, is consumed in the workings of its own best effects."⁴⁶ The self-consumed artifact succeeds, then, when it "points away from itself to something its forms cannot capture . . . it is concerned less with the making of a better poem than with the making of better persons."⁴⁷ By extending his aesthetic of the good physician to an underlying assumption of literary theory, it is clear that Fish regards the reader and not the work as the proper object of analysis thereby, in a braggadocious gesture of critical daring, embracing the Affective Fallacy. "But of course,"⁴⁸ he postulates with self-evident inflection, "the poem itself as an object of specifically critical judgment tends to disappear,"⁴⁹ suggesting somehow that the notion is implicit in the activity of reading. The question precisely concerns what Wimsatt and Beardsley regard as a confusion between the poem and its result. The contextualist position that "what it means is what it is" is anathema to Fish who argues that "what it does is what it means."⁵⁰ He assumes further that to regard the literary work as a container from which a reader extracts a message is to ignore the temporal perspective of the reading process. Contrastingly, meaning as "what it does" acknowledges the event, "something that happens to, and with the participation of, the reader."⁵¹

To argue the efficacy of his postulate, Fish examines this line from Paradise Lost (I, 335): "Nor did they not perceive the evil plight" and shows it to be problematic only if it is regarded as

an object promising meaning in its essence. However, the sentence as occurrence eliminates any problem by admitting that the reader's experience of the not truly double negation, the unfulfilled expectations, and the syntactic uncertainty is what permits a sense of closure to the question "did they or didn't they?" The event, the co-creative happening to the reader, responds with "they did and they didn't." But it is not to the intricate critical potential of such a promising line that Fish's methodology is shown in its clearest relief, but rather to the more seemingly mundanely assertive sentences which in their "contextual" paucity hold the big guns of exegesis agreeably at bay. Fish regards as unfortunate that "most methods of analysis operate at so high a level of abstraction that the basic data of the meaning experience is slighted and/or obscured."⁵² His own method is one in which the question "what is the work about?" has no place; it is an analysis of the temporal responses of the reader in relation to the work rather than an analysis of the features of the work; the result of this methodology describes the structure of the response and may in fact contrast with or only abstrusely relate to text.⁵³ Its direction of focus is away from evaluation and toward description, making no assumptions of literary superiority. The carte blanche veneer of the method does have its constraints: the system of rules shared by the speakers of the language, and semantic competence.⁵⁴ Fish's reader is an "informed" reader whom he defines as "a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up . . . in full possession of the semantic knowledge of a mature

listener . . . has literary experience."⁵⁵ His method (though he insists it is not really method but "process")⁵⁶ asserts his refusal to be intimidated by the compelling physicality of text; he would rather have "an acknowledged and controlled subjectivity than an objectivity which is finally an illusion."⁵⁷ The extent of Fish's insistence on an affective response to ontological considerations of meaning quite probably is in direct proportion to the extent of his disgust with methods which, while virtually ignoring language, its constituents and its operations, seek to determine what distinguishes literature from ordinary language.⁵⁸

To the extent that I have illustrated methodologies of select authorship which posit meaning in authorial intention, the Work itself, and the mind of the reader respectively, so also I have implied a need for a model of reading which ever broadens, not limits, its purview of polysemous meanings while insisting on ontological premises which explicitly acknowledge philosophical foundations to serve as guiding principles in criticism. Such a model must assume reading to be an activity, not an artifact.⁵⁹ It seem perhaps an embarrassingly simplistic assumption but one that needs voice; because, while it may be more critically prudent to be textually objective than affectively tolerant, tacit support for somnambulistic states of mind that make of reading an act of willing beyond a reader's competence and make of readers surrendered consciousnesses, potential disabilities, or cases for remediation must be recognized for the insidious approval that it is. No matter how imposingly wrought the facade of permanence

of "the literary work of art," the epistemological earth shifts and slides beneath the feet of those in the throes of rendering to readers "what it is, what it means." If to the notion of "reader" we extended the privileges implicit in the notion of "consenting adult," there perhaps would result a more comfortable facility with which the third part of the critical paradigm (the reader) be regarded. To neglect to distinguish between the kind of theories that civilize criticism and the kind of theories that reduce it to quandry is to conscribe an arena ensuring the perpetuity of critical restriction. Such civilizing criticism must emerge from behind the screens of empty metaphor.

The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work by Louise M. Rosenblatt represents such an emergence. It is essential to note at the outset that the theory she expounds regards neither tabula rasa readers awaiting the imprint of "the poem" nor psychologizing readers bringing context to "the poem" but rather readers who encounter a text "and proceed to meet the basic questions that flow from this event."⁶⁰ While admitting author, text, and reader, this model focuses on readers encountering a text and, more significantly, construes a paradigm for literary criticism that sets ontological constraints on meaning within the transaction⁶¹ (not interaction) between a reader and a text. There has been no reference in this paragraph to the literary work or the poem--except as ironically presented in quotation marks. Rosenblatt eliminates an enormous confusion in critical theory by semantically distinguishing between

"the text" and "the poem." By text is designated "a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols . . . printed signs in their capacity to serve as symbols."⁶² Poem, on the other hand, is an event in time and designates "the whole category of aesthetic transactions between readers and texts without implying the greater or lesser 'poeticity' of any specific genre."⁶³ Nothing her model postulates attempts in any way to denigrate any notion of author. Indeed, it is the author's creative activity to which the text gives outward and visible evidence. But the result of that activity is not a poem, the requisite of which is "always a reader, if only the author himself."⁶⁴ Neither is text merely an assumed element; it is an essential but not "sufficient condition for the re-creation of a particular work."⁶⁵

In large measure the failure of literary criticism to provide a more stable definition of the literary work of art has resulted in precisely those tenuous and tentative propositions of sometimes valid, often unreconcilable claims. It is this constant state of ambiguity and doubt that has accounted for what I call the pendulum syndrome. Refusing to fall victim to such syndrome, Rosenblatt distinguishes between two reading stances; aesthetic and efferent. The distinction is derived from what the reader does. In aesthetic reading "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text."⁶⁶ In efferent reading, on the other hand, "the primary concern of the reader is with what he will carry away from the reading."⁶⁷ Not only does this



distinction imply that the same text may be read from either stance, but also is it essential to this model's paradigm for literary criticism in which a critic moves from "an intensely realized aesthetic transaction with a text to reflection on semantic or technical or other details in order to return to, and correlate them with, that particularly personally apprehended aesthetic reading."⁶⁸ That is to say, close textual analysis constitutes efferent reading, a necessary but insufficient condition of criticism. This model, then, might define as literary works "all readings in which the reader attends to the lived through experience engendered by the text."⁶⁹ Text for Rosenblatt is both open and constrained having two criteria for valid interpretation: "that the reader's interpretation not be contradicted by any element of the text, and that nothing be projected for which there is no verbal base."⁷⁰

It is not my intention here to provide a detailed analysis of the model of reading postulated by Rosenblatt, but rather to present it as a model which, while explicitly regarding reading as an activity, attempts to exclude or relegate to echelons of "lesser" relevance neither the author nor the text. It is a model which specifically addresses the "openness" of the text in which the notion of "place of indeterminacy" would have relevance. It is a model whose advantages are all complementary to the phenomenological model of Roman Ingarden to be used in this study and explicated in the following chapter. Rosenblatt discussed Ingarden in her book and, though she expresses a general sympathy for his model, she is somewhat uncomfortable with his

use of "strata." Any sense of argument or disagreement is, I feel, inconsequential and more a matter of the semantics of a few select phrases. I shall refer to this matter again in the consideration of these phrases in Chapter V. Far more important is the presentation of a model of reading which insists upon the efficacy of each element of the paradigm and which provides criteria for the consideration of each. Ingarden's model is more inclusive than Rosenblatt's in its specification of the mode of existence of the literary work (with the dual meaning of both "text" and "poem"); and inasmuch as I regard the transactional view as described by Rosenblatt as implicit in phenomenological methodology as applied by Ingarden, I have selected his model as the reference for the investigation of the place of indeterminacy in Axel and Tiny Alice. It is a model which in its inclusivity instills intellectual confidence and induces the habit of thought.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER I

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²Rodolphe Palgen, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: auteur dramatique (Paris: Libraire Ancienne Honore Champion, 1924), pp. 53, 59, 61, 65.

³William T. Conroy, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), p. 142.

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⁵Wilson, Axel's Castle, pp. 19-20.

⁶Ronald Hayman, Theatre and Anti-Theatre (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 157.

⁷Theophilus Lewis, "Tiny Alice," America 112 (March 6, 1965): 336-337.

⁸Paulette Martin, "A Theatre of Mystery: From the Absurd to the Religious," Commonweal 84 (September 6, 1966): 583.

⁹Robert Brustein, "Three Plays and a Protest," New Republic 152 (January 23, 1965): 152.

¹⁰Harold Clurman, "Tiny Alice," Nation 200 (January 18, 1965): 65.

¹¹John Stark, "Camping Out: Tiny Alice and Susan Sontag," Players 47 (1972): 166.

¹²Tom Prideauz, "Who Needs Answers for Albee?" Life 58 (January 29, 1965): 14.

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¹⁴Cleanth Brooks, "Forward," in Critiques and Essays in Criticism, ed. Robert Stallmann (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. xx.

¹⁵E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 5.

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¹⁸Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 149.

¹⁹Hirsch, Validity, p. 57.

²⁰I. A. Richards, Practical Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929), pp. 173-181.

²¹T. S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 126.

²²Krieger, Theory, p. 6.

²³Hirsch, Validity, p. 5.

²⁴Ibid., p. 6.

²⁵Ibid., p. viii.

²⁶Ibid., p. 8.

²⁷Ibid., p. 12.

²⁸Ibid., p. 18.

²⁹Ibid., p. 218.

³⁰Ibid., p. 31.

³¹Ibid., p. 25.

³²E. D. Hirsch, Jr., "Three Dimensions of Hermeneutics," New Literary History 3 (1971): 252.

³³Ibid., p. 255.

³⁴Frye, Anatomy, p. 86.

³⁵Krieger, Theory, p. 17.

³⁶Ibid., p. 204.

³⁷Ibid., p. 5.

³⁸Ibid., p. 5.

³⁹Ibid., p. 131.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 132.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 13.

⁴²Ibid., p. 82.

⁴³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 208.

⁴⁵Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. xi.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹William Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), p. 21.

⁵⁰Fish, Artifacts, p. 393.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 390.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 399.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 402.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 406.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 426.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 407.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 408.

⁵⁹Eric Havelock, The Origins of Western Literacy (Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1976), p. 18.

⁶⁰Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem, p. 5.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 17. Her notion of transaction carries the sense of reciprocity and duration in contrast to "interaction" with its implication of "confrontation" and "precipitant."

⁶²Ibid., p. 12.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁵Ibis., p. 23.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 162.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 155.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 115.

CHAPTER II

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL MODEL OF READING: ROMAN INGARDEN'S LITERARY WORK OF ART

Why phenomenology? As Joseph J. Kocklemans has observed, as soon as the term "phenomenology" is used, one enters the realm of ambiguity.¹ Risking oversimplification, I am nevertheless obliged to say a few words about the conceptual framework in which Ingarden's theory of literature--its structure and phases--was conceived. Roman Ingarden was a student of Edmund Husserl, the name most often recalled when one speaks of phenomenology.

Extensively described in Cartesian Meditations and Ideas, Husserl's approach required that philosophy be regarded as a vigorous science; thus, it was essential that the absolute knowledge of things preclude every possibility of doubt.² His subject matter, knowledge and consciousness, made it imperative that he not adopt a point of view that interpreted or explained actions which themselves were generated in consciousness; rather, he sought to employ a method that adhered to the principle of no presuppositions.³ Any acceptable investigation then must be descriptive. Husserl's phenomenology describes objects instead of constructing explanations about them.⁴

Such descriptions are dependent upon a reduction of things from the particular to the purely general--its essence. Husserl's

"reduction" is, in effect, the procedure by which one occasions the opportunity to perceive things as they are, unencumbered by any preconceptions; it is a radical attitude of perception, so to speak, that enables a more profound attention to other aspects of what we thought we had already perceived.

At least two such reductions are possible: the eidetic and the phenomenological. In Ideas Husserl describes the eidetic direction leading from the realm of facts to that of general essences and the phenomenological from the world of realities to that of their ultimate preconceptions.⁵ Eidetic meaning, then, arises from the consciousness; the essence of the thing itself is for consciousness; it is the only way it "is" at all. Phenomenological reduction disallows any consideration based on the natural attitude--the frame of mind that holds the "here" (consciousness) and "there" (world-out-there)--but, rather, espouses consciousness as a pure field and any object as a phenomenon or appearance within that field. Tymieniecka's formulation of the phenomenologic reduction is apt: she says it consists of "suspending successively certain of the natural customary aspects and components of our cognition. . . ."⁶ Thus transformation of our cognitive attitude from the natural--providing only confused, uncertain cognition--to the "reflexive attitude" (in Husserl's view) opens the field of apodictically certain knowledge.

It is on the issue of transcendently pure experiences within the phenomenological attitude that Roman Ingarden takes issue with his teacher. For Husserl an object is only conceivable as the

correlative of an act of consciousness. His focus is on objects apprehended, not on objects existent in the world. By positing all reduction within consciousness--to conceive the real world and its elements as purely intentional objectivities which have their ontic and determining basis in the depths of pure consciousness that constitutes them⁷--Husserl asserts that all modes of being are thus contingent upon consciousness. Or as Lauer notes, this concept makes it possible "to know what something is without any reference at all to whether it is or not."⁸

Regarding consciousness itself as a field of experientially given phenomena yields as a first finding the intentional structure of consciousness. Any object appears as an object for or an object "intended" by a subject--"noema" intended by "noesis." Edie's definition of intentionality in Speaking and Meaning is succinct: "the ability of consciousness to entertain and hold before itself 'objects, noemata.'"⁹ Or to phrase it another way, it is a "descriptive characterization of the basic situation in consciousness in which there is an attentiveness-to a meaning on the part of a subject."¹⁰ In other words, it is of the essence of consciousness to form a meaning, to constitute its own objects thereby making the object of any act an inseparable aspect of the meaning phenomenon itself."¹¹

In his preface to the first German edition of the Literary Work of Art, Ingarden described his point of disagreement with Husserl:

My findings agree with Husserl's view, expressed in his Formal and Transcendental Logic, that word meanings, sentences,

and higher units of meaning are formulations which arise from subjective conscious operations. Thus they are not ideal objectivities in the sense in which Husserl himself determined them in his Logical Investigations. But while Husserl keeps the term "ideal" in most instances in his Logic and only at times adds the word "unreal" (irreal) in parentheses, I have totally abandoned this term and seek sharply to counterpose these formations to ideal objectives in the strict sense. This is the first essential difference: all objectivities which he previously held to be ideal--in the old sense--Husserl now considers to be intentional formations of a particular kind, and in this way he arrives at a universal extension of transcendental idealism; whereas I today still maintain strict ideality of various ideal objectivities (ideal concepts, ideal individual objects, ideas and essences) and indeed see in ideal concepts an ontic foundation of word meanings that enables them to have intersubjective identity and an ontically autonomous mode of existence.¹²

Thus Ingarden comes to the literary work of art, not to study it in and of itself, but rather motivated mainly by general philosophy with its nagging problem of idealism versus realism. In order to take a stand against Husserl's transcendental idealism, Ingarden chose to focus on purely intentional objects so that he could subsequently determine whether real objectivities had the same structure and mode of being.

The conceptual framework, then, is Husserl's phenomenology to which Ingarden is faithfully descriptive in spite of his marked differences on the issue of transcendental idealism. It is important to note here that the phenomenological method does not repudiate the possibility of explanatory approaches, each yielding its own special insights; the difference between phenomenological and explanatory approaches is precisely the difference between description (of the thing itself) and speculation (about the thing with concomitant reference to something else). With a basic ontological conclusion--

that the literary work is neither psychic nor physical, but rather intentional--and a major premise--that literary works have a structure common to all--Ingarden then proceeds with a description of the literary work.

He establishes four, although not necessarily inexhaustible, strata in the literary work: the stratum of linguistic sound formations, the stratum of meaning units, the stratum of represented objectivities, and the stratum of schematized aspects. There is an eidetic specificity to each stratum which clearly distinguishes one from another; however, it is the unity, the totality of the work which affords the possibility for actualization of any specific stratum.

In the first stratum of linguistic sound formations are found sound units of individual words, sentences, and sentence combinations. It is a structure that remains constant and is integral to the identity of the work. The phonic material of the work achieves the fullness of its devices when read aloud.¹³ This is of particular relevance to poetry and drama. So when I talk about the "sameness" or "constancy" of the sound structure, I do not imply the necessity for constancy in performance. Obviously, each individual utterance of a given sound will itself have tonal, rhythmic, sonorous, and a full array of suprasegmental phonemic identity. For example, not only will Sir John Gielgud as Brother Julian in Tiny Alice produce different concatenations of the "same" sound from those produced by, say Richard Burton, but also will Sir John Gielgud in successive performances produce different pitch, tone, and modulations of the

"same" sound. It is not the case that the specific sounds constitute the work of art but rather that they, along with their individual utterances, contribute to the possibility of the concretization of the work. I think it is important to remember here while discussing sounds that are the "same" yet "different" that we are describing the properties of a construct--the literary work--which, although having a physicality in the real world--the paper, printed words, for example--enjoys its existence through the intentionality of its creator. The object of the intentionality, then, is a context born of consciousness, and within that context the sameness of the sound structure is of the essence of that object. Ingarden describes this apparent immutability of sounds in this way:

One would have to agree, then, that we know word sounds by discovering them to be timeless, unchangeable entities and that we find them to be simply existing, as we find mathematical objects or pure essences. Nevertheless, a word sound is built only in the course of time, under the influence of various real and cultural conditions, and it undergoes, with changing time, numerous and varied alterations and modifications. It is not real; yet it is anchored in reality, and it is changeable according to changes in the latter. But its change is fundamentally different from change in the concrete phonic material, which originates at some point in time, exists, and then forever ceases to exist. Whereas the word may be uttered countless numbers of times, and the concrete phonic material may always be new, the "word sound" remains the same. Only a radical change in the cultural atmosphere of an epoch or a change in the external circumstances under which a certain word is used can effect a change in the word sound.¹⁴

Because this uniformity of sound longitudinally permeates the work, translations of a work completely eliminate this stratum and its particular array of possible concretions and replace it with quite another. My own phenomenological approach to Axel made me aware

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of translation concerns, some of which I mention later in the chapter on Axel where I have provided, in most cases, the original portion of the French text and English translation for reader convenience. Comparisons in this regard are rather fascinating and sometimes provocative. Ingarden refers to the "otherness" of the translated individual word sounds which bears different phonetic constructs.¹⁵

It is true that this stratum of linguistic formations--words, sentences, and sentence combinations--as "language" does provide us with "access," as it were, to the literary work, but that fact is in no way its primary role according to Ingarden. Rather, it functions as both the external, unchanging shell of the literary work in which the other strata find "their external expression,"¹⁶ and as the constructs to which the meaning units of the second stratum are bound since meaning units "necessarily require a word-sound material."¹⁷

In our approach to the second stratum, the stratum of meaning units, I think it may be helpful at the outset to distinguish between Husserl's conception of meaning as "ideal" and therefore contained in words, and Ingarden's conception of meaning "lent" to words. This view is a radical departure from Husserl's base for objective inquiry. Tymieniecka is again helpful with her definition:

A meaning intentionally "signifies" (symbolizes) an object, determining it naturally and formally. This significance is rooted in the physical world, but is not the property of the word. It is, in a way, "lent to it" by the signifying act of conscious; thus, it is not a physical entity. Neither is it identical with the individual act of consciousness; thus, the meaning is not psychical. Although it is brought about and sustained by an act of consciousness, it is transcendent to the act. The same meaning can be repeatedly concretized in new conscious acts. In spite of the alteration a meaning

can undergo it does not make a substantial part of our psychological acts or of the stream of experience (in the sense of William James). . . . Meanings are . . . created and can be modified by the conscious act of one who conceives them, intentionally "lending" identical content to them, while in the concretions the performer or spectator incorporates them into his actual experience.¹⁸

Clearly, then, what is here meant by "meaning" precludes its relegation to some ideal or inner form as well its verification by empirical reference. What it does admit is a view of meaning having properties of its own--a multi-level concept of meaning. One rapidly begins to appreciate the intricacy of structure of the literary work: the potential for a multiplicity of meanings emerges from a stratum characterized by continuity and sameness of sound. We have all observed in both our readerly and writerly acts the significant changes that can and do occur in word meanings when words are used in isolation or repositioned in various places in a sentence; it is apparent that the structure of the entire unit is affected rather than merely embellished by the inclusion of a word meaning. This shifting and, in the case of units larger than sentences, accumulation of meaning as Ingarden describes it envisions the entire work as

something dependent which arises from the total meaning content and from the order of the individual sentence. At the same time, however, one should not forget that individual sentences appear in a determinate sequence and in determinate connections and that as a result . . . their total meaning content (and in some cases even their phonetic side) is not determined solely by the word meanings appearing in the individual sentences (taken in isolation) but quite frequently is formed in detail and modified in various respects by the meaning content of other (preceding) sentences.¹⁹

This phenomenon sounds very much like what Frank Smith describes in Psycholinguistics and Reading as exploiting redundancy as an efficient strategy for negotiating meaning.²⁰

The contribution of the meaning stratum is its participation in the "whole" of the literary work by bringing out "unique moments that are characteristic of the entire work and that appear in its polyphony."²¹

The third stratum, the stratum of represented objectivities is probably the most familiar of the literary work; persons, events, situations, acts are included in this stratum. Ingarden is most explicit in his use of the expression "represented object or objectivity;" he explains that he is using it "to be understood in a very broad sense, encompassing, above all, everything that is nominally projected regardless of objectivity category and material essence. . . . At the same time, however, the stratum of what is represented can also contain the nominally projected, as, in particular what is intended purely verbally."²² Because these objects represented often so closely resemble objects in the real world, it is again timely to restate that they are derived, "purely intentional objects projected by units of meaning"²³ which are themselves quasi-statements²⁴ valid within the constraints of the work. This is an important consideration for it presents a criterion for the validity of judgments about the represented objectivities. Ingarden is careful to mention in this regard that objects of a different ontic kind are not necessarily precluded by this stratum of represented objectivities; he cites an example of a "represented" mathematician, for example, who, to be credible, would deal with "ideal" mathematical objects in his quasi-real or intentional world. It is this interspersal of ontic types

that sometimes makes it easy to forget that, however much they might resemble the autonomous objects of the real world, and however much those objects "appeal" because they seem so real, the represented objectivities are, in fact, purely intentional constructs.

Precisely because they are intentional and not their real correlates they are not fully determined. Ingarden uses the analogy of a beam of light "illuminating a part of a region the remainder of which disappears in an indeterminate cloud but is still there in its indeterminacy."²⁵ This analogy will later be most appropriate in the latter part of the discussion in Chapter IV when the lights in the model castle in Tiny Alice begin to go out. The projection of these objectivities by a finite number of meaning units is the essential feature differentiating them from objects in the real world. Ingarden refers to the aspect or part of the represented object which is not specifically determined by the text as a "place of indeterminacy."²⁶ These places of indeterminacy are not the "result of faulty composition;" rather, they are "necessary in every literary work."²⁷ There are several indeterminacies regarding objects represented in a text even when the determinacy of, say, A implies an array of other attributes. Ingarden uses the example of "representing" Julius Caesar; from the fact that the represented object is human we can assume that he has all the "normal" limbs, but cannot assume anything else about him which is not a necessary determinacy. In other words, "whatever is variable in the concept of 'human being' is thus indeterminate."²⁸ This is an interesting choice of example; the question of indeterminacy

and "assumed normal limbs" becomes significant and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

Let me delay for just a moment the discussion of concretization of places of indeterminacy in order to complete the description of the strata. The fourth stratum, the stratum of schematized aspects, is the stratum through which the represented objectivities appear. The schematized aspects are not generated by the experience of the individual perceiver but have a potential existence through the perceiver. The imagery--visual, olfactory, auditory, kinaesthetic--emerging in one's consciousness when confronting a represented object is what is meant by aspect--the "how" of the reader's experience, so to speak. As Ingarden says, an aspect is "something which is phenomenally present and not merely significantly intended."²⁹ This phenomenal presence avoids the issue of the psychical; although an aspect is in continuous reference to a perceiving subject, it is not solely dependent on that subject. Neither does phenomenal presence in object represented admit an aspect to an occurrence in the mind of the perceiving subject. Thus we can see that aspects are "in continuous contact with the simultaneously effected acts of consciousness of a perceiving subject and are sensitive to a high degree to changes occurring in acts and manifolds of acts."³⁰ Ingarden cites the example of our perception of a red sphere to indicate the flux of our experiencing it, the interchangeability of the sphere in spite of our perception of it, the fact of its being perceived as accidental to its existence, and the individuality of the

aspect from the object given by it.³¹ I find it a useful example for the elucidation of the fourth stratum of schematized aspects.

The stratified structure of the literary work, then, reveals an individuality, yet close cooperation among the various strata. Tymieniecka observes that the homogeneous unity of the strata is derived from the intentional mode of being of the literary work; that is, that this "unity is the result of the distinctive 'objectifying' functions of the intentional act which 'lends' to its objects a content separable from it."³²

Ingarden devotes considerably less attention to the question of time sequence or phases in the literary work. Suffice it to say that there are two of any real significance here: the time sequence of the represented objects themselves and the sequence of parts of the literary work. In a staged drama there is also the "playing time" of the staging itself through which an audience experiences the staging through the individual expectations of each member of an audience as well as the accumulation of "cued" inter-audience responses. From the reader's perspective there is also the time of the lived-through experience of its reading. In drama there seems to be an abundance of present tense forms giving the semblance of permanence, of going beyond time, of moving with a constantly new present moment.³³ Occasionally a character will respond in a way that suggests a confusion of represented times. In Chapter IV I refer to one of these "breaches" which assumes contextual significance.

Ingarden refuses to admit the notion of the temporal extension of the literary work, however feasible it may first appear given such characteristics as "beginning" and "end." For Ingarden the work exists "simultaneously in all of its parts and . . . none of these parts is 'earlier' or 'later' in a temporal sense."³⁴ While I sympathize with his reluctance to attribute different temporal extensions to the same work based on the length of any given reading, I think that this is precisely the argument for establishing Ingarden's "literary work" as merely "text" and acknowledging the temporality of the lived through experience of concretization, or "poem," to use Rosenblatt's term.³⁵

Given this stratified intentioned object, how then are the places of indeterminacy filled in? How is it going to "mean?" How do we as readers concretize the text? It is not with a conscious expectation of places of indeterminacy that we confront represented objectivities largely because these objects appear through those aspects positively asserted by the meaning units of the second stratum. It is during the reflective attitude that we become conscious of the presence of indeterminacies. Further, some places of indeterminacy are actualized by the reader during the reading process; in addition, a reader often goes beyond the text to flesh out the indeterminacies or replace them completely by determinacies that may or may not be

in agreement with the positively determined objective moments. In a word, the literary work is to be distinguished from its respective concretizations, and not everything that is valid for the concretization of the work is equally valid for the work itself. But the very possibility that one and the same literary work can allow any number of concretizations, which

frequently differ significantly from the work itself and also, in their content, differ significantly among themselves, has its base, among other things, in the schematic structure of the object stratum of a literary work, a structure which allows spots of indeterminacy.³⁶

The directing of ourselves to the stratified object attending to the temporal process of our cognitive acts is what Ingarden means by the apprehension of a work. Because of the complexity of a total apprehension, a reader cannot attend equally to all parts of this apprehension but accomplishes instead a "perspectival foreshortening . . . not so much dependent on the work itself as on the given conditions of reading."³⁷ Ingarden is careful to distinguish not only the literary work from its apprehensions but also its concretizations from either, although the concretizations are dependent upon the apprehensions. This dependence in no way implies that concretizations are thus psychic phenomena. Another Ingardian analogy is helpful here:

. . . just as a rainbow is not something psychic, even though it exists concretely only when a visual perception is effected under certain objective circumstances, so also the concretizations of a literary work, though it is conditioned in its existence by corresponding experiences, has at the same time its second ontic basis in the literary work itself; and with respect to the experiences of apprehensions, it is just as transcendent as the literary work itself.³⁸

Concretizations of the work, then, involve the reader in a co-creative activity of filling out places of indeterminacy.

Ingarden differentiates among the aesthetic, preaesthetic (he once referred to it as "extra-aesthetic," which is probably less ambiguous than the term preaesthetic), and post-aesthetic (or reflective cognition) attitudes, the second term of which would include the study of the literary work.³⁹ We can recall that Rosenblatt is much

clearer here in her distinction between aesthetic and what she calls "efferent" reading: in the aesthetic stance one's primary concern is with what is happening during the actual reading event, while the primary concern of the efferent stance is with what one will "carry away" from the reading, so to speak.⁴⁰ This is what Ingarden proposes as preaesthetic investigation.

One other consideration needs to be made here: the issue of side (or sub) text and main text in a drama. Although my attention is focused on two dramatically represented objectives, I have chosen to study them here as literary works assuming that prior to any staging they would first have to be read. I cannot, in fact, within the constraints of the stratification described above, discuss the staged play because it appears by other means of representation precluded by the literary work; namely, actors and the aspects held in readiness by their representations and the cueing and shareability of audience context.

The conspicuous presentation of the main text and stage directions (side text) in "written" drama in effect constitute a "double projection"⁴¹ of represented objectivities in that the spoken words and the speaking characters are representations of the side text and, further, these sentences "project by themselves a new object stratum, that is, that of the objects and viscissitudes that are being spoken of in these sentences."⁴² The two texts are complementary, the side text frequently "complet[ing] the states of affairs projected by the main text . . . and although the spoken words of the characters should

provide the substance (givens, information) of the drama, the side text is essential to this genre for the specification of "truly spoken sentences."⁴³ Now we are ready to approach the works themselves.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER II

¹Joseph J. Kocklemans, Phenomenology and Physical Sciences, trans. Henry J. Koren (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1966), p. 30.

²Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, trans. Forian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), and Ideas, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931).

³Edmund Husserl, Recherches logiques, trans. Hubert Elie, Vol. I (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 17.

⁴Richard Schmitt, "Husserl's Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 20 (1959-1960), p. 238.

⁵Husserl, Ideas, pp. 8-10.

⁶Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Phenomenology and Science in Contemporary European Thought (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1962), p. 9.

⁷Roman Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. lxxii.

⁸Quentin Lauer, S. J., The Triumph of Subjectivity (New York: Fordham University Press, 1958), p. 21.

⁹James M. Edie, Speaking and Meaning (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 1.

¹⁰Ronald Bruzina, Logos and Eidos (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), p. 58.

¹¹Kocklemans, Phenomenology and Physical Science, p. 37.

¹²Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. lxxiv.

¹³Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 57.

- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 59.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 61.
- ¹⁸Tymieniecka, Phenomenology and Science, pp. 26-27.
- ¹⁹Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 147.
- ²⁰Frank Smith, ed., Psycholinguistics and Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 23.
- ²¹Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 211.
- ²²Ibid., p. 219.
- ²³Ibid., p. 218.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 167.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 218.
- ²⁶Roman Ingarden, The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 50.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 51.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 260.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 257.
- ³¹Ibid., pp. 257-258.
- ³²Tymieniecka, Phenomenology and Science, p. 32.
- ³³Ingarden, Cognition, p. 125.
- ³⁴Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 125.
- ³⁵Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 12.
- ³⁶Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 252.
- ³⁷Ibid., pp. 333-334.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 336.
- ³⁹Ingarden, Cognition, p. 53.

⁴⁰Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem, p. 24.

⁴¹Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art, p. 209.

⁴²Ibid., p. 208.

⁴³Ibid., p. 209.

CHAPTER III

AXEL

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's Axel was conceived and written probably between 1862 and 1885 and revised, but not reprinted, prior to Villiers' death in 1889.¹ For my purposes here this information is significant only to the extent that the criticism of the play has been largely biographical, often attempting to accommodate both the original work of art and its later revisions as a single work of art.² Indeed, such a consideration of the latter is almost necessitated by employing as critical method the former. The revisions appear separately at the end of Oeuvres Completes de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Volume Four, but I shall only consider the original version here, making only summary reference to the revisions.

To summarize the drama briefly, Part One, *Le Monde Religieux*, begins on Christmas Eve about 1828 in a Catholic convent in Flanders where the Abbess is preparing her reluctant ward, Sara de Maupers, to pronounce her religious vows at the stroke of the Nativity. Not only will Sara's soul be saved from the world, but also the Order of Appollodora will become immeasurably richer as custodians of the de Mauper inheritance. Before the ceremony the Abbess advises the Archdeacon of Sara's reluctance and of her penchant for reading works from the Rosicrucians, an occult sect which has centuries earlier

occupied the convent, and an ancient parchment sent by a Master Janus. In spite of the Archdeacon's efforts to persuade Sara to take her vows, she rejects his offer of Light, Hope, and Life, threatens him with a votive-offering axe when he tries to punish her insubordination, and escapes from the convent to search for the treasure she has read about in the manuscripts.

Part Two, *Le Monde Tragique*, takes place on Easter Eve deep in the Black Forest in the Auersperg's medieval castle where three elderly retainers and Axel's young page, Ukko, discuss Axel d'Auersperg, Master Janus, and Commander Kaspar d'Auersperg, a visiting cousin. The Commander, a Dionysian practitioner who recognizes that his younger cousin's physical beauty and title could indeed be useful for his own purposes at court, is eager for Axel to abandon his seclusion and occultism and return with him to court. Herr Zacharias, another aged retainer, fearful lest he die with a momentous secret, confides to the Commander that hundreds of millions in thalers and jewels transported from the public reserve for safe-keeping during the war with the French under the Command of Count Gherard d'Auersperg, Axel's father, are buried in caverns near the castle. The Commander's lust for the treasure alters his plans to have Axel accompany him; rather, he decides to murder him after indirectly questioning him about the location of the treasure. It is quickly apparent to Axel that the Commander has learned of the treasure's existence; in his desire to have the treasure remain secret, to protect the seclusion of his castle, and to remain untainted, unseduced by the fortune, Axel provokes the Commander into a duel and kills him.

Part Three, *Le Monde Occulte*, continues without interruption of place or time with Axel telling Master Janus that he has just killed the Commander, but that the killing has aroused his desire for the gold--that is, the world--and that his life of asceticism will suffice no longer. When Master Janus asks if Axel will accept Light, Hope, and Life, he too, although with slight hesitation, answers no. One of the retainers announces the arrival of a woman; Sara has reached her destination. As Master Janus leaves the scene, he remarks to himself that the two renunciators are about to meet.

Part Four, *Le Monde Passionnel*, takes place in the vaults beneath the castle where the retainers and page are burying the Commander as Axel has requested, when, having considered that all was indeed vanity and decided to commit suicide, Axel arrives to tell them good-bye and designate Ukko as his heir. As soon as they leave, Sara enters as Axel conceals himself. She opens the vault to the cavern revealing its enormous treasure which cascades about her. Sensing that she is not alone and guarding her right to the treasure, Sara fires into the darkness wounding Axel who is nevertheless able to subdue her, wounding her with his own knife. Sara's beauty immediately transforms Axel's anger to adoration; and Sara, too, is affected by his charm. But it is Axel who persuades Sara that what they have just experienced is an ideal moment whose attempted explanation would only diminish its essence and that death is the only assurance of preserving that moment. They drink poison and die in each other's arms as a chorus of woodcutters and Ukko's preparations

for his marriage are heard through the slight opening in the vault.

Thus it appeared to critics that Villiers' "message" was the rejection of cloistered life, jaded life, esoteric life, and death-in-life (suicide) as Life, and that he was, in fact, espousing his own Gospel.³ That there may be parallels between the lives of Axel, Sara, and Christ is a given; to suggest it sufficient explication as a nihilist mystery play, however, is to confine, limit, and restrict in such a manner as even the text refuses to tolerate. Whatever is here indeterminate has structural import; the reader is expected, although sometimes neglected and scarcely encouraged to remain (I refer to the often critically discussed textually indulgent sections of Part Two and the esotericism of Part Three).⁴

While acknowledging the religio-biographical reading of the play, I should like to look again at this compendium of Symbolist tenets⁵ attending to the language of the text, to the structure of this literary work of art--what is determined and what is yet indeterminate--in the making of this poem.⁶

Part One, *Le Monde Religieux*, is introduced by an epigram by Lamartine which specifically addresses the reader:

Cœurs tendres, approchez: ici l'on aime encore!
 Mais l'amour, épuré, s'allume sur l'autel:
 Tout ce qu'il a d'humain à ce feu s'évapore,
 Tout ce qui reste est immortel.⁷

Tender hearts, come here to timeless love!
 For chaste love at the altar bursts in flame:
 Dispersed the mortal dross to airs above,
 None but th' immortal essence can remain.⁸

We are invited to attend and participate in the drama about to unfold. Further, in its statement of one of the philosophical concerns of the play--mortality and immortality--is also presented the technique of counterpoint so prominent throughout the play. The two reflexive verbs, "s'allumer" and "s'évapore," suggest both a mode of analysis, a reflection on the language itself, and a reiteration of the technique of counterpoint, given here as a movement from the substance--"l'amour épuré" encompassing both the human and the super human--to its essence. This is an early example in the play of the inter-relationship of the stratum of linguistic formations and that of meaning units, the former giving expression to the latter.

The first of the two sub-sections of this first part entitled ". . . ET FORCES-LES D'ENTRER" is set in the cloistered chapel of an old abbey. Our senses are immediately focused on the recurring images of gold, bells, censers, flowers, and the lamp. Sara is standing beneath the lamp; the Archdeacon is kneeling in prayer and the Abbess approaches Sara and unveils "un visage d'une beauté mystérieuse . . . Elle est immobile, les bras croisés" (p. 10). Both Sara's beauty and her stance are textually significant. Their initial veiled appearance followed by the brusque unveiling call attention to both. While we might not expect Sara to be completely startled, her serene immobility connoting a formidable resolve strikes the keynote for power and endurance in the play and foreshadows the statues in the tomb in the final scene.

With the first few lines of the play we are introduced to several recurring motifs:

Sara! le minuit de Noël va sonner, remplissant nos âmes d'allégresse! L'autel va s'illuminer, tout à l'heure, comme une arche d'alliance! nos prières vont s'envoler sur l'aile des cantiques! Avant que cette heure passe dans les cieux, il importe que je vous notifie la résolution sacrée que j'ai prise touchant votre avenir (p. 10).

*Sara! The midnight hour of the Nativity is going to peal, filling our souls with joy! Soon the altar will be illuminated like an Ark of Covenant! Our prayers will take flight on the wings of our carols! Before that hour joins the eternal, I must tell you the sacred decision I have made for your future (pp. 7-8).

Approaching the midnight hour marks an ending as well as a beginning-- Sara's cloistered preparatory life, and her quest for the gold. The anticipation is explicit in the syntax and implied is a Time Future with its concomitant definition of man.⁹ The illumination connotes the light of the intellect, the brightness of the imagination giving life to Futurity. As well as marking time, the pealing bell reverberates in reflexive waves and will re-sound at various points in the play.

Here, too, is the bird/flight motif introduced, explicitly with the verb "s'envoler" and the noun "l'aile" and implicitly in the graphemic display of "âmes" whose circumflex, metaphorically suffusing the word, suggests the direction of movement throughout the drama. (Implying contraction or the missing or silent "s," the circumflex becomes an indeterminate marker, as it were.) The word occurs twice in this complete speech, each time referring to Sara.

That the act of reading is consequential in this drama is also connotatively significant. The attention given to reading has provided Sara and Axel with an ascetic proclivity encouraging a

renunciation of the experience of the external world for the experience of the imagination savored in solitude. It has also provided Sara with the knowledge of the treasure, and her close textual scrutiny has rewarded her efforts with the key to its retrieval. To the extent that Sara's reading "sans cesse" (p. 11) suggests to the Abess something other (somehow metaphysical: "Que peut signifier une nature aussi studieuse et solitaire?" [p. 10]) than an idle pasttime so also might we attend to the text in the spirit of construing, negotiating, transacting meaning using the full range--graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic--of its linguistic array.¹⁰ What is apparent here in the words, sentences, and sentence combinations is the requisite relationship of word-sound material and meaning units referred to in the descriptions of the first and second strata.

This rather lengthy, four and a half pages, opening speech continues, providing a medley of images: "des fleurs, des lumières et de l'encens," (p. 13) and a description of Sara's characteristics the compounding of which begin to reinforce the visual assessment of strength already made by her stance and bearing:

. . . vous êtes une âme obscure. Sur votre visage toujours pâle brille le reflet d'on ne sait quel orgueil ancien. Il sommeille en vous . . . malgré la réserve et la simplicité de vos rares paroles et de tous vos actes . . . Vous vous soumettez avec une sorte d'indifférence taciturne . . . vous êtes une lampe dans un tombeau. . . (p. 11).

*. . . you are a dark soul. On your face, ever pale, a trace of some ancient pride glimmers. It sleeps within. . . . Despite the reserve and simplicity of your rare speech and of all your acts. . . . You submit to the discipline of our rule with sullen indifference . . . you are a lamp in a tomb. . . . (p. 8).

That Sara remains silent throughout the speech even as she, granting the Abess' request, signs over the deed by which she abandons all her possessions to the Order augments her aura of strength. The sub-text directs that although she "signe impassiblement," she "est rentrée dans son immobilité" (p. 14) before the Abess has had an opportunity to thank her. Frequently regarded as anathema to dramatic literature, particularly if and when the silence is devoid of action, the silence in Axel is premium, the sought, the desired, the subjective ideal of solitude, historical lessons teaching punishment for exceptional talent as the indisputable fact of solitude, notwithstanding. We feel it as such in the reading, and we read it in the sub-text. Rhetorical as the Abbess' interrogatives probably are, they simultaneously call attention to the responses not forthcoming--the silence--and beg determinacy, the reader's share.¹²

The choice of the name, Sister Emmanuele, selected for Sara upon recitation of her vows has encouraged consideration of the issue of the names Emmanuele and Axel both of which have Christian connotations.¹³ As significant, I suspect, is the "indefiniteness" rendered a person (or object) identified by several names--Eve, Sara, Emmanuel, Princess of Maupers. The effect is appropriately contrapuntal to the "on ne sait quel" quality (of pride) the Abbess tries to articulate: it is either given no word or multiple words to describe it, yet remains somehow indefinite. Three other nuns are identified: officiously and obediently praising the rules of the order, Sister Laudation regards Sara suspiciously; promising Sara allegiance unto

death, Sister Aloyse loves her dearly; and stammering at the audacity Sara displays, Sister Calixte avoids her. Again the focus on names is a metaphorical restatement of the determinate and the indeterminate.

Exploiting the tenderness that she knows Sister Aloyse feels for Sara, the Abbess charges her with watching and praying with Sara during the time just before the midnight ritual. In Scene Two, imploring Sara to accept the veil, Sister Aloyse's language becomes religio-sensual and foreshadows the tomb exchanges between Sara and Axel. She too searches for words, although not to describe, but to persuade:

Sara, souviens-toi de nos roses, dans l'allée des sépultures!
Tu m'es apparue comme une soeur inespérée. Après Dieu, c'est
toi. Si tu veux que je meure, je mourrai. Rappelle-toi mon
front appuyé sur tes mains pâles, le soir, au tomber du soleil.
Je suis inconsolable de t'avoir vue. Hélas! tu es la bien-
aimée! . . . J'ai la mélancolie de toi. Je n'ai de force que
vers toi.

Un silence.

Cède; deviens comme nous, sous un voile! Partage l'épreuve
d'un instant. Tu sais bien que nous ne pouvons pas vivre!
Si vite nous serions ensemble, au même Ciel, avec une seule
âme! . . . Sara, vois le ciel étoilé au fond de mes yeux:--
là, s'éloignent des cieux toujours étoilés!--Laisse-toi venir!
Je veux te parer moi-même comme une fiancée divine, une
épouse ineffable, un être céleste. La douleur m'a rendue
charmante et tu ne me repousseras plus avec tristesse, si
tu me regardes. Quelles paroles trouver pour te fléchir?
Sara, Sara!

(Tactilurne, Sara décroise les bras: son front
s'incline sur celui de la novice. Celle-ci lui
prend la main. Toutes deux traversent le sanctuaire.
D'une voix oppressée, plus basse encore et soudaine.
Oh! n'appuie pas ton front! . . . mes genoux chancellent!
(Sara s'est redressée et soutenant, d'une main,
soeur Aloyse devenue blanche comme son voile, toutes
deux sortent, lentement, par l'abside latérale
(pp. 16-17).

*Sara, do you remember our roses along the passage of the tombs? You came to me like a sister beyond all my hopes. To me you are next to God. I will die if you want me to. Remember at dusk when I used to rest my forehead on your pale hands. I am inconsolable because I have seen you. Alas! You are the beloved! . . . You have plunged me in dejection. I have strength only to come to you.

(A pause)

Yield; become one of us beneath the veil! Share the brief earthly trial. You surely know that we cannot live! So soon we should be together in the same heaven with a single soul! . . . Sara, see the starry Heaven in the depths of my eyes: --there extend skies forever bestarred! --Yield and come! I want to adorn you myself to be a divine bride, an ineffable spouse, a celestial being. Sorrow has given me charm, and you will no longer push me sadly away when you look at me. What more can I say to persuade you? Sara, Sara!

(Without speaking, Sara unfolds her arms; she rests her forehead on the novice's. The latter takes her hand. Both cross the sanctuary. In a choked voice, still lower, Sister Aloyse, startled.)

Oh! don't rest your brow on mine! my knees are giving way!

(Sara has straightened up and supports Sister Aloyse with one hand. The latter has become as white as her veil. Both slowly leave by the lateral apse)(pp. 11-12).

Although Sister Aloyse does not possess the strength of an Axel or a Sara, it is clear that she is a kindred spirit to whom Sara responds with unfolded arms, warmth, and the compliment (and complement) of silence. Textually apparent is this kindred potential for the passion of transcendency in the line, ". . . au même Ciel, avec une seule âme." The connotative significance of the word "âme" referred to earlier is here reinforced with the intensifier "même" providing a strikingly similar graphic display and a semantic invitation which queries rhetorically, "How many heavens are there?"

Witnessing Sister Aloyse's intoxication with Sara and concerned that Sara's excessive and dangerous beauty (as she regards it)

may urge Sister Aloyse to the brink of sin, the Abbess resolves to rectify the situation by having Sister Aloyse herself cut Sara's hair during the ceremony. The suggestion here, of course, is literally, one of severance; emotionally, one of disfigurement; and symbolically, one of a loss of power and strength.

The third scene is a discussion between the Abbess and the Archdeacon and presents the escutcheon of the de Maupers family which shares the ducal of the house of Auersperg in the object of a winged Death's head. The bird-flight motif is sustained here with the added image of death--a foreshadowing of the flight (or escape) that Axel and Sara ultimately choose.

Because of her anxiety that there never be any question about the Order's acquisition of Sara's inheritance, the Abbess expresses genuine alarm that the Auersperg line may in some way have bearing on Sara's patrimony. Assuring her that the link in lineage was a matter of agreement, of vain traditions, the Archdeacon recalls:

. . . ils s'agit simplement d'un récit de chevalerie et
de croisades où le merveilleux l'emporte sur le réel
(p. 20).

*It's simply a romance of chivalry and crusades in which
fairy tale gets the better of fact (p. 13).

The irony is implicit: that concern be expressed at the intersection of the Veil and the Mantle is apropos; but that the besting of reality by illusion be offered to allay fears is of no redemptive value. What is further implied is that the issue of illusion--reality is primal.

The Abbess reports further concerns about Sara's will to the Archdeacon; each observation makes Sara's formidable strength more explicit:

Mon père, cette jeune fille, haute et blanche comme un cierge pascal, nous est un coeur fermé qui sait beaucoup de choses. . . . Elle est trop froidement exemplaire . . . sa soumission n'est qu'extérieure. Le châtiment s'émousse sur elle et la corrobore en son orgueil. Cette fille est comme l'acier, qui se plie jusqu'à son centre, puis se détend ou se brise; elle a (s'il est permis d'oser une telle expression) l'âme des épées (p. 21).

*Father, this girl, tall and white like a Paschal taper, for us is a closed heart which holds many things. . . . She is too coldly exemplary . . . her submission is only external. Chastisement blunts its edge upon her and confirms her in her pride. This girl is like steel, which bends to its centre, then stretches out or breaks; she has (if I may use such an expression) the soul of a sword (p. 14).

At the mention of Dr. Janus' name as sender of the parchment from which the Abbess fears Sara has deciphered some occult clue, the sanctuary lamp throws a brilliant light, then immediately dies out; although explainable--Sister Laudation has forgotten to fill the lamp--it is a phenomenon the text tells us has never happened before. The effect produces a contrapuntal interplay of Christianity and the Occult (both of which have grave consequences in Sara's life) while heightening the mystery of the parchment. To the extent that the absence of light literally obscures the two discussants and surely interrupts their conversation, so also does it encourage the reader to attend to its significance, textually reinforced when light is restored, with, "Vous disiez donc, ma soeur, que Sara détraisait ce parchemin?" (p. 24). The combination of the darkness, the

indeterminate, followed by the specific invitation, as it were, to proceed with the story, the details, the determinate, abruptly remind the reader to participate actively.

Scene Four continues with prescriptions of treatment designed to break Sara's "nature impénétrable, grave et glauque" (p. 26). The image of darkness extends into this scene and is signified by the Abbess' inability to understand, to give meaning to Sara's visage "si atone, qu'il (lui) causa l'impression d'un danger," (p. 25) as it appeared when the Abbess had discovered her destroying the parchment. Further, the Abbess believes Sara endowed with "du don terrible, l'Intelligence," (p. 29) usually regarded as illuminating, not terrible or frightening. The archdeacon echoes the Abbess' appraisal and adds: "Surtout en une femme, ce don devient plus souvent une torche qu'un flambeau . . ." (p. 30)--to burn brightly, that is, and quickly die out as has the sanctuary lamp just done. Urging the Archdeacon to be persuasive with Sara while celebrating the Office of the Dead over her, the Abbess assures him that:

Mon troupeau d'âmes blanches ne vous comprend pas:
le scandale n'est donc pas à craindre (p. 29).

*My flock of white souls will not understand you; so,
there is no risk of scandal (p. 18).

This flock represents the truly passive souls, the real contrast to Sara's finely honed passivity.

Organ music, incense, flower petals, a choir of nuns, and the pealing golden bell ringing at the beginning of the Introit, announcing, as it were, the next or new phase of life for Sara,

fill Scene Five. The repeated sounding of the Bell of the Dead signals not Sara's cloistered death to the secular world as is anticipated, but, rather, the death of the iciness in the soul.

Throughout Scene Six while the Archdeacon, exhausting the pedantic quotes of religious scholasticism and shifting from "vous" to "tu," tries to instruct and persuade Sara of the efficacy of vowing Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience with his own homilic rhetoric, the Bell of the Dead continues to sound. Much of what is said may be construed on more than one level: he suggests to her that faith is the evidence of things not seen--although ostensibly suggesting that she give herself to God in faith, the statement also points to the significance of that which is not there, not apparent, not determined; he admonishes her to study the teachings of the Church remembering that "l'exégèse, la clef même de l'Évidence" (p. 40) (note again the complement of graphemics and semantics)--while on a literal level assuring that she be constructive in her "incessant" reading, this strategy may also suggest a revealing approach to the readers of this play; describing the acceptance of faith as an "act," he tells her that "Il faut penser. Il faut agir. . . . Pas un acte qui ne soit créé d'une instinctive pensée!" (p. 41)--although trying to convince by acknowledging her intelligence, this statement as well connotes the concept of intentionality which admits both the determined and the indeterminate; and, finally, he reminds her that "Tout S'EFFORCE autour de nous. . . . C'est pourquoi il monte, par et à travers la mort vers la lumière . . ." (p. 41)--while urging that Sara move

through the death of the external world to the light of faith, the statement is also an ironic comment on Sara and Axel's ultimate choice and quite probably "a meaning" of their suicides: embrace death before life destroys the illusion.¹⁴

With the twenty-third sounding of the bell of the dead, marking her "worldly years," and the reading from St. Bernard's Preparation for the Last Judgment, intoning the putrefaction of the flesh, Sara, rising from her prostrate position occasioned by the ceremony, resumes the position by which we have come to recognize her: ". . . elle se tient maintenant debout, immobile, les bras croisés, les paupières baissée" (p. 45). The sameness of the position suggests that the Archdeacon has failed, that there has been no philosophical shift from worldly pleasures to cloistered ecstasy. It is from this position of intimidating strength that, when approached at the outset of the second sub-section--LA RENONCIATRICE--and asked by the Archdeacon to accept La Lumière, l'Espérance, et la Vie, Sara," (d'une voix grave, très distincte et très douce" (p. 46) responds "Non."

The ensuing confusion--fainting nuns, abandoned flowers and still-smoking censers, spilled holy oil spreading over the altar steps, a stupefied Archdeacon, a staring Abess--becomes the ironic counterpoint for the joyful midnight pealing of the Nativity bells and ecstatic singing of the choir of nuns who have neither witnessed Sara's renunciation nor could comprehend it if they had. It is, so to speak, an axial scene; in contrast to the serenity of ritual, the

clamor, the cacophony appropriately accompany Sara's first and only words in the play until Part Four when she defiantly struggles with Axel. Having accumulated by her very silence, the tension and energy it has produced is given full release, full voice in the mouths of those who have been "compelled to come in," and full reverberation in the golden Nativity bells. The immobility and stylized movements of the first sub-section now give way to scurry and deliberate speed. Violently striking her clapper to stop the singing thus permitting the Abbess to restore some semblance of order, a heretofore very responsible Sister Laudation approaches Sara, shouts an invective most unbecoming a nun, raises her hand to slap her, and freezes. Dismissed by the Abbess to contain her indignation in the sanctuary, Sister Laudation leaves pensively bewildered: "Quel trouble subit m'a donc retenu le bras?--Pourquoi n'ai-je pas frappé?" (p. 50). The interrogatives here invite the reader to participate in their responses. Sara's superior power affects not only the weak and gentle (Sister Aloyse) but also the strong and wrathful (Sister Laudation). It is a power to be felt, lived, and reckoned with throughout the text--a power which ultimately permits Sara and Axel to escape life to preserve the illusion.

Assuming that powers other than holy ones are at work, the Abbess urges the Archdeacon to "sondez ce coeur sombre" (p. 50) to discover what dreadful occultism must have been discovered from the parchment. Now alone with Sara the Archdeacon tries first one tack--we are responsible for your soul--than another--having signed over the

inheritance, there is no way to effect the secret's discovery--and another--no person or institution can override the supremacy of this Faith, and if your repentance is sincere, we might consider you again one day. Here, too, he interchanges "vous" and "tu" when he exchanges his imperious "we" for his intimately persuasive "I."

As we might, with assurance, anticipate, Sara's response is an unyielding and silent strength. Under the guise of divine inspiration and imploring Sara to pray for his having to sequester her, the Archdeacon directs her to an opening of an underground sepulchre. The sub-text reads that Sara "(lève enfin les yeux sur le prêtre)" (p. 56) then looks at the excavation. Silently she walks toward a pillar, removes a votive-offered axe, returns to the hole and silently motions for the priest to descend. First recoiling in resistance, the priest, now intimidated by Sara's threatening gesture, obeys her deliberate yet silent imperative "(sous les yeux froids de Sara)" (p. 56). The choice of preposition here in the subtext syntactically signals the reversal of the Archdeacon's boast that:

Notre suprématie sur la terre est l'unique sanction d'une
lois quel-conque. Nul ne peut la contrôler. . . . (p. 53).

*Our supremacy on earth is the unique sanction of any law
whatsoever. No person or institution can override our
supremacy . . . (p. 35).

The final scene of Part One is entirely sub-text and describes the intersection of Sara's strength and that of the elements: the cold, the snow, the wind, the dark.

(. . . elle s'approche de la fenêtre et secoue la corde
du vitrail; la fenêtre s'ouvre avec violence, toute grande.
Une bouffée de neige et de vent nocturne envahit l'église et

éteint les cierges . . . ayant jeté un froc de pèlerin sur ses vêtements de fêtes, et debout sur la chaise abbatiale, elle atteint, d'un élan svelte et vigoureux, l'un des barreaux, de fer, le saisit d'une main et se dresse d'un bond sur le bord de la fenêtre. Puis elle se glisse, entre les barreaux, sur le bord extérieur et regarde, au dehors, en bas, dans l'espace, au loin, dans l'infini.

Au dehors la nuit apparaît, affreuse, obscure, sans une étoile.

Le vent siffle et rugit. La neige tombe. . . puis elle se baisse, décroît et disparaît, au dehors, suspendue, dans la nuit pluvieuse et glacée, silencieusement (pp. 56-57).

*(. . . She approaches the stained glass window and pulls the cord. The window swings open violently. Snow and night wind blow through the church--putting out the tapers . . . having thrown a pilgrims garb over her holy day vestments, she stands on the abbatial chair. Then with a svelte, vigorous leap, she seizes one of the iron bars with one hand, and with a spring hoists herself onto the window sill. Next she glides between the bars onto the outside sill and looks out below, into space, distance, infinity. Outside the night--dreadful, dark, starless. Winds blow and roar. Snow falls. . . . then she lowers herself and disappears outside, out of sight, suspended silently in the glacial, snow-filled night) (p. 38).

That the window swings open with such fury suggests the extent of the threat of the outside forces; the "toute grande" emphasizes, intensifies the violence. Sustaining the imagery into the next sentence, the text uses the verb "envahit" with its implied nuance of opposition or resistance. Both the wind and the snow blow through the church extinguishing the candles, the light, connotatively marking Sara's imminent absence from the cloister. (You will recall that earlier she has been described as the light in the tomb.) "Fenêtre" both lexically and graphically rehearses the motif of flight. Indeed she is even appropriately garbed as is evident in another textual grapho-semantic marriage: "un froc de pèlerin sur ses vêtements de

fête," the repeated circumflex and implied notion of "journey" in the word "pèlerin."¹⁵ Suggesting the scope of Sara's undertaking are the words "l'espace, le loin, l'infini;" by extension we might also regard these aspects of the text in the construal of meaning, "our poem," if you will, or concretization.

Although the complete absence of light, the falling snow, and the blowing, roaring wind pose a multiple threat to the success of her flight, Sara chooses to confront the elements; the text has already determined her physical and intellectual ability to do so. So when we read, "puis elle se baisse, décroît et disparaît," (emphasis mine) we are linguistically assured of her own activity, not victimization, and of her flight, not envelopment into a forbidding night; set apart by a comma and occupying final word position in the sentence, "silencieusement" renders further assurance of Sara's active choice and probable success--silence cultivate her strengths.

With the introduction of the iconography of weather in this last scene of Part One we encounter what becomes throughout most of Part Two a projection of inward tendencies in Axel. Part Two, *Le Monde Tragique*, begins with an epigram from *Phèdre*, ". . . quia mominor leo," (p. 59) giving body to the roar of the wind in the last scene and becoming explicit later in the section where we find a textual determinacy of Axel's physique: "l'air d'un jeune lion quoi porte sa race dans ses yeux" (p. 68) sub-textual determinacy of Axel's voice during an exchange with the Commander: "(. . . d'une voix si rude et si sourde qu'elle semble, par instants, comme un rauquement

de lion," (p. 147) and later during a more heated moment of the same argument Axel's three old faithful servants can no longer distinguish the storm from Axel's voice: "(. . . ils ont, même, confondu, parfois, les sons de bronze de ce verbe avec les éclats de la foudre)" (p. 150).

The three sub-sections of the second part are all set in an enormous hall of Axel's castle. Its strength and immensity as are its dampness and deterioration everywhere present in the description and strike the keynote for the power of Axel's later entrance. Setting the tone for both parts two and three the sub-text reads: "(--un lustre de fer pend du milieu des poutres entre-croisées)" (p. 61). *"(an iron candelabrum hangs from the center of the intersecting beams) (p. 41). The motifs of strength and light "intersect" foreshadowing Axels' clashes with first the Commander, then Master Janus, and finally Sara in the ultimate ideal of renunciation.

Whereas images of flight in Part One reside in the language, the setting of Part Two with its "d'énormes vaultours et de grands aigles fauves sont cloués les ailes étendues" (p. 62) is most explicit with its static imagery of flight. Of significance, too, is the fact that they are birds of prey, reflecting the Commander's desired relationship with Axel.

In contrast to the Commander's deception and subterfuge, the three ancient retainers, presented in this sub-section as "les veilleurs du souverain secret," (p. 61) embody valor-- each wears the Iron Cross--fidelity, and order--the castle and its maintenance is their charge. The first scene is one of readiness for impending danger.

Alone polishing the weapons, Miklaus comments on the dark, the active wind, and images of flight. The storm is so threatening that "les chauves-souris ne vole pas," (p. 63) *"the bats don't fly," (p. 42) thus reinforcing the static quality of the birds presented in the setting.

Joining Miklaus in the grand hall in the second scene, two other ancients, similar in bearing and identically honored, prepare to light an enormous fire to diminish the chill and dampness in the room. In addition to the room's immensity, its deterioration because of its dampness is also readily apparent: the portraits are effaced, the tapestries now have indistinct patterns, the armor has rusted, and the wood of the lance has rotted. Of import is that this deterioration has resulted from something unseen, the indeterminate--the non-illuminated region, to use Ingarden's analogy, but whose effects have most surely been felt; and on this particular night the effect is "singulier"--the outside warmth and closeness and the inside cold signal an approaching severe storm.

A further focus on the effect of things unseen is provided in the militarily maimed bodies of the three ancients: one is missing a part of his forehead, another a portion of his face, and the other an arm. Although portions of their physical selves are not apparent--we do not see them as physically whole, determined--we are told that what is absent is nonetheless felt and integral: in the following scene during a rather light but poignant banter between Ukko, Axel's young page, and the three ancients whose teasing hinders his eager

efforts to relate the details of his recent engagement, the ancients feign disbelief of his story because of his tender age:

HARTWIG
 . . . tu es joli, mais tu es une ombre.
 UKKO
 Mon bon Hartwig, est-ce que tu ne souffres pas à l'ombre
 de ton bras gauche quand le temps change?
 HARTWIG
 Si.--Pourquoi cela, mon fils?
 UKKO (rieur)
 Ah! demande-le au boulet qui t'emporta sa réalité à
 Lutzen. Je voulais seulement te faire constater qu'une
 ombre est quelque chose (p. 85).

HARTWIG
 . . . you are good-looking but you are a shadow.
 UKKO
 My good Hartwig, don't you suffer from the shadow of your
 left arm when the weather changes?
 HARTWIG
 Yes.--Why do you ask that, son?
 UKKO (joking)
 Ah! ask that of the canon ball which took away its reality
 at Lutzen. I just wanted to make you realize that a
 shadow is something (p. 54).

There are also the added touches of the juxtaposition of illusion and the real and the granting to the notion of "l'ombre" the privilege of time--extension, duration.

Another such reflection on the relationship between the determined and the indeterminate occurs in the description of a basket of fruit selected to grace the banquet-table: ". . . ce sont les meilleurs: ils ont été piqués par les aiseaux" (p. 65). That the fruit is not whole here determines another of its qualities--succulence--and, significantly, one for which it is selected to complement the feast.

Contrasting age and youth, experience and innocence, paternal and filial, this scene is crucial in setting the stage for the

affirmation of Real life (lived by Ukko) in contradistinction to Transcended life (sought by Axel). In spite of Ukko's age--he is seventeen--he is highly regarded not only by Axel but also by the three ancients who bestow on him the supreme compliment of age to youth:

C'est le gaieté du vieux burg, ce page d'autrefois: de plus, c'est un esprit déjà ferme; subtil, et qui étonne. --Il a l'air d'une longue étincelle (pp. 68-69).

*This page is worthy of the good old days. He brings gaiety to this old fortress, and what's more his mind is already decisive, subtle, and astonishing. --He's like a spark that does not flicker out (p. 45).

That affirmation is suggested here is evident, and by synthesizing time past, time present, and time future in the figure of Ukko that affirmation reverberates. The relationship is not necessarily one of succession but rather of juxtaposition, vitality, and continuity:

. . . Va, réchauffons nos dernières songeries à sa belle jeunesse, comme nous chauffons nos trois barbes blanches à ce bon feu clair. Laissons-le jouer, --même avec nous; son sourire malin nous ranime et sa vue est bonne (p. 69).

*Go on with you, let's warm our last dreamings in his beautiful youth, as we warm our three white beards in this good bright fire. Let him play,--even at our expense; his roguish smile revives us, and his company is good for us (p. 45).

Ukko's relationship with Axel is one of complement; he has the rare privilege of being permitted to accompany Axel, who clearly demonstrates a preference for solitude, during the hunt:

Oublies-tu qu'il n'aime que le silence!--S'il accepte, parfois, Ukko pour compagnon, c'est que l'enfant devient à ses côtés plus muet que son ombre te qu'il se sait aimé jusqu'à la mort par ce vigilant veilleur aux yeux de faucon! (p. 72).

*Are you forgetting that he is fond only of silence:--If he sometimes accepts Ukko as a companion, it's because at his side the child becomes more silent than his shadow and because he knows that such a vigilant watchman with falcon eyes will love him until death (p. 47).

The richness of imagery of this passage--solitude, innocence, becoming, shadow (with its implications of indeterminate reflection and potential completion), fidelity, and flight--is surpassed only by the tenderness implicit in Axel's extending to Ukko filial privilege with the concomitant assumption of the earned.

The chorus of ancients in this scene has the final duties of voicing suspicion about the Commander's visit, concern regarding Herr Zacharias' uneasiness--the fact that he knows all the family secrets, even "le TERRIBLE," could well make him a target--and a bewilderment about Master Janus:

Janus ne vieillit pas . . . ses yeux ne semblent pas être ceux d'un homme de ce siècle . . . il a quelque chose en lui qui retient l'affection. . . . C'est un homme naturellement impénétrable (pp. 74-75).

*Janus does not grow old . . . his eyes do not seem to belong to a man of this century . . . there is something in him which holds back affection. . . . He is naturally unfathomable (pp. 48-49).

Their anxieties are proper given their respect, loyalty, and concern that Axel be in no way threatened. In his absence the "weather" speaks for him, giving textual testament to his ability to withstand any threat:

(Depuis quelques moments le temps s'est couvert au dehors, et des rafales annoncent une prochaine tempête. --Cinq heures sonnent) (p. 75).

*(In a short time the sky outside has become overcast, and squalls announce an approaching tempest. Five o'clock strikes)(p. 49).

Both sub and main text attention to the storm occur contrapuntally with references to Axel making explicit the connection between the sound and intensity of the storm and Axel's voice and inner tendencies:

GOTTHOLD

C'est égal: Lorsque Axel d'Auersperg rompra le silence dans quelque solennel moment, cela sonnera, je crois, le son rude.

MIKLAUS (hochant la tête)

Aux grands vents battent les grandes parties!

GOTTHOLD (presque à lui-même)

Ah! c'est qu'il fut toujours, en sa nature, de devenir un homme . . . surhumain.

(Bruits de tonnerre; lueurs d'orage; lointaines rumeurs des bois.)

MIKLAUS (se levant et allant à une fenêtre)

Mais, --quel temps! . . . Le ciel a changé pendant nos souvenirs! La tourmente secoue la montagne . . .

(Une vaste lueur, d'un bleu violet sillonne les ombres de la salle.)

Ah! le coup va sonner!

GOTTHOLD

Un triste et hideux éclair, c'est vrai.

MIKLAUS

J'ai cru voir un regard de l'enfer!

HARTWIG (après le coup de tonnerre)

Et c'est la veille de Pâques! (pp. 76-78).

GOTTHOLD

*Nevertheless, when Axel of Auersperg breaks his silence on some solemn moment, in my opinion this place will ring.

MIKLAUS (shaking his head)

The main doors bang in the strong winds

GOTTHOLD (almost to himself)

Ah! the fact is that by nature he is always becoming a man . . . a superman.

(peals of thunder; lights of a storm; distant echoes from the woods.)

MIKLAUS (rising and going to a window)
 But, --what weather! . . . The sky has changed during our
 reminiscing! The storm torments the mountain . . .

(A vast blue violet flash furrows the shadows of the
 room.)

Ah! the thunderclap is going to burst!

GOTTHOLD

It was a gloomy and hideous flash.

MIKLAUS

I thought I caught a glimpse of hell!

HARTWIG (after the clap)

And it's Easter Eve (p. 50).

The religious analogy accustomed by the season and the imminent
 temptations augment both the mystery and the intensity of its solu-
 tion.

Having heard about Axel and having experienced in the storm
 a projection of his inner tendencies, we expect his physical self in
 the following scene. Provided instead is the appearance of Ukko, his
 shadow, appropriately dressed and with "(deux plumes d'aigle à son
 bonnet de fourrure)," (p. 78) sustaining the imagery of flight and
 strength and "determining" another aspect of Axel.

Asked about the success of the hunt, Ukko advises them that
 among the catch was a vulture:

Le vautour était perdu dans les nuées noires, dans le
 tonnerre, quand la balle du maître s'en est allée l'y
 surprendre (p. 79).

*The vulture was lost in black clouds, in thunder, when
 the master's bullet took it by surprise (p. 51).

This explanation on a literal level describes one part of the hunt;
 on an emotional level it synthesizes the tension and anxiety of the
 previous scene; on a connotative level it suggests Axel's capability
 of being a successful hunter; and on a symbolic level it foreshadows

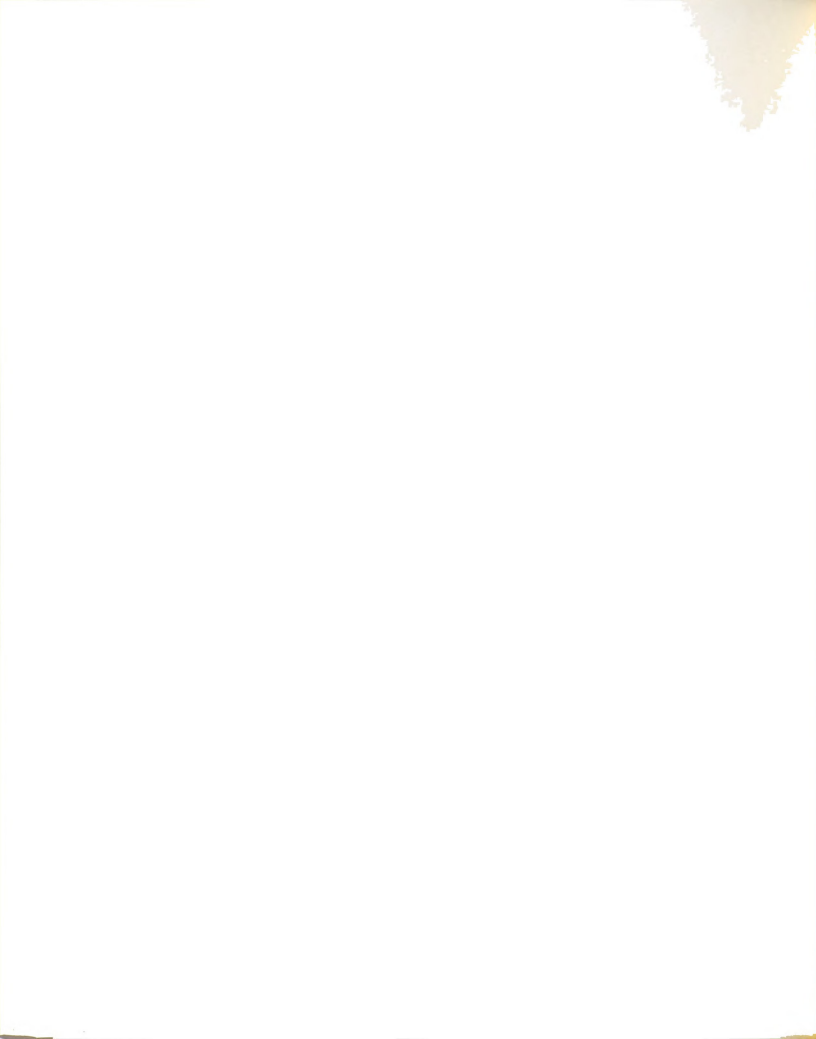
the Commander's death by presenting the vulture (a scavenger, a threat) lost in the story (Axel) and killed because of it. Assuring in its symbols, the passage makes an effective transition.

Contrasting in tone to the previous scene, this one is not anxious but anticipatory, not gloomy but veritably gay. It is here that we learn about Ukko's meeting and imminent marriage to Luisa Gluck--the "fortunate" name another affirmation. And although there has been no time gap between the two scenes, the storm, so previously apparent, is here nearly absent. The sub-text presents it as the gentle accompaniment for Ukko's relating the circumstances of his good fortune:

(Alors, debout entre les fleurs de la table, éclairé par les candélabres . . . et des épars violets, il médite . . . Il parle, en souriant, comme perdu en un rêve--tandis que des harpes semblent, en des lointains l'accompagner, au fond de l'orage) (p. 82).

*(Then, standing by the table flowers, lighted by the candelabra . . . and the rare violet flashes, he meditates. . . . He speaks, smiling as if lost in a dream--while from the depths of the story distant harps seem to accompany him) (p. 52).

Swept up in Ukko's ecstasy and eager to participate as best man and godfathers, the three ancients are suddenly aware of the compression of time, at once recalling the day Luisa was born and anticipating the progeny of an already sixteen year old. Although Ukko's response has been criticized as an authorial slip,¹⁶ it does, by calling attention to the words--the language--suggest a significant relationship here between the concept of time and the levels of semantics and lexicon:



L'un dit: «Déjà!» l'autre: «Enfin!» Je commence à croire que c'est la même mot retourné (p. 84).

*One says "Already!" and the other "finally!" I am beginning to believe that it is the same word turned around (p. 54).

Additionally, the participle "retourné," itself having been "turned into" an adjective here, invites a rewarding reflection on and attention to language.

While they are all drinking a toast to Ukko's fiancée, the Commander enters (Scene Four) observing in an aside that:

Ce sont des pierres--est l'enfant est l'âme damnée de son maître (p. 87).

*They are rocks,--and the child is the damned soul of his master (p. 55).

thus affirming both strength and loyalty and again presenting textual lexical support for filial-paternal and flight imagery, and designating Ukko as an aspect of Axel. This brief scene ends with sub-textual information on weather:

(Depuis quelques minutes, l'ouragan paraît s'être apaisé: il ne tonne plus qu'à de longs intervalles, et, au lointain, la pluie a presque cessé; néanmoins, à travers les vitraux le ciel demeure couvert et menaçant) (p. 87).

*(For the past few minutes the storm seems to have abated; it now thunders only at long intervals, and in the distance the rain has nearly stopped; through the windowpanes the sky remains overcast and threatening)(p. 55).

When Ukko and the three ancients exit the Commander is alone for all of Scene Five, musing on what he considers Axel's vices and virtues, that is, the degree to which other things and people influence him, and the extent to which he himself will be able to persuade Axel to come with him to court.

Having been offered wine, tobacco, warm fire and books while awaiting Axel's return, the Commander selects a book, Traité des Causes secondes, and reads:

Chapitre premier: Les Silentiaries. --Diable! « Tout verbe, dans le cercle de son action, crée ce qu'il exprime. Mesure donc ce que tu accordes de volonté aux fictions de ton esprit » (p. 88).

*Chapter I: Silentiaries. --What the devil! "Any word in the circumference of its action, creates what it expresses. Therefore, consider how much volition you grant to the inventions of your mind" (p. 56).

Agitated, he closes it and tosses it among the others. Although ostensibly designating the extent to which Axel has fallen prey to occultist practitioners, the passage may also be construed as a comment on intentionality:¹⁷ it is the author's intentionality which represents the portrayed objects; but the creation of what the word expresses, that is, meaning, is dependent on a transaction between the words (text) and a perceiver.

That Axel has sequestered himself in the Forest living such a solitary existence makes little sense to the Commander; and deciding that there is another reason for his exile, he prepares to explore the alternatives with Herr Zacharias, the uneasy old servant. Because the solitude so consoling and nurturing to Sara and Axel is disturbing to Zacharias--"le silence m'opprime depuis--oh! depuis tant d'années!" (p. 96)--the Commander can procure the secret while virtually allowing the old man to unburden himself. With his presentation we again find attention given to the "choice" of word:

Monseigneur, je ne parle jamais qu'en pesant bien tous les termes dont je me sers. Or il est vraiment impossible d'en

trouver d'exacts pour qualifier les faits que je désire vous exposer. Bref, s'il est, sur la terre, un secret méritant le titre de . . . 'SUBLIME . . . certes, on peut dire que c'est celui-là. Y penser, seulement . . . me donne le vertige . . . Vous le voyez: je suis inquiet--d'en parler! (Bruissement de la tempête. Il regarde autour de lui) (p. 95).

*My lord, I never speak without weighing all my words carefully. Now it is really impossible to find words exact enough to describe the facts which I desire to present to you. In short, if there is on this earth a secret meriting the title of SUBLIME--certainly, we can say it is this one. Only to think about it . . . gives me vertigo . . . You see: I am distracted . . . just talking about it.
(The tempest roars. He looks around) (p. 60).

To say that the facts will be left unqualified invites reader participation: "SUBLIME" will need to be made more determinate. With the sub-textual roaring tempest Axel's voice is raised, as it were, in violent objection to Zacharias' disclosure, the breadth of whose effects extends from the Auersperg's to Germany, and then the world. This scope that renders Zacharias incapable of qualification also connotes the range of "poems" to be made of all these images.

Herr Zacharias' story constitutes all of the second subsection of Part Two at the end of which Axel's approaching horn is heard in the distance. His sub-textual description readily calls to mind similar descriptions of Sara:

(Il est d'une très haute taille et d'une admirable beauté virile. L'élégance musculeuse et les proportions de sa personne annoncent une puissante force corporelle. Son visage, d'une pâleur presque radieuse, ressortant sous de longs et ondulés cheveux bruns, est d'une expression mystérieuse à force d'être pensive . . . Il porte un bonnet de loutre, à plume d'aigle . . . Il demeure un moment immobile, au seuil de la salle) (p. 114).

* (He is very tall and has an admirable virile beauty. Both his robust elegance and the proportions of his frame indicate powerful physical strength. His face, almost radiantly pale, emerging from long, wavy brunette hair, has an expression rendered mysterious by its excessive pensiveness. . . . His otter bonnet has an eagle plume. . . . For a moment he stands immobile on the threshold of the hall) (p. 73).

The superior strength, beauty, pensiveness, stance, and proclivity for flight make Sara and Axel complementary images of each other.

In contrast to Sara's presentation in Part One--she was seen but not heard--Axel has been heard but not seen. With the first scene of the third sub-section of Part Two we see and hear Axel, not as shadow and storm but in his physical presence. It is an amicable scene although ironic because of the Commander's newly acquired knowledge. As we might expect the sub-text reads: "(La pluie cessé: l'orage paraît s'être enforcé dans les bois)" (p. 116). *(The rain has stopped; the storm apparently has retreated to the woods)" (p. 75). Axel as congenial host can now speak for himself.

During the Bacchanalian banquet of the next scene, urging Axel to accompany him to court, the Commander recites all the delights of the flesh awaiting them there. Axel is cordial, but disinterested. Impatient with Axel's insouciance, the Commander decides to murder him after having exacted the location of the treasure.

Surmising that the Commander has discovered the secret, Axel calls Zacharias for confirmation. The internal ramifications of the disclosure for Axel are mirrored in the weather. Ukko's observation, "Tiens, le tonnerre va tomber, ici" (p. 132). "Say, lightning is going to strike here" (p. 85) foreshadows the ensuing tumult iterated

for emphasis in the sub-text: "(Depuis quelques instants, l'orage du dehors, après l'accalmie, a repris son intensité. La pluie recommence à bruire aux vitreaux et il éclaire) (p. 133). *(During the past few minutes the storm outside, which had been calmer, resumes its intensity. The rain begins to rattle on the window panes, and there is lightening)" (p. 85). His decision to duel "à outrance: à mort" (p. 136) *"(To the end: to death" (p. 87) is in large measure dictated by his need for solitude--his need to have the Secret die with the Commander: "Le silence de la grande Forêt--marche dont je suis margrave--n'est pas à vendre: il m'est plus cher que toutes paroles: c'est un bien sacré, dont je n'entends pas qu'on m'exproprie et dont l'or de vos banques ne m'indemniserait pas" (p. 159). *"(The silence of the great forest--the march of which I am the margrave--is not for sale. It is a sacred trust which I do not mean to have expropriated and which could not be indemnified by the gold of your banks" (p. 102).¹⁸ The extent to which the sanctity of Silence is incomprehensible to the Commander is emphasized by an explicit textual reference to the word itself:

AXEL

--puisque le Silence ne représente rien pour vous, qu'un bâillement. En effet, ce mot, vide quand vous usurpez le droit de le prononcer, n'a pas (bien que de mêmes syllabes) l'ombre d'une parenté avec celui que j'ai proféré tout à l'heure. C'est en vain que vous essayez de les confondre en une même valeur. . . .

(Souriant.)

Acte de faussaire ou de perroquet (p. 160).

*--since Silence means only yawning to you. Indeed, this word, empty when you usurp the right to pronounce it, has not (even with the same syllables) a trace of a relationship with the word as I have uttered it just now. It is futile for you to try to confuse them in the same valuation. . . .



(Smiling)

Like a forger or a parrot (pp. 102-103)

The primacy of meaning is clearly the issue of this passage--even the most correct pronunciation of the word renders it still meaningless.

It is interesting to note that the interminable wordiness of this final scene of Part Two is to a great extent the Commander's attempt to buy time, thus his life. Sometimes hypothetical, other times metaphysical, but always abstruse, the scene becomes a demonstration of language devoid of any significant consequence: Axel has already decided to kill the Commander; the excessive verbiage permits a linguistic duel, a rehearsal of sorts, before the actual clash of swords. Immediately before engaging swords Axel, having done with the word play, observes: "Autres paroles: à quand l'action?" (p. 181). *"Lofty words; when the action?" (p. 116).

That Axel has the clear advantage is instantly apparent with the sub-textual reinforcement of power: "(Au dehors, à chaque instant, éclats de tonnerre" (p. 182). *"Outside thunder bursts at every instant" (p. 116). In spite of the Commander's skill, Axel's superiority is circumscribed within himself and made explicit by his description: "(. . . il demeure comme de pierre à l'abri de son poignet mouvant, s'enfermant en son impénétrable épée)" (pp. 182-183). *(Axel stays like a stone statue in the shelter of his moving wrist, secluding himself in impenetrable swordplay)" (p. 116). The reflexive, "s'enfermant," makes even more poignant his strength and immovability. Merging man and metal sword, the killing thrust brings "(le bras et le

fer horizontalement droits)," (p. 183). *(his arm and iron into one straight line)," (p. 117) epitomizing Axel's superior strength.

Having been ordered to bury the Commander below in the family crypt, and reminding Axel that there is a grave already prepared--Axel's own--Gotthold is forced to speak directly into Axel's ear "(. . . protégeant, d'une main, ses paroles, à cause des assourdissants coups de tonnerre, qui, sans doute, frappent, maintenant, le sommet du donjon)" (p. 184). *(protecting his words with his hand because of the deafening roars of thunder which now strike the summit of the keep)" (p. 118). The unleashed, raging voice of the storm, threatening even Gotthold's words, is indicative of Axel's inner turmoil: his having killed the Commander has not succeeded in leaving dormant the Secret; Axel himself has been seduced by the potential acquisition of the Gold. That this transference has occurred is suggested in Axel's response to the Commander's burial in his own grave: "Soit: cendre pour cendre" (p. 184). *So be it: his ashes for mine" (p. 118) and by his aside in response to Master Janus' appearance at the top of the stairway: "Maître Janus! (Un silence. Puis avec un profond soupir.) Ah! je me sens redevenir seulement un homme, en présence de ce vivant (p. 185). *Master Janus. (A pause. Then with a deep sigh.) Ah! in the presence of this living being I feel that I have become a mere man once more" (p. 119). It is as though Axel, with his great sigh, has assumed the Commander's appetite for the Gold, for things material, and having done so is no longer "super" but merely human.

Part Three, *Le Monde Occulte*, begins with a Lao Tse epigraph which reads: "Accueille tes pensées comme des hôtes, et tes désirs comme des enfants (p. 187). **"Welcome your thoughts like guests and your desires like children"* (p. 121). This introduction to Master Janus' plea for Axel's acceptance of asceticism is an appropriate transition from Axel's temptation by things material. Presumably, mental, esoteric activities are properly entertained like guests, but desires, while acknowledged, are fittingly contained, restrained, controlled like children. The first sub-section of this third part consists of Master Janus' argument for the ascetic life; this is the world from which Axel now struggles to detach himself:

Jusqu'ici, j'avais seulement vu la lumière de ce monde de prestiges que cet homme m'a dévoilé: en ce moment toute l'ombre m'en apparaît. Un doute immense me saisit. . . . La Vie appelle ma jeunesse, plus forte, que ces pensées trop pures pour l'âge de feu qui me domine! Ce mort m'a scandalisé, . . . le sang peut-être . . . N'importe! Je veux rompre cette chaîne et goûter à la vie! . . . (p. 191).

*Until now I had seen only the light of the world of enchantment which this man unveiled for me; at this moment I see only its darkness. An immense doubt encompasses me. . . . Life calls to my youth, stronger than these concepts which are too pure for the fiery season ruling me! That dead man ensnared me . . . the blood perhaps. . . . No matter! I want to break my present chains and taste life (p. 124).

Axel's present attraction to life and its living precludes consideration of any rewarded afterlife as well as a world of ideas.

AXEL

Je suis homme; je ne veux pas devenir une statue de pierre.

MAITRE JANUS

Libre à toi: seulement, l'univers ne se prosterner que devant les statues (p. 192).

AXEL

*I am a man: I do not want to become a stone statue.

MASTER JANUS

As you wish: but the universe prostrates itself only before statues (p. 125).

It is ironic that, although Axel finds it unacceptable to become a "statue," it is precisely this stance toward which both he and Sara move and ultimately achieve in death. Janus' admonition to Axel to die "en ascète, de la mort des phenix" (p. 200). **"ascetically, like the phoenix"* (p. 129) is similar in essence to Axel's disgusted observation of the Commander's death: "Tu tombes au profond de la Mort comme une pierre dans la vide,--sans attirance et sans but" (p. 183). **"You fall to the depths of Death like a stone into a void,--without attraction and without a goal"* (p. 117). The death that Master Janus would have Axel seek is the death to the world of "cette vieille Extériorité, maligne, compliquée, inflexible . . . La Mort, c'est avoir choisi. C'est l'Impersonnel, c'est le Devenu" (p. 199). **"that old Externality, malign, complicated, inflexible . . . Death is the fulfilled choice. It is the Impersonal. It is Becoming finalized"* (p. 129). Axel, however will eventually choose a literal death in order to preserve his illusions.

That Janus knows the potential of Axel's passion urges him to further warn Axel of the dangers of "Le grand crime d'aimer et de vivre. . . . Chaque fois que tu 'aimes', tu meurs d'autant" (p. 201). **"The great crime of loving and living! . . . Each time you 'love,' that much more of you dies"* (p. 130). You will recall that early in Part Two the three ancients, observing a certain ". . . quelque chose

en lui, ce maître Janus, qui retient l'affection" (p. 74). ". . . something in Master Janus that holds back affection," (p. 48) prefigured this ultimate direction toward the denial of warmth and life. That Master Janus' words are ironically construed on at least two levels is also foreshadowed early by the three old retainers: "Lorsqu'il parle, événement rare, ce qu'il dit bien que toujours simple, semble comme le reflet c'entre deux miroirs: on s'y perdrait à l'infini" (p. 75). **"When he speaks, a rare event, what he says, although always simple, seems like a reflection between two mirrors: you get infinitely lost in it"* (p. 49). The focus here is again on language, on words spoken and their polysemy suggested by the words "le reflet" and "l'infini."

In this same vein, there is an interesting reference to reading for the purpose of edification. Resting his own case of words spoken, Master Janus advises Axel to continue reading: "Si tu désires d'autres paroles . . . N'essayois-tu pas de lire, tout à l'heure? Reprends ta lecture. Peut-être ce livre te répondra-t-il mieux que moi: --je n'offre que ce qui suffit" (p. 209). **"If you desire other words. . . . Weren't you trying to read a little while ago? Resume your reading. Perhaps the book will answer you better than I. --I offer only what suffices"* (p. 135). That Janus has offered only what is sufficient--perhaps in summary--suggests the process of selection, intentionality, and it further suggests the notion of textual redundancy with its attendant potential for making meaning, for understanding: "Comprendre, c'est le reflet de créer"

(p. 209)." *"Understanding is the reflection of creating" (p. 135). An earlier similar reference to the necessity for Axel's participation in the negotion of meaning even refers to the integral "behind the eye" contributions:

Si tu n'entends pas le sens de certaines paroles, tu périras, simplement, dans l'air qui m'entoure. . . . Je n'instruis pas: j'éveille. --Alors que tu vagissais, dans tes langes, si tu n'eus pas, sous tes paupières fermées, le regard tout empreint de cette Lumière qui pénètre, reconnaît et réfléchit l'Esprit substantiel des choses, l'esprit d'universalité entre les choses, je ne puis te donner ce regard. . . . Nul n'est initié que par lui-même (p. 196).

*If you do not understand the meaning of certain words, you will simply perish in the air surrounding me. . . . I do not instruct: I awaken. sic. If you do not have beneath your closed lids a sight already marked by this Light which penetrates, recognizes, and reflects the substantial Spirit of things, the spirit of universality among things. . . . I cannot give this sight to you now. . . . Only you can initiate yourself (p. 127).

In the second sub-section, "Le Renonciateur," there is the renunciation of the occult parallel to Sara's renunciation of the religious life; the words are the same:

Acceptes-tu la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie?

AXEL, après un grand silence et relevant la tête.

Non (p. 137).

*Do you accept Light, Hope and Life?

AXEL (after an extended pause raising his head.)

No (p. 137).

As the severity of the storm had connoted the intensity of Axel's struggle, so too, the long silence preceding his response reflects the degree of difficulty of his decision. Having renounced ascetism

and refusing response to Janus' indignation, Axel assumes a by now familiar position:

(Axel s'est croisé les bras et demeure les yeux fixes, sans paler . . . coup de cloche au loin dans la nuit)(p. 214).

*(Axel has folded his arms. He remains staring without speaking. . . . In the depth of the night a bell tolls once) (p. 138).

The striking bell provides a parallel frame for the scene just as did the bells of the dead and golden nativity bell as Sara renounced sequestered life.

Gotthold's announcement of Sara's arrival at the end of this third part finds a highly distraught Axel; his pallor is frightening to the old retainer, and the extent of his distraction is suggested by the fact that he calls for Ukko, momentarily forgetting that the page is taking care of the Commander's burial. The intensity of the scene and the anxiety attending Sara's arrival is attested to by the last words of the third part:

MAITRE JANUS, à lui-meme, au sommet de l'escalier
de pierre

Le Voile et le Manteau, tous deux renonciateurs, se sont
croisés: l'Oeuvre s'accomplit (p. 216).

*The Veil and the Mantle both renunciators have intersected:
the Work nears fulfillment (p. 139).

The two reflexives emphasize an internal focus--of attention to Axel and Sara, to their own internal tendencies, to the text itself. While "l'Oeuvre" refers to the destinies of the houses of Auersperg and Maupers, it may also suggest the work of art itself for the fourth part does indeed mark the end of the drama.



The first scene of Part Four, "Le Monde Passionnel," finds the three ancients and Ukko completing the Commander's burial. Rather than the anticipated hushed tones and reverences fitting a burial, Ukko interjects a certain candor, vitality, even ribaldry:

L'Épitaphe? la voici:--Ce fut un seigneur insoucieux,
qui prisait fort la bonne chère et les belles femmes.
Que cette excellente lame, d'ailleurs, intercède pour
nous dans la lumière divine! (p. 220).

*The epitaph? here is one: --Here lies a carefree lord
who loved good cheer and beautiful women. And add this:
may his superlative sword intercede for us now and in the
hour of our death! (p. 144).

The interrogative and pause of the first words invite a response or encourage an anticipatory attitude in the reader; the double entendre stresses the import of the words. (There is the added association of "lame" with "l'âme" at the level of sound and its concomitant connotation of flight imagery, mentioned previously). Contrasting the somber intensity of the previous scene, Ukko provides a fresh honesty which invests him with a sense of hope, renewal, and continuity in preparation for the following scene. Again there is a compression of time suggested in the terms used and references made to Ukko by the ancients; juxtaposed we find "Colères d'enfant!" "mon garçon" ". . . qui as encore du lait dans le nez!" "Tu es dans l'âge de la vigueur" (pp. 222, 223). *"Childish anger!" My boy," ". . . a nursing with milk still on your nose!" "You are in the season of strength" (pp. 144, 145).

Appearing in the crypt, having come to bid them all farewell, Axel assumes the tone and terms of paternal affection in his address

to the three ancient retainers: "Amis,--Amis! mes vieux enfants. Il le faut. Pardonnez!" (p. 224). **"Friends, --friends! my old children! --I must. Forgive me"* (p. 146). It is immediately and painfully apparent to his charges that Axel's leave-taking is from life itself. Axel's responses to Ukko's protestations that he is not to accompany his master is an affirmation of the continuity of life: "Et ta fiancée, enfant! et ta patrie! Je dois partir, sans vous revoir, au lever du soleil, en ce jour de Pâques" (p. 224). **"What about your fiancée, child! and your fatherland! --On this Easter day I must leave at sunrise with out seeing you again"* (p. 146). The season adds again another level of significance: the concomitant death and necessary rebirth. All Axel's power and potential vitality is literally passed on to Ukko:

AXEL, l'embrassant.

Mon fils!

(Il ouvre les bras; Ukko s'y précipite et, tout en larmes, l'embrasse.)

Tu trouveras, sur ma table, un parchemin signé d'Axel: à toi ce château, si je n'y reviens plus (p. 225).

*

AXEL (embracing him)

My son!

(He opens his arms. Ukko runs to them and kisses them tearfully.)

You will find on my table a parchment signed Axel. If I return no more the Castle is yours (p. 146).

That Axel is exceptional and has earned the respect and admiration of Ukko as well as the three old retainers is evident in Miklaus' lament: "Lui, dont le regard nous nourrissait" (p. 226). **"And in his glance we found our daily bread"* (p. 147). The statement further restores Axel to the sanctity of solitude he enjoyed prior to his

having been tainted by the Commander's lust for gold; this is the Axel who is about to be tempted not by "l'or" but by "l'amour."

Alone now pondering for a final time the family escutcheon, Axel hears Sara's approaching steps, attractive to him because they are "bein assurée," conceals himself, and watches her open the vaulted treasure. As the jewels and coins cascade down around her, Sara, aware of a presence, turns, sees Axel, and fires two shots wounding him in the chest. The ensuing struggle, during which Sara is superficially wounded by her own dagger, is in effect the foreplay to a union to be consummated not in life with Axel but in their deaths.¹⁹ Each is intoxicated by the beauty and prowess of the other, and the passion of struggle is transformed to tenderness as Sara, observing Axel's pallor from the loss of blood, removes his jacket and applies "le grand voile noir tout trempé de l'eau funéraire" (p. 235). *"the voluminous black veil soaked in funerary water" (p. 153). While literally checking the flow of blood, the veil also shrouds Axel, as it were.

Here Sara comes into her full power; she is confident, knowing the extent to which she has already affected Axel and the degree to which she can give him pleasure. To the extent that her silence in Part One magnifies her determination and will, so also her erotic language electrifies the close air of the sepulchre, scintillating Axel's very essence:

(Elle se suspend languissamment, la tête renversée
et le regardant, avec des yeux de lumière entre ses
cils; ses cheveux se dénouent, roulent et l'enveloppent.
Elle parle d'une voix pure, très sourde, très douce,

presque basse, oppressée. --Parfois elle ferme les yeux tout à fait et son éclatante beauté grave resplendit sous les lueurs du flambeau, de la lampe et des pierrieres. --Haletante, les narines frémissantes, les bras languides.)

Sois indulgent pour toi-même, enfant! Est-ce donc pour toi-même, enfant! Est-ce donc pour moi que je veux vivre! Ne me tue pas. A quoi bon? Je suis inoubliable.

Sais-tu ce que tu refuses! Toutes les faveurs des autres femmes ne valent pas mes cruautés! Je suis la plus sombre des vierges. Je crois me souvenir d'avoir fait tomber des anges. Hélas! des fleurs et des enfants sont morts de mon ombre.

Laisse-toi séduire! --Je t'apprendrai les syllabes merveilleuses qui enivrent comme les vins de l'Orient! Je puis t'endormir en des caresses qui font mourir: je sais le secret des plaisirs infinis et des cris délicieux, des voluptés où toute espérance défaille. Oh! t'ensevelir en ma blancheur, où tu laisserais ton âme comme une fleur perdue sous la neige! Te voiler de mes cheveux où tu respirerais l'esprit des roses mortes! --Cède. Je te ferai pâlir sous les joies amères; j'aurai de la clémence pour toi, lorsque tu seras dans ces supplices! (pp. 237-238).

* (Her face upturned, her glittering eyes watching him through her eyelashes, she languishes at his neck. Her coiffure coming loose, her hair cascades and envelopes her. She speaks in pure tones, her words barely voiced, her voice very gentle, almost oppressive. --Sometimes she closes her eyes altogether, and her dazzling grave beauty glows beneath the light of the torch, the lamp, and the gems. --Breathless, her nostrils dilating, her arms languid.)

Be indulgent to yourself, little one! Do I want to live for myself! Do not kill me. What good would that do? I am unforgettable. Do you know what you refuse? All the favours of other women are not worth my cruelties! I am the most inhuman virgin. I think I remember causing the angels' fall. Alas! flowers and children have died from my shadow.

Let me beguile you!--I shall teach you marvelous syllables inebriating as Eastern wines! I can put you to sleep with fatal caresses; I know the secret of infinite pleasures and delectating cries, the secret of voluptuous sensations where every hope expires.

Oh! let my white limbs enshroud you, burying your soul like a flower, lost beneath the snow. Let me veil you in my hair so you may inhale the attar of roses of all time! . . . Yield. I shall make you pale beneath stinging joy; I shall be merciful, when you are under this torture! (p. 155).

Sara is clearly the aggressor here, and it is a significant point. Because of Countess Lisvia, Axel's mother--a gentle, pensive woman whose Book of Hours Sara has read in the convent thus discovering the secret of the treasure--Sara is now with Axel to ennoble his death as his mother has ennobled his life. Seeing a statue of Axel's mother in the mausoleum, Sara observes: "C'est ta jeune mère, n'est-ce pas? --Oui, tu as ce noble front . . . et, vois, que de mélancholie! . . . Madame vous le voyez: Je donne à votre enfant tout ce que je suis" (p. 243). **"It's your mother, isn't it? --Yes, you have this noble brow . . . and see, what melancholy! . . . Madam, you see I give your child all that I am"* (p. 158), thereby sustaining the motif of nourishment: Axel both nourishes and is in return nourished by a woman stronger than he.

Sister Aloyse's relationship with Sara in Part One has prefigured this aspect of Sara's character. That the early passage was of such import is stressed here in Part Four when Sara pleads with Axel not to seek retribution for the hardships she endured at the convent: it is because of Sara's concern for Sister Aloyse, depicted as a kindred soul, that Axel agrees to forgive rather than exact justice from the convent:

Je t'intercède encore au nom d'une toute jeune fille, aussi pâle que nous, mais pareille aux séraphins de l'exile--et dont le coeur, consumé de l'amour natal, était si épris de sacrifices . . . qu'il me donna le fleur de ses rêves candides, préférèrent se perdre à se garder! Grâce! au nom de cette enfant qu j'ai désolée! (p. 246).

*I intercede also in the name of a very young girl, pale like us, but more like the seraphim of the exile--and whose heart, born consumed by love, was so enrapt with sacrifice . . . that she gave me the flower of her white dreams; she would lose

herself for my sake! Pity! in the name of that child whom I left disconsolate! (p. 160).

All the tenderness and religio-sensual language of the earlier convent scene is recalled and intensified here with the "pâle," "rêves," and "Grâce" providing, at the graphic level, the correlative motif of sky, expansion, flight.

Enchanted and charmed by Sara, Axel confesses his love for her, whereupon Sara intones a five-page litany of futurity, as it were, inviting him to participate in naming his desires with the implied promise of immediate fulfillment: "Dis, cher aime! Veux-tu venir . . .? veux-tu vivre . . .? veux-tu explorer . . .? veux-tu voir . . .? veux-tu rêver . . .?" (pp. 251-256). **"Tell me, dearly beloved! Do you want to come . . .? do you want to live . . .? Do you want to explore . . .? Do you want to see . . .? Do you want to dream . . .?"* (pp. 163-166). The motif of flight is also present in this speech, but in a real, not transcended sense: "Mais, plutôt, envolons-nous, comme les alcyons, vers des horizons toujours bleus et calmes, à Corinthe à Palerme, sous les portiques de Silistria!" (p. 254). **"But, instead, let us fly away like halcyons toward the horizons, always blue and calm, of Corinth or Palermo or beneath the portico of Silistria!* (p. 165). Sara's invitation is for a sharing of mutual pleasures in the real world.

That Sara has indelibly affected Axel is evident; she has, in fact, given him the resolve, the purpose to leave life in a supreme gesture of renunciation: "Sara! je te remercie de t'avoir vue. . . . Je suis heureux, ô ma liliale épousée! ma maîtresse! ma vierge! ma vie! je suis heureux que nous soyons ici ensemble, pleins de

jeunesse et d'espérance, pénètres d'un sentiment vraiment immortel. . ." (p. 259). *"Sara! I thank you--for letting me see you . . . I am happy, O my lily, my wife! my mistress! my virgin! my life! I am happy that we are all together, full of youth and hope, imbued with a truly immortal feeling. . ." (p. 167). Assuming that she has persuaded Axel to "come with her and be her love," Sara ends the first sub-section with ". . . tous les rêves a realiser" (p. 259). *. . . all dreams to fulfill!" (p. 167).

In the final subsection of Part Four, "The Supreme Option," Axel responds to Sara's hope for realized dreams: "A quoi bon les réaliser? . . . ils sont si beaux" (p. 260). *"What is the point of fulfilling them? . . . they are too beautiful" (p. 169). Only then does Sara sense that Axel has incorporated her zeal for futurity into "des pensées divines." To Sara's retort that life is here and now with future promise Axel responds:

Vivre? Non. Notre existence est remplie,--et sa coupe déborde! . . . L'avenir? . . . Sara, crois en cette parole: nous venons de l'épuiser. Toutes les réalités, demain, que seraient-elles, en comparaison des mirages que nous venons de vivre. . . . La Terre, dis-tu? . . . c'est elle . . . qui est devenue l'Illusion . . . et c'est bien EN RÉALITÉ que nous sommes devenus nos âmes. . . . Vivre? les serveurs feront cela pour nous. . . . J'ai trop pensé pour daigner agir (p. 261).

*Life? No. --Our existence is already full, and its cup runneth over. . . . The future? Sara have faith in my words: We have just exhausted it. What would all those realities be tomorrow in comparison with the mirages we have just lived through? . . . The Earth, you say? . . . it is the Earth which has become Illusion . . . and indeed in REALITY we have become our souls. . . . As for living? our servants will do that for us. . . . I have thought too much to stoop to act! (p. 169).

It is interesting to note here that Axel functions for Sara as Master Janus and the Commander did for him in Parts Three and Two respectively and as the Archdeacon did for Sara in Part One. While not completely renouncing what Axel espouses, Sara does resist trying to buy one more tomorrow, with its possibility of greater strength for her to accede to Axel's wishes. But the "demail" which holds the potential for greater strength for Sara threatens to make Axel "le prisonnier de (son) corps splendide!" (p. 265). * "prisoner of (her) splendid body!" (p. 172). Sara's choice to follow Axel follows "un profond silence," so much a part of this work and from which both Axel and Sara have garnered enormous strength throughout the play. As Axel has relinquished the living of life to his servants, so also does Sara conclude her acceptance speech with this caveat:²⁰ "Pour-tant, souviens--toi de la race humaine!" (p. 265). * "However, remember the human race" (p. 172).

Here, too, are there similarities that can be found between the events in the Garden of Gethsemane and these in the Auersperg sepulchre; there is even the similarity in language: ". . . et qu'il en soit fait selon ta volonté" (p. 267). * ". . . and let it be done according to thy will" (p. 173). This use of the future subjunctive, "Soit," begins in Part Two. Scene Twelve²¹ with Axel's decision to kill the Commander, and multiplies at an exponential rate through the second and third parts and Scene One of Part Four. The focus again is on language, on the relationship between syntax and semantics. With the repetition of "Soit!" comes an urgent sense of the "destined"

foreshadowed in Part One when the Abbess explains Master Janus' role in the houses of Auersperg and de Maupers and made more explicit at the end of Part Three where Janus observes that with the crossing of the Veil and the Mantle the work accomplishes itself.

The use of the subjunctive further connotes the "irreal," very much a concern of this play and that to which Axel and Sara ultimately give themselves in order to preserve "le moment intérieur" (p. 263).

That the imminent suicides be considered, in context, an affirmation rather than a negation of values has been carefully prepared throughout the drama. The dramatis personae are of two realms--human and super-human. Among the humans are those who serve, those who are served, and those who retreat to religion or asceticism for none of these people would suicide be textually affirmative. But for Sara and Axel, the super-humans, the extent of their success is measured in terms of renunciation, the supreme option of which is, in fact, suicide--a turning inward to an ultimate degree: ". . . c'est bien en RÉALITE que nous sommes devenus nos âmes!" (p. 261). *and in REALITY we have become our souls" (p. 169).

The question persists, however: why, when Sara and Axel's circumstances are the most favorable that can be imagined--they are young, beautiful, strong, intelligent, rich, free, and in love (p. 260)--would they give it all up for an unknown? Sara herself poses the same question:

SARA, un peu éperdue.

Quoi! renoncer à tant de joies!

AXEL

L'homme n'emporte dans la mort que ce qu'il renonça,
de posséder dans la vie. En verité--nous ne laissons
ici qu'une écorce vide. Ce qui fait la valeur de ce
trésor est en nous-mêmes (p. 266).

SARA (a little bewildered)

*What! how can you renounce so many pleasures?

AXEL

Man carries into death only what he renounces in life.
Really--we leave behind only an empty rind. What makes
this treasure valuable is in us (p. 172).

On a literal level the explanation satisfies the nagging question;
on a connotative level the latter sentences may extend to the notion
of text and reader. This connotation is augmented by Sara's specific
reference to readers (or audience) just two lines later: "Entends--
tu le rire du genre humain, s'il apprenait jamais la ténébreuse
histoire, la folie surhumaine de notre mort?" (pp. 266-267). *"Can't
you hear men's laughter if they ever learned this obscure story, this
super human madness behind our deaths?" (p. 172). In addition to
calling our attention to a textual reference to readers (or perceivers
of a story) with the attendant implication of participation, this
passage also acknowledges both a textual obscurity--indeterminacy--and
the intended superhuman realm.

That Sara is the aggressor here is also suggested by her
supplying the suicide poison from her family-crested ring. All around
them is life in abundance. It is interesting to note that even this
"life" participates in their deaths in the form of the early morning
dew used to dissolve the poison grains of powder in the golden chalice:
"Ainsi, le ciel sera de complicité avec notre suicide!" (p. 268).

*"Thus heaven will be an accomplice of our suicide!" (p. 173). A chorus of woodsmen can be heard in the distance singing songs of joy and renewal. Ukko, too, can be heard going to meet his bride whose wedding dress has "la rosée, au bas" (p. 269). *"dew on the hem" (p. 174)--the same morning dew of the poison potion. In spite of, or even perhaps because of death--part of the woodmen's song praises the "grands arbres dont la mort nous donne le pain!" (p. 269). *"high tress whose death gives us bread!" (p. 173)--there is the expectation of fruition and continuity further suggested by the last words of Ukko's song: "C'est pourquoi ses pas sonneront sur la terre" (p. 269). *"And thus her earthly steps will ring" (p. 174).

Preparing to drink the poison, Sara, bejeweled and resting her head on Axel's shoulder, recites the last spoken words of the play:

Maintenant, puisque l'infini seul n'est pas un mensonge,
enlevons--nous, oublieux des autres paroles humaines, en
notre même Infini! (p. 270).

*Now, since infinity alone is no deception, let us steal
away, oblivious of other human words, into our own
Infinity! (p. 174).

Striking is the reflexive "enlevons-nous" instead of the repeatedly used "envolons-nous." The phrase turns in on itself, convolutedly, and becomes a symbol for the juxtaposition and self-referentiality suggested by the language of this drama as the vehicle for the realization of meaning potential. The reflexive verb is followed by an adjective denoting a mental act and another specific reference to "words," a statement which may well suggest a caveat to readers concerning the source of the realization of meaning. While sustaining

the motif of flight right to the end the circumflexed adverb of emphasis, "en notre même Infini!" is semantically reflexive, for the final time inviting the reader to a transaction between text and self.

To the sub-text falls the final counterpoint of this symbolist melody²² of life and death, reality and illusion, continuity and flight:

(A présent, le soleil jaunit les marbres, les statues . . .
Une pièce d'or tombe, roule et sonne comme l'heure contre un
sepulcre. --Et--troubant le silence du lieu terrible où
deux êtres humains viennent ainsi de vouer eux-mêmes leurs
âmes à l'exil du CIEL--on entend, du dehors, les murmures
éloignes du vent dans le vaste des forêts, les vibrations
d'éveil de l'espace, la houle des plaines, le bourdonnement
de la Vie)(p. 271).

*(Now the sun tints the marbles and statues. . . . A gold piece
falls, rolls, and rings like a clock striking against a
sepulchre. --and--disturbing the silence of the awesome
place where two human beings have just freely dedicated
their souls to the exile of Heaven--are distant murmurs of
the wind in the forest vastness, vibrations of the awaken-
ing of space, the surge of the plain, the hum of life) (p. 175).

There are revisions and fragments which Villiers, in an alleged crise de conscience deciding to present a more orthodox view of Catholicism, began but never indicated how and where the inserts or substitutions were to be made (pp. 275-283). Although interesting as literary fragments, the revisions need not be reconciled with the original text; I have made no attempt to do so here, although I must admit more than a momentary temptation to look more closely at such phrases as, "Toute syllable est irrevocable" (p. 278) and "Pourquoi vraiment? un adverbe l'épée au côté! Je vais envoyer des gens d'armes demander ses papier à ce personnages . . ." (p. 279). The conscious focus on language as vehicle by which the author "intends" through

text requires the active participation of a reader and assumes a recognition that meaning is actualized only in use, in transaction.

That Axel may be an unevenly wrought Christian mystery play might possibly be conceded in a narrowly defined frame. But it is more, much more, and its language (determinacies and indeterminacies) invites the reader (audience) to attend with other than only religious-biographical assumptions so that meaning potential might be realized. It is of particular importance to focus on its language because of the inclination of Symbolist drama to celebrate the singularity of emotions and sensations to an extent that detaches metaphors from their subjects. Such detachment necessitates critical criteria that consider the lived-through experience of the work as an essential aspect of meaning construal and considers the linguistic formations as both the external, immutable shell of the work in which the meaning units are bound and the represented objects and in which schematized aspects find expression.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER III

¹William T. Conroy, Jr., Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), p. 133.

²The suggestion that Villier's own personal religious views and psychological states of mind are reflected in Axel and thus change from Axel's beginnings to its revisions at the time of Villier's death is found in E. Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens d'Axel," La Grande Revue 135 (1931): 271-273. Also in Rodolphe Palgen, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: auteur dramatique (Paris: Champion, 1925), pp. 53, 59, and 65. And in Peter Brugisser, La Double Illusion de l'or et de l'amour (Berne: Herbert Lang, 1969), pp. 11, 12, 37, 38.

³Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens d'Axel," p. 276.

⁴Marilyn Gaddis Rose, trans., Axel by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1970), p. x. Rose refers to the second act as the "most tedious in modern drama."

⁵Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1931), pp. 13, 14, 20, 21.

⁶Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 12.

⁷Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Axel, Vol. IV of Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Mercure de France, 1923), p. 7. Hereafter references to this work will appear as page numbers in parentheses within the text itself.

⁸Rose, Trans., Axel, p. 5. Translations from the original French are taken from this volume. When they appear in the text, they will be preceded by an asterisk (*). Hereafter references to this work will appear as page numbers in parentheses within the text itself.

⁹George Steiner, After Babel (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 159.

¹⁰Kenneth S. Goodman, "Psycholinguistic Universals in the Reading Process," in Psycholinguistics and Reading, ed. Frank Smith (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 25.

¹¹Rose translates the phrase "on ne soit quel" as "some." My preference is for a translation focusing on the inability to give it words. Rose discusses the necessity for basic assumptions when translating literary works in "From Literary Analysis to Literary Translation: Some Basic Assumptions of Literary Translation," Equivalence 7 (1978): 15-24.

¹²Richard Macksey, "The Consciousness of the Critic: Georges Poulet and the Reader's Share," in Velocities of Change, ed.: Richard Macksey (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 307.

¹³Conroy, Villiers, p. 136.

¹⁴A. W. Raitt, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le mouvement symboliste (Paris: Librairie José Carti, 1965), p. 260.

¹⁵Even a perfunctory glance at the phrasing here makes it clear that in translation even at the graphic level can some of the textual import be lost. One would be hard pressed to sustain the double flight imagery with its corresponding sound stratum complement.

¹⁶Rose, trans., Axel, p. 54. The note on the bottom of this page indicates that there may have been some "slip" in the writing of the manuscript to the effect that the author could not remember what he had already written.

¹⁷I use the word here in the Ingardian phenomenological sense.

¹⁸In Rose's translation there is no mention of "paroles"; in fact, the entire phrase, "il m'est plus cher que toutes paroles," is eliminated. In the June Guicharnaud translation, Axel (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc.), p. 109, the phrase does appear as "it is dearer to me than any words." Because the issue of "words" and "language" has so central a focus here, an omission such as this significantly alters the meaning units.

¹⁹Rose makes the observation of the sexual allusion in her forward to the play, p. xi.

²⁰Raitt, Villiers, p. 261. Raitt observes here the similarity between these lines and those of another of Villier's plays, Isis. Raitt feels that this is "pour Villiers une dernière tentative désespérée de suivre le conseil que Forsiana donne à Wilhelm dans Isis: "Gardez vous rêves! . . . Ils valent mieux que la réalité!" This repulsion of life because of its inferiority to some ideal is typical of the symbolist movement; but life is also somehow essential if nothing more than that from which these symbolist heroes transcend.

²¹This use of the subjunctive begins in Axel, Vol. IV, p. 150 and in Rose, trans., p. 96.

²²Wilson, Axel's Castle, p. 13.

CHAPTER IV

TINY ALICE

In 1964, just two years before he received the Pulitzer Prize and during the season in which he had four plays running concurrently,¹ Edward Albee wrote Tiny Alice. The mixed critical reception greeting this play threatened its early closure. Taking the critics to task for believing it their responsibility to reflect what they consider the tastes of their readers, and admonishing readers (audience) for abdicating their right to establish their own criteria for taste, Albee asked that the play be given a fair chance: ". . . entered into and experienced without preconception, without pre-determination of how a play is supposed to go . . . sit back, let it happen to you, and take it in rather as you would a piece of music or a dream."² Earlier Albee had addressed himself to the audience's (reader's) responsibility to a work of art saying that it demanded of them "the willingness to bring to it some of the intensity and perception its creator put into it. The more concrete the work, the less passive may be the audience. Unless of course the audience does not desire participation . . . and far too little is ever said about the responsibility of an audience."³

Just what was this dramatic chimera that has caused such controversial dramatic criticism?⁴ To briefly summarize the plot I shall

use Albee's own summary, aware that it is itself selectively "determined" yet nonetheless succinct:

A lay brother, a man who would have become a priest except that he could not reconcile his idea of God with the God which men create in their own image, is sent by his superior to tie up loose ends of a business matter between the church and the wealthy woman. The lay brother becomes enmeshed in an environment which, at its core and shifting surface, contains all the elements which have confused and bothered him throughout his life: the relationship between sexual hysteria and religious ecstasy; the conflict between selflessness of service and the conspicuous splendor of martyrdom. The lay brother is brought to the point, finally, of having to accept what he had insisted he wanted . . . union with the abstraction, rather than (a) man-made image of it, its substitution. He is left with pure abstraction--whatever it be called: God, Alice--and in the end, according to your faith, one of two things happens: either the abstraction personifies itself, is proved real, or the dying man, in the last necessary effort of self-delusion, creates and believes in what he knows does not exist.⁵

Describing Albee as one of the four leading American dramatists of this century, Ruby Cohn observes that it is Albee's finely honed use of dialogue to successfully advance plot and delineate character that makes him so deserving of attention. Adding monologue, I concur. The direction of this study is encouraged by Albee's own suggestion that Tiny Alice be "approach(ed) on its own terms,"⁶ Cohn's regard for his dialogues, and the English translations of the third edition of Das literarische Kunstwerk and Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks.⁷ This chapter will consider the work "on its own terms"--its language, in both the text (dialogue/monologue) and the sub-text (stage directions), and its various levels of structural significance.

In an "Author's Note" to the play a comment that Tiny Alice is "less opaque in reading than it would be in any single viewing"⁸

further suggests a focus on the full array of language as a fruitful course of study and reminds us that, although dramatic literature is ultimately written to be performed, it must first be read by its director and actors.⁹

The import of both the sub-text and the main text is immediately apparent in Act One, Scene One of Tiny Alice. The sub-text directs:

(The CARDINAL'S garden. What is needed . . .? Ivy climbing a partial wall of huge stones? An iron gate? Certainly two chairs--one, the larger, obviously for His Eminence; the other, smaller--and certainly an elaborate birdcage, to stage left, with some foliage in it, and two birds, Cardinals . . . which need not be real. At rise the LAWYER is at the birdcage, talking to the birds)(p. 3).

For the reader the play begins with this rather abundant bit of information, operative on several levels. That the garden represented belongs to a Cardinal not only, by extension, presents a broader sphere--a home, or an estate of which the garden is but a part--but also renders that sphere more determinate by attributing to it ecclesiastical relevancies which are thus posited as context. The incompleteness signified by the ellipsis, ". . .," the interrogative syntax of the second, third, and fourth sentences, and the agentless passive voice of the second sentence present and reinforce the concept of indeterminacy and the passive motif which pervade the play. The "climbing ivy" in the third sentence suggests in its "foliating out" ("fleshing out")¹⁰ the incomplete wall a direction of effort or a method of analysis of the play for a reader. The "huge stones" as the significant givens which comprise but a "partial wall" again substantiate the notion of indeterminacy. The syntactic interrogative



and the semantic strength presented in the fourth sentence connote the authorial represented objectivities of the indeterminate and the determinate. The sentence following the interrogative litany intones with the declarative strength of two "certainlies" and one "obviously" only to hedge its postulate with ". . ." followed by a caveat which admits the "non-real"--illusion--another significant aspect of the play.

The foliated bird cage with the two cardinals makes explicit the macrocosmically persuaded extension of the first sentence by microcosmically replicating the incomplete ivy-covered stone walled garden. The last sentence of the sub-text specifies the action with which the play begins.

The main text, too, begins not only with a preponderance of interrogatives but also with a self-conscious phonological focus:

LAWYER

Doom, yoom, yoom, um? Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. Um?
 You do, do, do, do, um? Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,
 tick, um?
 (He raises his fingers to the bars) Do, do, do, do, do, do, do.
 Aaaaaawwww! Oomm Yoom, yoom, yoom, um? (p. 3).

As the side text contains indeterminacies on various levels, so too, does the main text and in an immediately fundamental way. What is "Oomm, yoom, yoom, um?" How does it sound? Can I make it "mean" if I say it? The arrested attention given this odd assortment of squiggles on the page is drawn inquisitively to the easily discernible words "tick" and "do." What do we have here? Might I suggest the presentation of the seven final interrogative "ticks" answered with an equal number of interrogative "do's" strike the keynote for an integral

relationship between time and action. That the interrogatives remain suggest not only a focus on structural indeterminacy with its implication of engaging the reader but also on the issue of choice. The exclamatory "Aaaaaawwww!" which follows is phonetically and phenomenologically a metaphorical response to, specifically, our protagonist's responses to consequences of his choice. In addition, the "ticks," intrinsically signifying sound, prefigure the heartbeat at the end of the play; at some level, then, sound is here integral to meaning. That this introduction prefigures the end of the play is made more explicit by the sub-textual note that the object of the Lawyer's words need not be real, just as the object of Julian's final words may not be real. The epistemological stance of the play views man as free to make choices but not free to then escape the consequences of those choices. If a man considers his life as limited existence in time, then the success or failure of that life is dependent on how one spends that time. The language of Tiny Alice provides a vision of life passively lived and damningly judged.

That this first scene characterizes the Cardinal and the Lawyer--representatives of religious and secular life, respectively--announces the impetus of the play--the grant--and introduces, by reference, Brother Julian, the protagonist, is readily apparent; somewhat more elusive, perhaps, but of insistent import is the persistent and reflexive attention to language in its phonetic, graphic, syntactic, and semantic array.

The Cardinal's first words to the Lawyer, "Saint Francis?" not only, in its interrogative form, invite the supplying of information

but also extend the scope of the garden scene by bestowing on it beatific privileges. One of the more striking features particularly of the first five pages of dialogue, although it suffuses the text, is that its sentences are incomplete or exaggerated by pauses designated by ". . .". Albee uses this device in such abundance and with such regularity it seems almost one of the voices of the drama as are the great silences in Axel. And in a sense it is; it is we, the readers, whose participation is essential for successful meaning negotiations.

The multiplying of interrogatives, begun in the initial sub-text and sustained throughout the play, is most apparent in this first scene; its effect is to nag and tug at the reader to do his "share."¹¹

CARDINAL (a deep sigh)
Well. What should we do now? (Pause) Should we clap our hands (Does so twice) . . . twice, and have a monk appear? A very old monk? With just a ring of white hair around the base of his head, stooped, fast-shuffling, his hands deep in his sleeves? Eh? And should we send him for wine? Um? Should we offer you wine, and should we send him scurrying off after it? Yes? Is that the scene you expect now? (pp. 5-6).

Although the Cardinal's "we" is imperious, that it occurs with these repeated interrogatives implicates the reader.

This use of the imperious "we" is mimicked by the Lawyer and specifically drawn to the Cardinal's attention:

LAWYER
Do you ever slip?

CARDINAL
Sir?

LAWYER
Mightn't you--if you're not careful--(Tiny pause)
lapse and say "I" to me . . . not we?

CARDINAL

(Pretending sudden understanding)

Ah ha! Yes, we understand.

LAWYER

Do we, do we.

CARDINAL

We do. We--and here we speak of ourselves and not of our station--we . . . we reserve the first person singular for intimates . . . and equals (p. 8).

Later, learning of Miss Alice's desire to give millions to the Church, the Cardinal's repeated pronominal transgression sends the Lawyer in unrelenting pursuit:

CARDINAL

(Stuttering with quiet excitement)

Y-y-y-y-yes, b-b-but shall I just go to the house and pick it up in a truck?

LAWYER (Great heavy relief)

AaaaaaHHHHHHHHhhhhhhh.

CARDINAL (Caught up short)

Hm? (No reply) HM???

LAWYER

Say it again. Say it once again for me.

CARDINAL (Puzzled; suspicious)

What? Say what?

LAWYER (Leaning over him)

Say it again; repeat what you said. It was a sweet sound.

CARDINAL (Shouting)

SAY WHAT!

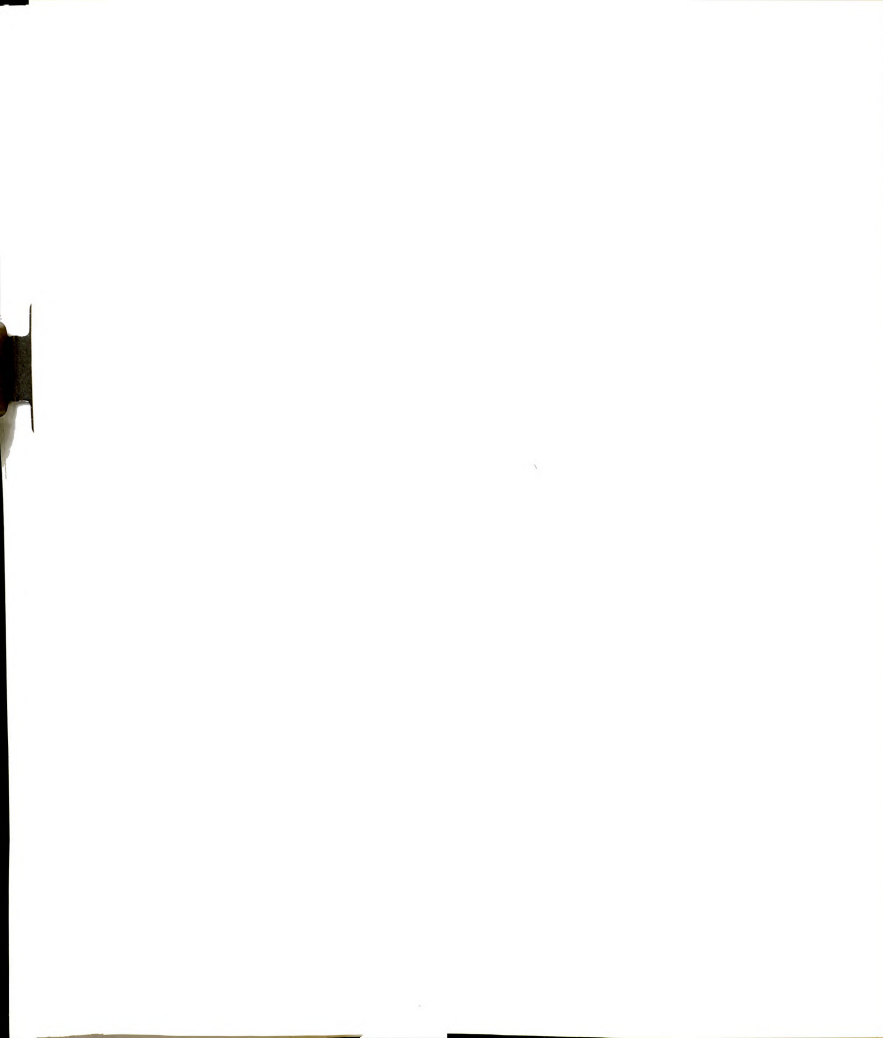
LAWYER

"Yes, but shall I just go the the house and pick it up in a truck?"

CARDINAL

(Thinks on it a moment)

Well, perhaps there was a bit . . . perhaps there was too much levity there . . . uh, if one did not know one . . .



LAWYER (Coos again)
 . . . "But shall I just go to the house . . ."

CARDINAL
 Wh . . . NO!

LAWYER (Sings it out)
 Shall I I I I I I I I just go!

CARDINAL (Cross)
 No! We . . . we did not say that!

LAWYER
 I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I.

CARDINAL (A threat)
 We did not say "I."

LAWYER (Almost baby talk)
 We said I. Yes, we did, we said I. (Suddenly loud and tough)
 We said I and we said it straight. I! I! I! By God, we
 picked up our skirts and lunged for it! I I I I I I I! Me!
 Me! Gimme!

CARDINAL
 WE SAID NO SUCH THING!

LAWYER (Oily imitation)
 We reserve the first-person singular, do we not, for . . . for
 intimates, equals . . . or superiors. (Harsher) Well my dear,
 you found all three applying. Intimate. How close would he
 rub to someone for all that wealth? As close as we once did?
 (pp. 17-19).

In spite of the Cardinal's request that he "leave off" the Lawyer continues to verbally strip him of the pretense, revealing not a cleric in service to the Church, but a depraved sycophant parading as ecclesiast; finally the Lawyer thrusts: "We have come down off our plural" (p. 19).

The extent of the Cardinal's greed is emphasized by yet another slip in which the "I" is thrice repeated:

CARDINAL (Humble)

I would not bother the lady; I have not met her; Of course,
I would very much like to have the pleasure of . . .

LAWYER

We slip often now, don't we.

CARDINAL (Very soul-weary)

Pardon?

LAWYER

The plural is gone out of us, I see.

CARDINAL

Oh. Well, Perhaps.

LAWYER

Regird yourself. We are about terminated. (Quick, insulting
finger snaps) Come! Come! Back up; back on your majesty!
Hup! (p. 21).

There is a lot going on here in this first person focus: there is the use of language for character delineation; that the text has the characters themselves discuss language qua language yields another dimensional relevance--a turning inward, an isolation of language itself; a connection between the motif of isolation and language itself foreshadows the final scene of the play in which Julian, in a confused state of dying, shifts from first to third person singular as he literally becomes progressively detached from life; and, finally, the homosexual allusion made in the "rub someone" comment is sustained in the phrases "come down off," "back up,"--with its double meaning supplying yet another innuendo--and "back on your majesty."

The use of the word "do" receives an interesting amount of attention; while stressing the already mentioned relationship between time and action, it also isolates the word for further semantic consideration. The arrested syntax of ". . . who did talk to the birds so,

did he not" (p. 4) draws the reader's attention to the emphatic use of "do" and the upper register non-contracted auxiliary "do" in the interrogative tag. One may entertain at this point just a brief flirtation with the possibility of a connection between this and the initial chatter to the birds. Just as one decides not to be seduced by so slim a lure the lawyer himself draws the reader back to the initial stage business: "That was gibberish I was speaking to the cardinals--and it's certainly not accepted that St. Francis spoke gibberish to his . . . parishioners . . . intentional gibberish or otherwise" (p. 6). Now there is no comfortable way to ignore that there may be an intentioned, represented, determined connection between the two. Another almost immediate use of the word draws further attention to it:

LAWYER

No. May I smoke?

CARDINAL

Do (p. 7).

Not only is it bare in its isolated sentence form and glib in its response but also is it stark, unadorned in its presentation on the page. Another emphatic, "At school . . . we did loathe you so" (p. 7) (ellipsis mine), a multiple exchange already cited in the context of we/I, "Do we, do we. We do" (p. 8) and an idiomatic use of "do" as in ". . . I'll have you do your obeisance (Sweetly) As you used to, old friend" (p. 8) contribute to the semantic consideration of lexicon and syntax.

A prepositional distinction, "And in the same class . . . but not of" (p. 9) (emphasis Albee's) occurring in the same sentence with

an ellipsis further focuses the readers attention on the thematic use of language in the play. The Lawyer responds in kind to the "in/of" line:

LAWYER

. . . (ellipsis mine) You are in the Church, are you not?
We find it fitting.

CARDINAL

You're good! You are! Still! Gutter, but good . . . (p. 9).

To the reader, of course, is left the same syntactic/semantic analogy, and the inter-language word play of gutter/good.¹²

References to time are fairly self-conscious maintaining the audibility provided by the initial "ticks." The Cardinal's "heavy schedule" (p. 4) as well as suggesting framed or boundaried time also connotes activity implicit in the notion of schedule; and although both the Lawyer and the Cardinal are nefariously characterized, they are, to a large extent, conscious of the need to direct one's own life in contrast to Julian who is "acted on" by time. For example, the Lawyer's equestrian allusion, "Hup! Back up on your majesty" (p. 21) which affects the desired response from the Cardinal is a sharp contrast to Julian's appearance in a later scene in which, although carrying a riding crop, he is presented ineffectually and diminutively as "my little horse-back rider and crop switcher . . ." (p. 121).

Before the purpose of the Lawyer's visit is revealed, specific attention is given to time past: "Shall we . . . shall we talk about times gone by" (p. 7). Then, having done so: "And now that we have brought the past to mind, and remembered what we could not exactly, shall we . . . talk business?" (p. 12). While there is much about

this play regarding place and time that remains inexplicit, it does acknowledge a flow of time past, present, and future and its meta-physical relationship to man.

A sense of orderly progression of time is also conveyed in the textual considerations of child-boy-man. That Julian's ambivalence about the various stages of development is in some way responsible for his death is supported in his dying monologue in which he pleads, "bring me my slippers, the sacramental wine, (Little boy) my cookie? (Usual again) . . . come bring me my ease" (p. 187). Both sub-textual instructions make explicit the thematic significance of the drama's conscious vacillation between the two elements of time.

In this same vein, the Lawyer's reference to the Cardinal as "buddy" calls attention to the appropriateness of nominal assignations and the effect of their out of context usage. With "vengeance" he strikes at the Cardinal with "You'll grovel, Buddy" (p. 8) and repeats it in a similar tone in Act Three (p. 168); later, playing with the pun of Julian's "lay brother" status, he implies a homosexual relationship between Julian and the Cardinal: "We know, (for Julian's benefit) His Eminence--buddy . . ." (p. 37). Responding to Julian's easy "Tch, tch" reprimand, the lawyer quickly asserts, "He was my buddy at school . . . if you don't mind," (p. 38) retreating sufficiently to the appropriate while leaving just enough of the ambiguous to sustain a focus not only on time but also on action. The word is used both as a diminutive and as a function. Further, in addition to being called Miss Alice's little horseback rider, the Lawyer also

refers to him as "poor priestlet, poor former priestlet," (p. 145) the repetition and the "time" adjectival stressing the motif of time.

That this first scene calls attention to play-acting within the drama (p. 14) affects a self-referential dramatic focus implying potential thematic significance. Raising the issue of the real versus illusion, it also refers us to the work itself in which actors "direct" and talk about themselves acting and directing.¹³

Ending much as it begins, this scene again focuses on language; this time it is the Cardinal talking to the cardinals:

Do . . . do you . . . do you have much to say to one another,
my dears? Do you? You find it comforting?
Hmnmnmnmnm? Do you? Hmnmnm? Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do?
Hmnmnmnmnm? Do?

CURTAIN (p. 22)

An appropriate linguistic frame for the scene, the "intentional gibberish" on another level provides essential textual redundancy for a reader. Ingarden has suggested that thoughts ripen in their speaking;¹⁴ here a reader's thoughts ripen with the iteration of this self-conscious reflexive (a Cardinal talking to cardinals) configuration.

Scene Two takes place in the library of Miss Alice's mansion. The sub-text describes the setting:

Pillared walls, floor-to-ceiling leather bound books. . . . A huge reading table to stage left--practical. A phrenological head on it. To stage right jutting out of the wings, a huge doll's house model of the building of which the present room is a part. It is as tall as a man, and a good deal of it must be visible from all parts of the audience. . . . At any rate, it is essential (ellipsis mine)(p. 23).

That the scene takes place in a library walled with books and prominently displaying a huge reading table clearly focuses on the activity of reading, and the phrenological head suggests the mental act, or more specifically, the intentional act. While the model sustains the motif of the real versus illusion, that it is "as tall as a man" prefigures Julian's end of the play plea to have the model welcome him.

The action begins with Julian's repetition of the word "extraordinary" as he regards the model; Butler enters and echoes the word in the interrogative, "Extraordinary, isn't it?" (p. 23), thereby arresting attention on the word and, at the same time, requiring a response to it--a verification of what, in fact, Julian has already observed:

BUTLER

I never cease to wonder at the . . . the fact of it, I
Suppose.

JULIAN

The workmanship . . .

BUTLER (a mild correction)

That someone would do it (pp. 23-24).

Strategically positioned, the ellipsis between the definite article and a repeated definite article and noun interrupts the reader's expectation of assured completion refusing to let the reader sit passively by. The remainder of the exchange emphasizes precisely this attention to the "active" in contrast to the passive--not the abstraction (workmanship) but the action (that someone would do it): not the competence, but the performance, as it were.

Although the purpose of the entire scene is to continue characterization, the increasingly explicit references to language make

clear the essential role that language plays here not only in advancing plot but also in delineating character--and by extension constructing meaning.

The extent of the effect of the model on Julian is subtextually directed and reinforced in the main text:

JULIAN
(The proper words won't come)

It's . . . It's . . . (p. 24).

The articulation of effect is left to the reader for Julian finally and simply retreats to the already over-worked "extraordinary." Implicit in the Chinese box model within a model is the idea of the continual, but that the model is sealed juxtaposes the notion of stasis sustaining the contrapuntal tone of the play.

Following some light chatter and witty repartee on the quantity of work he has to do in the mansion, Butler's interjected "Heigh-ho" (p. 27) is operative on several levels: it recalls the dwarfs' song of "Snow White"--an appropriate focus on the diminutive, the idea of work (action), and a reinforcing of "illusion" or non-reality. Because the sub-text is most deliberate here--"(For no reason, a sort of 'Oh, what the hell.')" (p. 27)--and beguiling with its "for no reason," the reader ponders the meaning of this piece of self-conscious intentionality.

The pun of "lay" brother, the semantic distinction between "of the cloth but have not taken it" (p. 28) (emphasis Albee's), a textual stress and repeated emphasis on modality, which syntactically broaches the issue of polysemous meaning--"JULIAN: You could say that.

BUTLER: You could say it, and quite accurately" (p. 29) (emphasis Albee's), and this semantic confusion

JULIAN
 . . . I don't have your name.

BUTLER
 Fortunate.

JULIAN
 No, I meant that . . .

BUTLER
 Butler.

JULIAN
 Pardon?

BUTLER
 Butler.

JULIAN
 Yes. You . . . you are the butler, are you not, but . . .

BUTLER
 Butler. My name is Butler.

JULIAN (Innocent pleasure)
 How extraordinary.

BUTLER
 No, not really. Appropriate: Butler . . . butler. If my name were Carpenter, and I were a butler . . . or if I were a carpenter and my name were Butler . . . (pp. 29-30)

which, not surprisingly, has Julian intoning his favorite word, leaving the reader to question the validity of a mind that perceives a world in which everything is "extraordinary"--all of these compounding textual focuses on language connote the reality of language itself even in its depiction of illusion.

Entering the library and exchanging with Butler terms of endearment uttered with "no fondness," (p. 31) the Lawyer provides a



display of language devoid of anticipated meaning but imparting possible sexual relevancies to a relationship, one of whose members has already been characterized as depraved.

In possession of Julian's life history, save six years during his thirties, the Lawyer asks him to ". . . fill them for (them)" (p. 33). While reluctant to make those years determinate, "They were nothing," (p. 33) Julian assures the Lawyer that although the years are "blank," they aren't "black," just "dull"--shades of meaning, partially determined, we might say.

Because neither Julian nor the Lawyer, who never drinks "before the barn swallows start screeching around," (p. 35) as Butler phrases it, cares for a drink, Butler pours only one for himself. The Lawyer corrects his observation:

There's no such word as screeep.

BUTLER (Shrugs)

Fit.

JULIAN

I think it has a nice onomatopoetic ring about it . . . (p. 35). Coined words and textual comment on their appropriateness and quality are yet other cues signalling attention to lexicon and context as explicitly essential elements of meaning.

The distinction made between a bequest and a grant is another example of lexical attention to context. Quick to point out that a bequest is made in a will and therefore contingent upon a death, the Lawyer reminds Julian that Miss Alice is very much alive, and, as such, her gift to the Church is a "grant." It is interesting to note

the irony here: Ostensibly this "grant" does not require a death as would a bequest, but it, in fact, ultimately does.

The Lawyer constantly completes Julian's sentences or interrupts and interjects his own choice of phrase:

JULIAN (Taking a deep breath)
Of her overwhelming grant to the Church, and of my
assignment to come here, to take care of . . .

LAWYER

Odds and ends.

JULIAN (Shrugs one shoulder)
. . . if you like. "A few questions and answers" was
how it was put to me (p. 37).

With the use of the word "ends" the Lawyer is off and running again in a scatological tone, playing and varying it with another turn at "lay brother" and a description of the Cardinal:

. . . (ellipsis mine) and bold, very bold; behind--or,
underneath--what would seem to be a solid rock of . . .
pomposity, sham, peacocking, there is a . . . flows a
secret river . . . of . . .

BUTLER (for Julian's benefit)

This is an endless metaphor.

LAWYER

Of unconventionality, defiance even. Simple sentences?
Is that all you want? . . . (p. 38).

Juxtaposed with the Lawyer and Julian's discussion of Julian's relationship with and charge from the Cardinal are Butler's musings on the Lawyer's images:

. . . whose still waters . . .
(pretending to be talking to himself)
. . . run quiet? Run deep? Run deep. That's good! . . .
though I wonder if you intended to get involved in
two watery metaphors there: underground river and
still waters (p. 39).

Such juxtaposition, by literally presenting two levels of dialogue, connotes the relationship between conscious attention to language and development of plot in this drama.

The syntax in this scene does much to characterize Julian as a passive type--Julian himself regards his passivity as obedience which is "not a fault;" he remains impervious to the Lawyer's retorted caveat "nor always a virtue. See Fascism" (p. 41). Leaving to announce Julian's arrival to Miss Alice, the Lawyer says, "And if she cares to, I will have you brought up" (p. 42) the causative structure calling attention to a passive Julian; shortly after when Julian, reassured by Butler's disdain for the Lawyer, fills in the six-year gap for Butler not only is his choice of syntax and semantics a revealing one, but also again is textual attention drawn to that choice:

JULIAN

I . . . declined. I . . . shriveled into myself; a glass-dome . . . descended, and it seemed I was out of reach, unreachable, finally unreaching, in this . . . paralysis, of sorts. I . . . put myself in a mental home.

BUTLER

(curiously noncommittal)

Ah.

JULIAN

I could not reconcile myself to the chasm between the nature of God and the use to which men put . . . God.

BUTLER

Between your God and other's, your view and theirs.

JULIAN

I said what I intended . . .

BUTLER

Six years in the loony bin for semantics? (pp. 43-44).

You will notice in his first speech that each first person pronominal utterance hedges elliptically, rather by way of apology for having made the assertion. The two reflexives project an inward tendency rather than an extroverted persuasion; both the choice of verb and the preposition governing the first further connoting withdrawal, and the choice of verb of the second reflexive suggests in its transitivity an object acted on by an agent--the line could have been, for example, "I went to a mental home," or, as is used later in scene three, "I committed myself" (p. 50), using the most obvious and frequent verb choice while retaining the reflexive; neither "went" nor "commit" imparts the sense of being acted upon so characteristic of Julian.

Interrupting their conversation, a chime sounds, sustaining the motif of time at an audible level and recalling in a musical display the "ticks" of the first scene. It also marks a settling of past issues in that the interrupted conversation has just filled in the six indeterminate years fulfilling a prophecy made earlier in the scene by the Lawyer: "You will . . . in time (To Butler) Won't he, Butler? Time? The great revealer?" (p. 42).

Being led up to Miss Alice's room, Julian ends the scene asserting that "(His) faith and (his) sanity . . . they are one and the same" (p. 45). In his equating of faith and sanity is the passive implication that perhaps his metaphysical health is predicated on the abdication required by faith.

Scene Three takes place in Miss Alice's sitting room where, at curtain, she is seated in a winged chair with her back to the

audience in conversation with the Lawyer. The first words of the scene, "Nor is it as simple as all that" (p. 46) have an interesting syntactic effect. Not only does the negative "nor" strongly imply its affirmative assertion, but also does it require an inverted word order of subject and verb; such an inversion--the seduction of Julian from the lure of religion to the reality of Tiny Alice--is precisely the concern of the play and overtly engaged in this scene. Further the statement makes context demands on the reader by necessitating that he "flesh out" "all that."

To the knock on the door that interrupts their conversation the Lawyer announces to Miss Alice, "That will be our bird of prey. PRAY. P-R-A-Y. What a pun I could make on that; bird of pray. Come in" (p. 46). This statement merges overt textual attention to language and word play and the recurring motif of birds operative on at least two levels. Surely diminutiveness and vulnerability are suggested right from the beginning of the play with the two caged cardinals nominally replicated by the Cardinal, a representative of an even large body;¹⁵ Butler has likened the Lawyer's imbibing habits to "barn swallows" (p. 35)--another pun embedded in the phrase; the Lawyer refers to Julian as "the drab fledgling . . . pecking away in the library (ellipsis mine) (p. 41), and later, Miss Alice iterates the Lawyer's description with yet another diminutive for emphasis: "Little bird, pecking away in the library" (p. 67) even the "solid rock of . . . peacocking" (p. 37) that the Lawyer proffers as an attribute of the Cardinal is subject to charges of sham and illusion; and

recalling a judgment of a school boy attempt at sonnet writing, the Lawyer recalls his teacher having described it as having "all the grace of a walking crow" (p. 175). On another level, the bird motif suggests flight--what Julian has done with his retreat into religion in his avoidance of the real world that frightens.¹⁶ That Miss Alice is seated in a "winged chair" (p. 46), later opens her gown "unfurling . . . great wings" (p. 126), then enfolds Julian "in her great wings" (p. 127), and finally, insisting that he accept Tiny Alice, reminds him that he had through herself as surrogate "wrapped (himself) in her great wings" (p. 163)--all connote Julian's return flight, as it were, from illusion to the ultimate reality--the mouse in the model (p. 107).

The previous scene's chiming reminder of marking time reverberates into this scene with Butler's emphasized announcement that "Brother Julian who was (emphasis Albee's) in the library is now here" (p. 46). With the assertion of was and is is implied will be in a synthesizing syntax whose completed paradigm of time is contingent upon a reader's efforts. The effects of time on Julian will be seen very shortly in the following act and made manifest in a shiver (p. 95) signifying his fear of the future. Seeking reassurance from Miss Alice that everything is going to be all right, Julian finds instead the terrible confirmation of his fears:

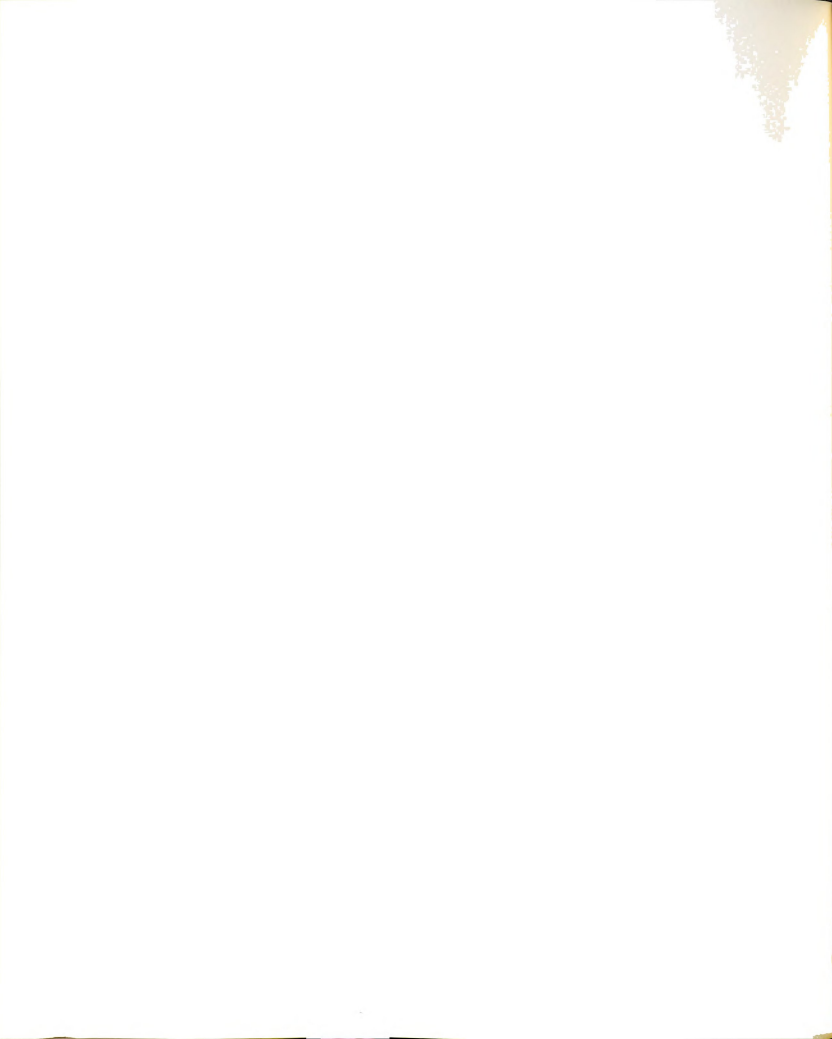
JULIAN (Knowing there is)
Is there anything to be frightened of, Miss Alice?

MISS ALICE (After a long pause)
Always (p. 96).

Finding the fearful future so literally upon him, Julian shivers again in the final act. Here the shiver is operative on yet another level which I shall discuss later in conjunction with the play's treatment of garb.

The question of what is real and what is illusory is raised again when it is clear that Julian's expectations of Miss Alice are other than what he finds: "But I thought . . . His Eminence said she was . . . young" (p. 47). Within this puzzling context it is most appropriate that there be another focus on the word "do." To Julian's shouted "HOW DO YOU DO?" to the seemingly deaf Miss Alice, she retorts "How do I do what?" (p. 48) (emphasis Albee's). The effect is two-fold: there is the suggestion that language be used to illumine, to reveal, not to obscure; and the deliberate return to "do" connotes an emphasis on action in spite of an environment in which distinctions between reality and illusion are elusive. Given a context by the Lawyer,--the words just spoken have only been a formality, an "opening gambit" (p. 49)--Miss Alice can respond: "Oh. (To Julian) How do you do?" (p. 49) thereby reinforcing the subject of the active verb.

The next eleven exchanges between Julian and Miss Alice consist of her interrogative responses, each of which either containing the word "what" or constituting its whole, to each of his increasingly frustrated and shouted statements. The implicit structural invitation to "complete" the text referred to in the first scene's use of the interrogative is evidenced here as well. That there is the necessity for such completion becomes apparent when Julian, now utterly



distraught with their series of meaning failures, says, ". . . this won't do;" (p. 52) (ellipsis mine, emphasis Albee's). Miss Alice, divesting herself of wig and mask, twice agrees using his words and emphasizing the second agreement with the adverbial intensifier "at all"--to not act (do, and in this context to make meaning) will not "do" (suffice).

The contrast in the use of language for the remainder of this scene is striking; no more the wit, barb, and clever repartee of the exchanges characterizing the Cardinal, the Lawyer, Butler, and even Julian in his own ironically innocent fashion; rather, Miss Alice, sub-textually described as malevolent (p. 50) pronounces stark statements--that Butler had been and the Lawyer was presently her lover--intended to unsettle Julian and encourage his detailing to her those six unaccounted for years.

Listening to Julian's rationale for his confinement in the mental institution, Miss Alice does comment on the unsuspected structure of his statement: "I notice you do not say you lost your faith, but that it abandoned you" (p. 60). Again, it appears that Julian has said what he intended. To recast the statement with Julian in the subject position would imply a kind of action uncharacteristic of him; instead, he reconfirms his own passivity; "Do I. Perhaps at bottom I had lost it, but I think more that I was confused . . . and intimidated . . . by the world about me, and let slip contact with it . . . with my faith" (p. 60) with the past perfect tense and inverted false-causative affecting further suggested inactivity.



Demanding more facts about his life, Miss Alice asks Julian how many women he has slept with--a curious question to pose to a lay brother who has taken a vow of celibacy, yet just another of Miss Alice's surprisingly candid utterances. Describing a fellow inmate who thought herself the Virgin Mary, Julian details in a state of religio-sexual ecstasy an evening which, by his own admission, may or may not have happened:

. . . was . . . was on a grassy space by the pool--or this is what I imagined--on the ground, and she was in her . . . a nightdress, a . . . gossamer, filmy thing, or perhaps she was not, but there she was, on the ground, on an incline, a slight incline, and when she saw me--or sensed me there--she raised her arms . . . (Demonstrates) . . . out, in a supplication, and cried, "Help me, help me . . . help me, oh God, God, help me . . . oh, help, help." This, over and over, and with the sounds in her throat between. I . . . I came closer, and the sounds, her sounds, her words, the roaring in my ears, the gossamer and the milk film, I . . . A ROAR, AN OCEAN! Saliva, perfume, sweat, the taste of blood and rich earth in the mouth, sweet, sweaty slipping . . . (Looks to her apologetically, nods) . . . ejaculation. (She nods) The sound cascading away, the rhythms breaking, everything slowly, limpid, quieter, damper, soft . . . soft, quiet . . . done (p. 62).

The nominal pounding of the first half of the description followed by the adjectival ebbing of the second exerts a powerfully semantic pressure on the word "ejaculation" endowing it with both sexual and religious relevancies.

To impart the structural strength of religious ejaculations to the word, there are three contributing utterances juxtaposed with Julian's continued yet less vivid story of the Virgin inmate. Even the sub-text describes the phrases as curious and dispassionate:

I am a very beautiful woman.

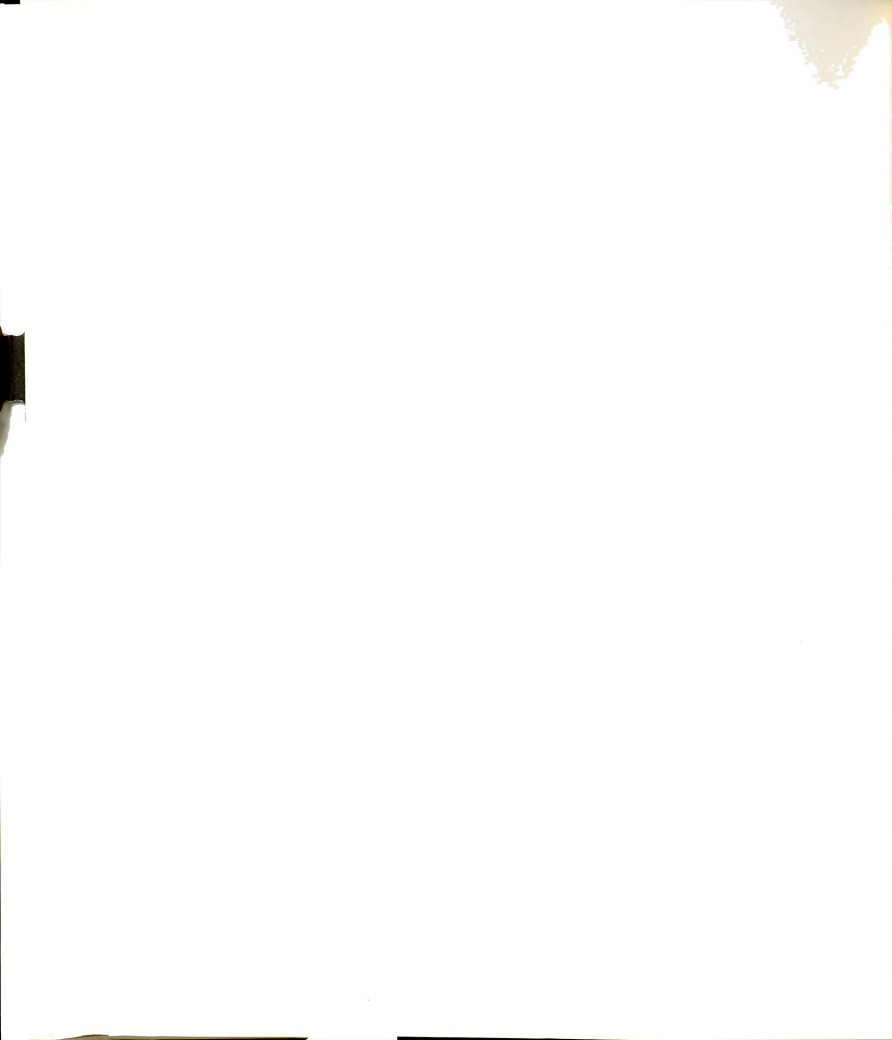
And a very rich one

And I live here in all these rooms (p. 63).

At the end of Julian's story Miss Alice repeats her litanous phrases seducing him with their promise of grace while holding the "little recluse" (p. 67) in abeyance, advising him that their business for the moment is concluded.

It is interesting to note that the contrastive behavior of Miss Alice and Julian in this scene is marked by the verb "do:" Miss Alice's early attention to the word--"How do I do what?"--is contained in her little masquerade--"a little game . . . a little lightness to counter the weight" (pp. 52-53) (ellipsis mine)--and Julian's focus on the word is as the past participle "done," the final and static adjective in his lengthy description. Both Miss Alice's game and Julian's "experience" are at least one step removed from reality;¹⁷ however, the former is active (external in its direction) and the latter passive (internal) signalled by the forms "do" and "done" respectively.

Instructing him to move into the mansion for the convenience of discussions, Miss Alice dismisses Julian. He hesitates at her extended hand and finally kneels to kiss it as he would the Cardinal's ring. To his pause Miss Alice echoes a warning about inaction: "Ah, ah, ah, he who hestiates loses all" (p. 67). Signalled by the genuflection, the conversion is underway--from Church to secular, from the Cardinal to Tiny Alice (through Miss Alice), from comfortable illusion to frightening reality.



With Julian's departure the Lawyer returns to inquire about the progress of events. As Miss Alice has just controlled Julian, so now does it become apparent that the Lawyer is, in this conspiracy, the instrument of control. Responding to Miss Alice's concern about the wisdom of their plan, the Lawyer says:

Wise? Well we'll see. If we prove not, I can't think of anything standing in the way that can't be destroyed.
(Pause) Can you?

MISS ALICE (Rather sadly)

No. Nothing (p. 68).

The act ends on a foreboding note of malevolent forces and doom emphasized by the repeated negatives of the last words in the scene.

The first scene of Act Two takes place in the library. Onto the momentarily empty stage Miss Alice hurtles, suddenly freed from the Lawyer's grip, and shouting, "KEEP . . . GO! GET YOUR . . . LET GO OF ME!" (p. 71). The malevolent note on which the first act ended is echoed here; not only do the conspirators prey on Julian but on each other as well. Suggested, too, in the Lawyer's pursuit of Miss Alice is the idea of game, diversion, introduced in the previous act. Ambiguous in their context, the first words of the scene play a bit with the reader's expectations; is the "keep" both a maintaining and a distancing? Certainly both are implied and a case for both interpretations is made in Miss Alice's own ambivalent responses to the Lawyer for, although she loathes him, she participates to the extent that she has called herself his mistress.

It is interesting to note in this scene the effect that Miss Alice's words produce in the Lawyer; she provides a rare opportunity for the revelation of the Lawyer's vulnerable spot. That Miss Alice begins her attack by saying, "I have a loathing for you that I can't describe" (p. 73), makes the thrust that much more lethal; despite the fact that she is "never one with words" (p. 73) the string of adjectival invectives ultimately strikes home. It is cruelly ironic that Miss Alice's paucity of language facility exacts from the Lawyer, the master of vituperative intent, a rare admission of pain; "Everything! Everything in the day and night, eating, resting, walking, rutting, everything. Everything hurts. Deeply" (pp. 76-77). Immediately the subtext reads, "(Quickly back to himself)." Rather than choose passivity and be paralyzed by the pain, the Lawyer "acts;" in rather rapid succession textual references to "acting" or "playing the part" make the point explicit: "But you, little playmate, you're what I want now. . . . Are you playing it straight, hunh? . . . Don't you dare mess this thing up. You behave the way I've told you; you PLAY-ACT. You do your part; STRAIGHT" (p. 77) (ellipses mine).

The direct relationship between time and action established at the outset of the play continues to reverberate here. Returning from having conducted Julian through the wine cellar, Butler announces the disarray and decay in which he has found things:

Some great years, popping, dribbling, away, going to vinegar under our feet. There is a Mouton Rothschild--one I'm especially fond of--that's . . .

LAWYER (Pacifying)

Do. Do . . . fix it (p. 80).

The bursting bottles and popping corks of this act function as time markers just as did the "ticks" and "chimes" of the previous act. In both cases is there a connection between time and action (Do).

Before Julian returns from the wine cellar the conversation among the three--Miss Alice, the Lawyer, and Butler--projects a greater sense of uneasiness and foreboding, broadening the conspiracy to include Butler of whom Julian is fond. Were it not for the Lawyer's jealousy of Julian and dedication to Tiny Alice, an easy atmosphere of comradeship might be suggested by such lines as, "Well, it's nice having him about" and "Oh, we'll be a foursome soon" (p. 80). But when Julian enters saying, "Ah! There you all are," to which the Lawyer responds, "We had wondered where you were" (pp. 81-82) (emphasis Albee's) the conspiratorial lines are clearly drawn in the emphasized pronominals "we" and "you."

The castle itself then becomes the focus of attention, first on a descriptive level: the wine cellar is a wreck, the Chapel although in good condition shows evidence of spider activity around the altar, and the "organ is . . . in need of use . . ." (p. 83)--a pun the Lawyer amusingly obliges but Julian chooses to ignore, biding his time and momentarily making the Lawyer the butt of another pun, a play on the word solicitor. To the Lawyer's snide reference to the Church as solicitor, Julian reminds him that in England he would be referred to as solicitor. Denying both the truth and the appropriateness of the comment, the Lawyer retorts that they are not in England anyway. It is Butler who, suggesting that the comment may in fact be

apropos, reminds them that "This place was . . . in England" (p. 84) (emphasis Albee's) thereby focusing on the symbolic level of significance of the castle--is it replica, model, or original (actual, real)? Every stone of the Castle has been marked and shipped from England, so that, in one sense, it is not the replica that Julian has taken it to be, but in another the Lawyer says "it is a replica . . . in its way . . . (pointing to the model) of that" (p. 85). Sure that he is being played with, Julian receives the Lawyer's comments in rather a light vein; but it is clear that he is confused by which is replica and which model--or, to put it another way, Julian is never quite sure throughout the entire play which is substance and which symbol. To Julian's question whether Miss Alice's father had had the castle put up, Butler, with affected innocence, becomes involved in a bit of word play with Julian:

(To Julian pointing first to the model, then to the room),
Do you mean the model . . . or the replica?

JULIAN

I mean the . . . I mean . . . what we are in.

BUTLER

Ah-ha. And which is that?

JULIAN

That we are in?

BUTLER

Yes.

LAWYER (To Julian)

You are clearly not a Jesuit. (Turning) Butler, you've put him in a clumsy trap.

BUTLER (Shrugging)

I'm only a servant.

LAWYER

(To Julian, too sweetly)

You needn't accept his alternative . . . that since we are clearly not in a model we must be in a replica.

BUTLER (vaguely annoyed)

Why must he not accept that?

MISS ALICE

Yes. Why not?

LAWYER

I said he did not need to accept the alternative. I did not say it was not valid.

JULIAN (Cheerfully)

I will not accept it; the problem is only semantic (pp. 85-86).

Fascinating in its subtleties, this bit of dialogue more firmly establishes the Lawyer as mouth-piece of the conspirators (the Cardinal has earlier recalled that the Lawyer's schoolboy nickname was "hyena" --a resourceful scavenger which dines on offal, devours its dead scavenged prey by chewing into it through the anus (pp. 11-12), Butler as something more culpable than merely the congenial servant, Miss Alice as more of an ally with Butler, and Julian as again teetering precariously on the brink of lunacy--recall that his earlier six-year institutionalization was for "semantics."

Julian's inner confusion is reflected first in the words of the conspirators and then in the model itself. While, on one hand, it appears that the Lawyer is directing or is the instrument of direction of the conspiracy--I thought I had made it clear to you the way you were to behave . . . (ellipsis mine). Remember what I told you. Watch . . . your . . . step!" (pp. 87, 89)--his jealousy and need to possess Miss Alice, on the other, reduce him to almost pleading to

stay overnight at the castle and asking to be forgiven for his overbearance! (p. 89). And Miss Alice, with malicious pleasure, reminds the Lawyer, "You forget your place" (p. 88) suggesting a deviation from both script (acting) and propriety, yet still submits to his physical abuse. That Julian is bewildered by these exchanges is evident; but it is with disbelief that he first spots the fire in the sealed model: "(Peering at the model rather amazed) Can it . . . can it be?" (p. 88). Asked for the location of the fire a "jostled" Julian responds, "In the . . . over the . . ." (p. 90). Discovering its location and while running out of the room, Butler asks Julian whether he is coming. Yielding in faith to the non-sensibility of the situation, Julian, "confused, but following," responds, "But I . . . but . . . yes, of course" (p. 91).

The ambiguity--in both its senses of confusion and multiple meanings--of the scene is augmented by Miss Alice's juxtaposed incantation and natural tone address to possibly "someone in the model," (p. 92) while the Lawyer, Butler, and Julian have hurried off to extinguish the fire. Her prayer alternates between a plea to save the place, to let the resonance increase and her promise to hold on, continuing to try to obey what she had not understood (p. 92). Her natural-tone comments constitute a plaint of the hurts she has had to endure over time--"the hurt the same, the name and face changing" (p. 92).

Returning in time to hear the end of Miss Alice's rather odd incantation, Julian begins to become somewhat fearful in addition to his confusion:



I don't understand anything. The chapel was in flames
 . . . and yet . . . I saw the fire here in the model
 . . . and yet . . . the real chapel was in flames. We put
 it out. And now the fire here is out as well. . . . I
 don't understand. Why did it happen that way in both
 dimensions? (pp. 93-94).

The scene ends with his fear and confusion physically made manifest in his shivering.

The isolation expressed by both Julian in his confusion and shivering and Miss Alice in her prayer (p. 92) is carried into the second scene and marked by their physical absence; presumably they are off riding together, suggestive in its innuendo derived from the riding motif in Act One, Scene One.

This scene takes place in the library where Butler and the Lawyer, even more riddled with jealousy, discuss the progress of the relationship between Julian and Miss Alice. The Lawyer's impatience and anxiety are noted by the persistence of the repeated interrogatives again. Here the reader has not only to fill in gaps of time and place for the sake of cogency, but also supply those answers sufficient to assuage the Lawyer's anxiety. Butler tries to provide the perspective--"everything on schedule" (p. 98).

Recognizing his own "humanity" in his complaint that Miss Alice is "Too human; not playing it straight," (p. 98) the Lawyer again lets his jealousy threaten his task. Butler reminds him that yes, although he is human, his dedication will somehow provide a balance and "On . . . and on . . . we go" (p. 99). Another momentary shift in control is affected here:

BUTLER (Too offhand, maybe)
I've noticed you've let your feelings loose lately;
too much: possessiveness, jealousy.

LAWYER
I'm sorry.

BUTLER
You used to be so good.

LAWYER
I'm SORRY!

BUTLER
It's all right; just watch it.

LAWYER
Attrition: the toll time takes.

BUTLER
I watch you carefully--you, too--and it's the oddest
thing: You're a cruel person, straight through; it's not
cover; you're hard and cold, saved by dedication; just that.

LAWYER (Soft sarcasm)
Thank you.

BUTLER
You're welcome, but what's happened is you're acting like
the man you wish you were.

LAWYER
Yes?

BUTLER
Feeling things you can't feel. Why don't you mourn for
what you are? There's lament enough there (pp. 99-100).

Butler rather imperceptibly has moved into the role of director, as it were, using some of the pat phrases that have been used before by the Lawyer to Miss Alice. The interchangeability made possible by this script in some way, by extension, implicates the reader. The incompleteness implicit in the Lawyer's humanity and in our own as participating readers is stressed in the use of the word "want." When Butler

restores the reins to the Lawyer, the Lawyer directs him to accompany him to go talk again to the Cardinal:

You COME! To back me up, when I want emphasis.

BUTLER

In the sense that my father used the word? Wants emphasis: lacks emphasis.

LAWYER

No. The touch of the proletarian: your simplicity, guilelessness (p. 101).

That the Lawyer "wants emphasis" is precisely the effect that his jealousy has on his ability to direct the proceedings. Textual attention is again focused on the word itself as a repository of potential multiple meanings whose realizations are dependent on a reader's active participation--"backing them up," so to speak.

Preparations to make another visit to the Cardinal provide the occasion for textual presentation of scripted intention--a play within a play; Butler assumes the role of the Lawyer while the Lawyer becomes the Cardinal, immediately resorting to the "we" of station. Musing as themselves that the Cardinal should not only be told the "whole story" but should, in fact, perform the marriage of Julian to

LAWYER

Alice.

BUTLER

Miss Alice.

LAWYER

Alice!

BUTLER

Well, all right; one through the other. But have him marry them (p. 104).

the Lawyer lapses with gusto into an uncharacteristic yet easy and appropriate vernacular: "I will like that. It will blanch his goddam robes . . . turn 'em white" (p. 103). Expressing second thoughts about revealing the "whole thing" to the Cardinal causes Butler and the Lawyer to consider just how much he can really take:

LAWYER

He is a man of God, however much he simplifies, however much he worships the symbol and not the substance.

BUTLER

Like everyone.

LAWYER

Like most (p. 105).

There is at least a double implication here: first, metaphysically implied is that we, as most of humanity, are culpable as worshipers of the symbol instead of the substance; second, phenomenologically implied in the issue of symbol and substance are the referential functions of words which not only designate and signify--point to and carry meanings--but also "bear intrinsic reference to the consciousness which organizes experience--the "intentional act of consciousness."¹⁸ This technique of embedding a play within a play, while having actors ad-lib the embedded script, draws conscious attention to the intended objects of the literary work and stresses the potential for multiple and simultaneous meanings whose realizations are dependent upon a reader.

The play action continues with the Lawyer talking to Julian played by Butler; in addition, Butler as Butler talks to the Julian that he has "intended" in this scene. They talk to the issue of Julian's previously stated inability to accept the symbol--the use

men put God to, the "Gingerbread God with the raisin eyes" (p. 106)
 --reassuring him that there is indeed an abstraction which cannot be
 understood:

LAWYER

There is Alice, Julian. That can be understood. Only the
 mouse in the model. Just that.

BUTLER (Being Julian)

There must be more.

LAWYER

The mouse. Believe it. Don't personify the abstraction,
 Julian, limit it, demean it. Only the mouse, the toy. And
 that does not exist . . . but is all that can be worshipped
 . . . Cut off from it, Julian, ease yourself, ease off. No
 trouble now; accept it.

BUTLER (Talking to Julian now)

Accept it, Julian; ease off. Worship it. . . . Accept
 it (p. 107).

The motif of diminution here comes more into thematic relief. It is,
 in fact, a strategy by which reality is made more acceptable after all
 the glitter of illusion. If reality is indeed the darkness of the
 isolated attic closet, as Julian has feared, then what the Lawyer and
 Butler propose--a limited, diminished abstraction--represents a palat-
 ability of the real. What Butler and the Lawyer finally agree to tell
 the Cardinal is not, in fact, the "whole thing" but rather that
 Julian's permanent presence with them benefits both the Church and
 Julian's soul; the Lawyer's terse summary rationale: "If it be saved
 . . . what matter how?" (p. 108) is somewhat of a linguistic synthesis
 of the scene: the conditional subjunctive supplies the tone of irreal-
 ity and contingency; the ellipsis again as intended, indeterminate
 representation to be filled in by a reader; and the sparse,

attenuated nominal/adverbial interrogative begs definition in its paucity.

The scene ends with the Lawyer addressing the model:

(quietly, but forcefully; no sarcasm)
 Rest easy; you'll have him . . . Hum; purr; breathe; rest.
 You will have your Julian. Wait for him. He will be
 yours (p. 109).

As might be expected, this passage has been regarded in a variety of ways--the purr of a cat,¹⁹ the mechanized hum of a computer,²⁰ for example. That it is the reality, the abstraction is connoted in the intransitivity of "hum," "purr," "breathe," and "rest;" there is a self-referentiality of substance implied in the repeated forms here that contrasts it with the "other" - referentiality of illusion--the symbol "for" the substance.

That Julian will be Alice's is the action of Scene Three which takes place appropriately in Miss Alice's sitting room with the door to the bedroom invitingly ajar. Julian's transition from religious to secular life--from cloister to coitus--is marked by clothing, textual reference to sequential events, and erotic poetry. Although Julian's clothing is not specified in the subtext, we assume him to be wearing his same clerical robes. We also know that he and Miss Alice have been off horseback riding; when he appears in this scene the sub-text instructs that he is carrying a riding crop. Later in the scene Miss Alice, showing off her own outfit, asks if Julian approves of it:

JULIAN

It is most . . . becoming.

MISS ALICE
We're dressed quite alike (p. 115).

Julian's choice of adjective to describe Miss Alice's outfit into which she has changed at the beginning of the scene and sub-textually described as a "black negligee with great sleeves" (p. 111) also suggests transition, process, or change, with its implied contrast, "being." "Becoming" aptly specifies Julian's status at this point in the play; it is emphasized by the addition to his habit, the riding crop, by Miss Alice's seductive negligee, and by the dialogue itself discussing that change.

That there is another level of significance--a sexual level--implied by the riding crop is also readily apparent. The sexual connotations of the motif established in Act One, Scene One, with the Lawyers insulting remark to the Cardinal--"Back up on your majesty! Hup!" (p. 21)--are sustained here with the first exchanges of the scene:

JULIAN
(After a moment; over his shoulder)
It was fun. Miss Alice; it was fun.

MISS ALICE
(From behind the door)
What, Julian?

JULIAN (Turns)
It was . . . I enjoyed it; very much.

MISS ALICE
(Her head appearing from behind the door)
Enjoyed what?

JULIAN
Riding; it was . . . exhilarating.

MISS ALICE
I would never have thought you rode. You were good.
(Disappears) (p. 110).

That Julian is alone on the stage save for Miss Alice's head appearing only briefly permits the reader a defining focus for Julian's transition; he is there, for our scrutiny, in his naivete, incongruously riding-cropped, and in communication with a voice from the bedroom. The necessity for completion is implied in Miss Alice's interrogatives, the ellipses, and the sub-textual information that only Miss Alice's voice, then head, are apparent. Julian's second comment also tentatively asserts a shift from a passive to an active stance: that Julian can say, "It was . . . I enjoyed it: very much" suggests the potential for his considering physical pleasure as much a virtue as his self-abnegating religious obedience. Even though he hedges with the ellipsis and semi-colon and quickly retreats to the safety of the pronominal referent, his language here has represented his inner tendencies.

The tensional balance derived from the different levels of perception and connotation--Julian really believes himself to be talking about equestrian pursuits, and Miss Alice, although asking the questions, understands well the seductive potential of the topic--contribute to the tone necessary for the consummation of the change.

The relief/release from the double entendre that might be expected with Julian's explanation of his childhood familiarity with horses is not forthcoming; explaining his having known a moneyed family who kept horses, Julian says, "It was one of their sons who was my playmate . . . and we would ride," (pp. 110-111) thereby sustaining the implication of impropriety fostered in the Lawyer's earlier comment to the Cardinal.

Julian's recollection of his early riding triggers a specific remembrance so vivid that time past and present almost merge:

You remember, you know how seriously children talk, the cabalas we have . . . had. My friends and I would take two hunters, and we would go off for hours, and talk ourselves into quite a state--mutually mesmerizing, almost an hysteria. We would forget the time, and bring the animals back quite lathered. (Laughs). We would be scolded--no: cursed out--by one groom or another; usually by a great dark Welshman--a young fellow who always scowled and had--I remember it clearly, for I found it remarkable--the hairiest hands I have ever seen, with hair--and this is what I found most remarkable--tufts of coarse black hair on his thumbs. (Looks at his own thumbs.) Not down, or a few hairs which many of us have, but tufts. This Welchman (p. 111).

Not only do we sense the "presence" of Julian's past habits for Julian but also do we perceive that Julian's proclivity for near hysterical mesmerization has a practiced, personal history. Clearly sensual, the recollection affords an opportunity for Miss Alice to proceed with the seduction by calling Julian's attention to the similarity in sensual evocation between his own description and the D.H. Lawrence poem, "Love On the Farm," which she proceeds to recite. Observing Julian's obvious embarrassment, Miss Alice describes the effect that the poem had on her classmates and herself at school as "early eroticism: mental sex play" (p. 112). The remark is clearly calculated to encourage Julian to make the same admission about this recollection of his early horseback riding:

MISS ALICE

I've embarrassed you!

JULIAN

No! No!

MISS ALICE

Poor Julian; I have. And you were telling me about horseback riding.

JULIAN

No, I was telling you about the groom, as far as that goes.
 And I suppose . . . yes, I suppose . . . those thumbs were
 . . . erotic for me--at that time; if you think about it;
 mental sex play. Unconscious.

MISS ALICE

(Sweetly to divert him)

It was fun riding. Today (pp. 112-113) (emphasis Albee's)

Success! Although it is necessary for Julian to posit his admission outside the realm of responsible time, so to speak--"unconscious" time--he nonetheless allows for the connotation of "riding" to extend to include the sexual. That such an admission can now be forthcoming from Julian marks the extent to which the transition is underway. Miss Alice's final statement synthesizes the relationship of time past and time present as a further indication of transition; that Julian responds to Miss Alice's emphasized statement focuses on conscious rather than unconscious time.

Sensing Julian's willingness to participate, however peripherally, in this vaguely ribald repartee, Miss Alice pursues the conversation succeeding in having Julian respond encouragingly. Noticing the riding crop, she suggestively observes, "You're carrying the crop. Are you still in the saddle?" (p. 113). This time there is no embarrassment, no reticence, no affected naivete on Julian's part, but rather an uncharacteristic yet nervously eager response:

JULIAN

(Laughing; shyly brandishing the crop)

Are you one of Mr. Lawrence's ladies? Do you like the smell of saddle soap, and shall I take my crop to you? (p. 114).

Julian's venture into erotic chatter is met by another of Miss Alice's surprises; instead of tease and flirtation, Miss Alice expresses regret that:

Nobody does things naturally anymore--so few people have the grace. A man takes a whip to you--a loving whip, you understand--and you know, deep and sadly, that it's imitation--literary, seen. (Intentionally too much.) No one has the natural graces anymore.

JULIAN

(Putting the crop down; quietly)

I have . . . not whipped . . .

MISS ALICE

But surely you have.

JULIAN (an apology)

I do not recall.

MISS ALICE (expansive)

Oh, my Julian! How many layers! Yes?

JULIAN

We . . . simplify our life . . . as we grow older.

MISS ALICE (Teasing him)

But from understanding and acceptance; not from . . . emptying ourselves (p. 114).

Miss Alice's shift from the sexual to the philosophical, artfully re-focusing on symbol and substance--here, it is "imitation" and "natural"--leaves Julian disappointed and apologetic. Her Gyntian reference to layers, while connoting both Julian's transition from religious to secular life signified by his alteration of Church attire and the yielding of doubt--the abdication required by faith, also implies a core of emptiness in contradistinction to Julian's own notion of simplification; it is precisely Julian's difficulty with understanding and acceptance that keeps him "walking on the edge of an abyss," balancing, yet vulnerable to being "pushed . . . over, back to the asylums" (p. 106), as Butler describes his precarious perch. Julian himself, you will recall, equates his faith and his sanity (p. 45).

Because Julian senses the increasing difficulty of "balancing" in the castle, he voices his concern to Miss Alice: "I have too much . . . of comfort, of surroundings, of ease, of kindness . . . of happiness. I am filled to bursting" (p. 116). Reminding him that his presence there is not for self-indulgence but for service to the Church, Miss Alice admonishes him for losing sight of his function. An angry Julian responds:

What's being done to me. Am I . . . am I being temp--tested in some fashion?

Tempted?

MISS ALICE (Jumping on it)

Tested in some fashion?

JULIAN

Tempted?

MISS ALICE

JULIAN

BOTH . . . (ellipsis mine) WHY AM I BEING TESTED! . . . And why am I being tempted? By luxury, by ease, by . . . content . . . by things I do not care to discuss (p. 117).

Here again is attention focused on the verb "do." Although it is the main verb in the first sentence, its passive rather than active construction augments Julian's own passivity and sense of victimization. That he expresses his anger in repeated passive constructions adds another note of irony; the manner adverbials compound to suggest the extent to which he feels himself a victim, isolated. The presentation of the word "content" stresses isolation--it is itself separated from the sentence by ellipses on either side; that it has two nominal forms --content and content, either and both of which have contextual applicability--contributes yet another level of significance. It is

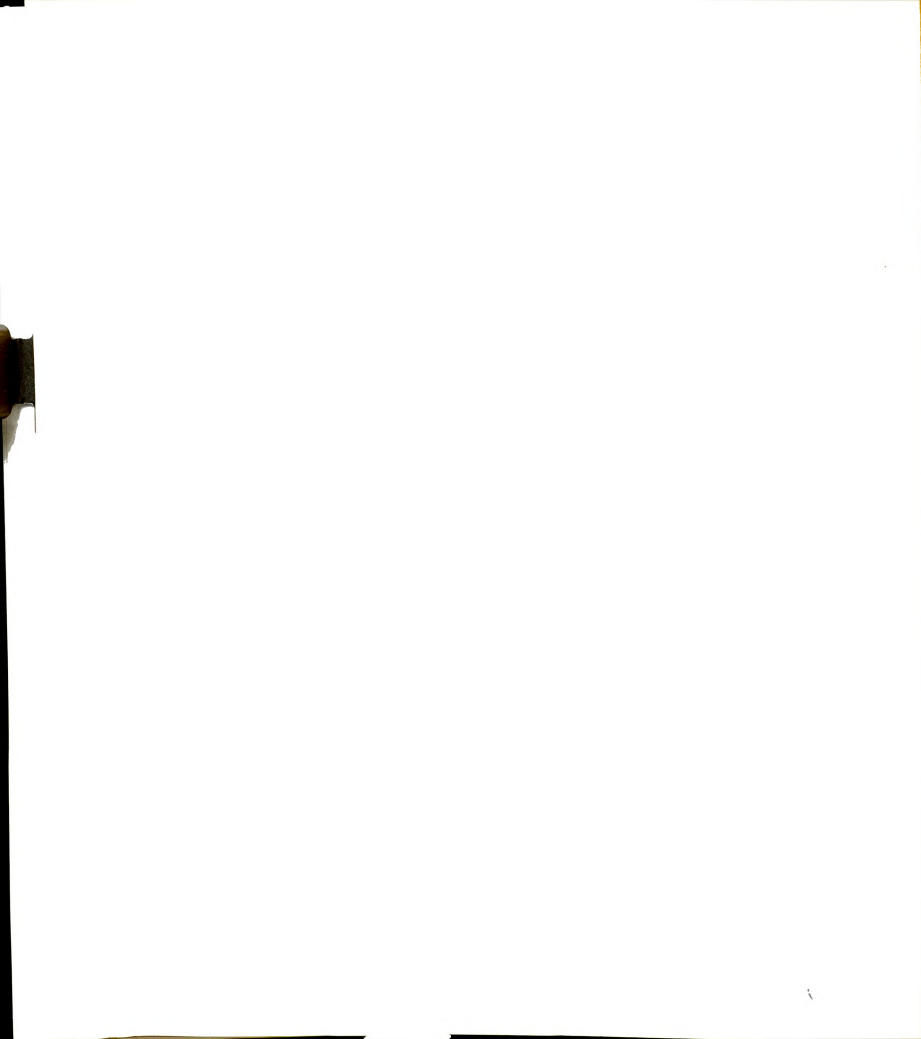


Julian's uneasiness with his content that has triggered Miss Alice's response of content (substance). His final adverbial of manner expects a more active reader's attention to the sentence.

Refusing to encourage Julian's victim fantasies, Miss Alice advises him to be answerable to his own temptations. Such responsibility is, however, more than Julian can summon for it requires initiative, not just service. In this regard it is interesting to note how effectively the play employs the word "do" with different syntactic and semantic functions. More often used as an auxiliary (for questions often requiring "information" for completion, for negatives, for abridgements, and for emphasis) than a main verb, the word enjoys high frequency usage in the language; it is an active word, a service word, so to speak. Julian's explanation to Miss Alice of his early and long practiced habit accounting for his discomfort with being tempted/tested is a passage which consciously addresses itself to the relationship between language with its many levels of reference,²¹ and the delineation of character and development of plot:

JULIAN

I have longed . . . to be of great service. When I was young--and very prideful--I was filled with a self-importance that was . . . well disguised. Serve. That was the active word: I would serve! (Clenches his fist) I would serve and damn anyone or anything that stood in my way. I would shout my humility from the roof and break whatever rules impeded my headlong rush toward obedience. I suspect that had I joined the Trappist order, where silence is the law, I would have chattered about it endlessly. I was impatient with God's agents, and with God, too. I see it now. A . . . novice porter, ripping suitcases from patron's hands, cursing those who preferred to carry some small parcel for their own. And I was blind to my pride, and intolerant of any who did not see me as the humblest of men.



MISS ALICE (a little malice)
You phrase it so; I suspect you've said it before.

JULIAN
Doubtless I have. Articulate men often carry set paragraphs (pp. 118-119).

This recitation of past habit is indeed presented with the precision and detachment of a stock phrase. That the speech addresses itself to a misguided notion of the "active word, serve" connotes the play's ironic treatment of Julian's idea of action proper to the time: he equates passivity with obedience and extols it as a virtue. He chooses not to do, contrary to the "do/tick" dictum established at the outset and is quite literally consumed by time in the last scene.

Both the higher register syntax of the hypothetical statement, ". . . had I joined . . ." and its semantic contrast--endless chatter in spite of a vow of silence--combine to describe or present a linguistic metaphor for Julian's metaphysically persuaded reticence and his inverted notion of service. His response to Miss Alice's pat-phrase barb also suggests an incongruity between his perceptions of himself and those provided by the text: Julian is anything but articulate; his inability to use language effectively is symptomatic of his passivity. His three lengthy monologues--the description of his asylum encounter with the mad virgin, his childhood recollections of the aching joys and dizzying raptures of imagined martyrdom, and his dying memory of a frightening childhood accident--are static; the first two are his own practiced rehearsals of mental eroticisms, and the last an early predilection to his death-seeking hysteria. Just as language in its linguistic array and in its conscious attention to

the readerly implications of the intentional act has been presented by and about the other characters to permit their definition, so, too, do Julian's words in the sterility and ineffectuality of their stock responses signify his detachment, his hollowness. Unlike the Lawyer who uses words to accomplish, Julian recites; unlike Butler who does serve and who uses language to expressively communicate, Julian chatters about service; and unlike Miss Alice who, although never one with words, uncannily times her few remarks and supplements them with effective action, Julian lacks both articulation and action. To the extent that Julian talks and accomplishes nothing, uses language as symbol to chatter about substance, can we as readers develop a set of expectancies of the relationship of language to plot.

Even Julian is not completely innocent of his illusionistic use of language. His continued insistence upon wishing to serve, "to move great events," (p. 120) prompts this revealing exchange:

MISS ALICE
(Pauses, then laughs)

You're lying!

JULIAN

I?

(Then they both laugh, like conspiratorial children)(p. 120)

And, finally, Miss Alice comments on the whole business of Julian's stated desires and his failure to attempt their accomplishment is a blend of images and motifs employed to suggest his inner tendencies:

. . . my little lay brother and expert on wines; my little horseback rider and crop switcher . . . my little whipper, and RAPIST? (p. 120)

The vulnerable, the frail, and the incomplete is suggested in the repeated diminutive; the sexual motif becomes increasingly explicit

with each of her phrases culminating not in passion but in the violence of "RAPIST," hedged somewhat with the question mark; the element of time is represented by "wine" which is, ironically, "popping, dribbling away" (p. 120) in the cellar of the castle; and the idea of imitation (not natural) is sustained with her use of the word "whipper," recalling her lament that no one has natural graces anymore.

Her teasing and overt invitation to physicality come quickly to a halt when Julian suggests she should just let him do his service and not play games:

MISS ALICE

. . . (ellipsis mine) Games? Oh no, my little Julian, there are no games played here; this is for keeps, and in dead earnest. There are cruelties, for the insulation breeds a strange kind of voyeurism; and there is impatience, too, over the need to accomplish what should not be explained; and at the end of it, a madness of sorts . . . but a triumph.

JULIAN (Hands apart)

Use me, then . . . for the triumph.

MISS ALICE

(Moving on him again)

You are being used, by little Julian . . . I am being used . . . my little Julian. You want to be . . . employed, do you not? Sacrificed, even?

JULIAN

I have . . . there are no secrets from you, Miss Alice . . . I have . . . dreamed of scarifice (p. 123).

Here the transition from victim to willing participant is complete. Julian's dream of sacrifice, because it is little more than prideful illusion, will only serve him ill. His participation consists of his rapturous eagerness for martyrdom, "to go bloodstained and worthy . . . upward" (p. 124); that this desire is illusionistic is

evident in his quite sensual description of his childhood fantasies of martyrdom. Miss Alice seizes the sensuality of the experience to affect the climax of the seduction. The scene is fascinating in its juxtaposition of the sensuality of espoused religious fervor and overt eroticism. As Julian, in his self-trance, recites the ecstasies of ". . . com(ing) . . . bloodstained and worthy," Miss Alice entreats him: "Marry me;" and, shifting from the symbol to the substance, "Come to Alice, Julian, in your sacrifice . . . give yourself to her, Julian, . . . Alice says she wants you, come to Alice, Alice tells me so, she wants you, come to Alice . . . come . . . come . . . come" (pp. 125-126). Miss Alice opens her great gown with its winged sleeves revealing her body to Julian who, with a "dying cry," moves toward her to be enfolded:

JULIAN (Muffled)
Oh my God in heaven . . .

MISS ALICE
(Her head going back calling out)
Alice! . . . Alice! . . .

JULIAN
(Slowly kneeling within the great wings)
. . . in . . . my . . . sacrifice . . .

MISS ALICE (Still calling out)
He will be yours! He will be yours! AAALLIIICCCEEE! (p. 127).

Act Two ends, then, with the seduction completed. The language here has been incantatory, recollective, erotic, and supplicant, each layer blending and lending a richer texture of simultaneity of meaning potential--an appropriate context for Julian's deliverance to Alice through Miss Alice.

The beginning of Act Three strikes a sharp contrast to the emotional level of tumult and passion of the last scene. It is set in the library and begins with no one on stage. Butler enters after a few moments carrying heavy grey sheets; he has placed them on a table and is counting them when Julian enters dressed now in a suit. Marking the transition completed in the previous act, Julian's change in garb also signals his further detachment from all things familiar. From his long, flowing, ecclesiast robes to "city clothes . . . banker's clothers" (p. 144), as the Lawyer phrases it, sardonically referring to the closing of the deal, Julian's change of garb suggests in its removal of familiar layers a kind of psychic nudity leaving him vulnerable to the chill of reality. His insistence that "These are proper clothes" (p. 145) is acutely naive and underscored with the Lawyer's response: "As you will discover, poor priestlet, poor former priestlet. Dressed differently for the sacrifice, eh" (p. 145), the repeated diminutive stressing both innocence and play-acting, and the use of the word "former" implying in its contextual ambiguity both the transformation from lay brother to husband and the transcendence to martyrdom. "Proper clothes?"--for sacrifice, yes; and to the extent that Julian shivers in his banker's clothes can we measure the degree of the sacrifice, just as his initial and repeated shivers signaled the ebbing of human warmth.

The alienation and isolation expressed by the suit is also mirrored in his speech. The attendant celebration and merriment one would expect following a marriage is nowhere to be found; in contrast, the heavy grey sheets with which Butler continues to busy himself

projects a funereal tone. That their counting is in progress maintains an impending atmosphere of moribund anticipation.

Julian is clearly discombobulated; his presence is self-conscious and his speech erratic, hesitant, and becomes more agitated when Butler is unable to provide him with answers:

Where . . . I . . . I feel quite lost. Well, uh . . . I will confess I haven't participated in . . . been married before, but . . . I can't imagine it's usual for everyone to disappear . . . There I was . . . one moment married, flooded with white, and . . . then . . . the next alone. Quite alone, in the . . . echoes . . . for everyone to . . . vanish, as if I'd turned my back for a moment, or an hour elapsed, or a . . . dimension had . . . (pp. 131-132).

This echoing dimension in which Julian now resides is, in fact, not the gladiatorial arena of his childhood fantasies, but rather the actual arena of his chosen martyrdom--a fact of which he becomes increasingly and uneasily aware. Finally noticing that Butler is engaged in some activity, Julian asks what he is doing:

BUTLER

What?

Julian

What are those?

BUTLER

These? (Looks at them) Un . . . sheets, or covers, more accurately.

JULIAN

(Still quite nervous and staying away)

What are they for?

BUTLER

To . . . cover.

JULIAN (Ibid.)

Cover what!

BUTLER

Oh . . . nothing; no matter. Housework, that's all. One of my labors (p. 134).



Apologizing for his upset state, Julian attributes it to his not having been married before. But when Miss Alice hurries into and, seeing Julian, out of the room the strangeness is too much to abide; "I find everything puzzling today. Is something being kept from me?" (pp. 137-138). The combination of the passive syntax of the last sentence and Julian's sentence position as the object of the preposition effect an even more removed passivity. Julian is, as it were, even obscured from the very language he speaks. The multiple unknowns for Julian in this scene exist at several levels: he is married yet states that the circumstances surrounding the marriage are "confusing;" his banker's clothes are conspicuous, yet he insists they are "proper;" he claims to be dedicated to the reality of things rather than to their appearance, yet finds that reality "puzzling." There is nothing that he finds comforting or even orienting.

Butler likens his situation to that of a child locked in the attic closet in the dark; the terror is so chilling that "who" comes to open the door doesn't matter. Presumably Butler is about to provide some sort of explanation, but first he leaves to get the "occasional" champagne; it is the Cardinal who enters to "open the closet door," so to speak. The irony of his entrance is noted in Butler's parting remark, "Ah! Here comes the Church" (p. 139). Rather than edification, what the Cardinal brings is more perplexity for Julian; but because Julian has always found solace, safety, and sanity in faith, he is almost relieved to have God's representative provide an opportunity for yet another illusory handle. Perfunctorily assuring



Julian that the matter of his service has been "resolved," (emphasis Albee's) the Cardinal is deliberately abstruse in his choice of word. It is sufficient for Julian, however; he latches onto it and adorns it with illusionistic chatter:

But than I judge it is God's doing, this . . . wrenching of my life from one light to another . . . though not losing God's light, joining it with . . . my new. (He is like a bubbling little boy) I can't tell you, the . . . radiance, humming, and the witchcraft, I think it must be, the ecstasy of this light, as God's exactly; the transport the same, the lifting, the . . . sense of service, and the EXPANSION . . . the blessed wonder of service with a renewing, not an ending joy--that joy I thought possible only through martyrdom, now, now the sunlight is no longer the hope for glare and choking in the dust and plummeting, but with cool and green and yellow dappled . . . perfumes . . . (pp. 140-141).

The Cardinal tries three times, finally shouting, to interrupt this self-mesmerizing recitation. In the company of something familiar--the Cardinal, his confessor, the Church--can Julian, though still somewhat puzzled, create his own anchor with the texture and shading of language as illusion. Performing a sort of last rites for Julian, the Cardinal admonishes him to "accept what . . . will happen, may happen, and . . . accept what may come as God's will . . . that you may be worthy of sacrifice, unto death itself . . . is asked of you; that you may accept what you do not understand" (p. 144). The emphasized modality of the Cardinal's admonition and the nominal "will" extension of the modal connote the multiplicity of meanings in the events of the plot as well as in the language used to describe the characters and develop the plot. The rite concludes with Julian's hesitant, uncertain interrogative, ". . . A . . . Amen?" (p. 144)

verified by the Cardinal's nodded declarative, "Amen." That two sacraments, Marriage and Extreme Unction, are performed by the same person for the same person on the same day without benefit of the anticipated grace constitutes, in effect, rites of exclusion rather than inclusion into a larger community for Julian; that he recedes to the periphery becomes increasingly apparent.

As Julian leaves to look for his wife, the Lawyer returns to hand over the money to the Cardinal. Having done so, completing their end of the transaction, he removes a pistol from a drawer to verify its readiness. Startled by the pistol and appalled by what he senses to be its function, the Cardinal expresses the hope that, contrary to the possibility allowed by the Lawyer, shooting Julian may not be necessary. But for the Lawyer, Julian's death would be a practical necessity to assure a larger continuity:

If the great machine threatens . . . to come to a halt . . .
the great axis on which all turns . . . if it needs oil
. . . well, we lubricate it do we not? And if blood is the
only oil handy . . . what is a little blood? (p. 148).

The repeated conditionals and the abundant ellipses here, while firmly presenting an atmosphere of contingency, also convey a sense of the inevitable made palatable in the name of the greater good. The Cardinal's anxiety about Julian is lessened when he considers that Julian's death, if it be necessary, may make him a martyr. The Lawyer's response states the essence of the Grand Illusion:

Why not? Give me any person . . . a martyr, if you wish . . .
a saint. . . . He'll take what he gets for . . . what he
wishes it to be. AH, it is what I have always wanted, he'll
say, looking terror and betrayal straight in the eye. Why
not: face the inevitable and call it what you have always
wanted. How to come out on top, going under (p. 148).

At which point Julian returns, still not having found Miss Alice. When the Lawyer notices and comments that he is alone, Julian responds: "I seem not to be with anyone" (p. 148). Butler returns with Miss Alice completing the cast of characters. A sub-textual direction of stage blocking and its effect on the reader makes clear the relationship between Julian's isolation and his embrace of the Grand Illusion:

(Something of a silence falls. The other characters are away from Julian: unless otherwise specified they will keep a distance surrounding him, but more than at arm's length. They will observe him, rather clinically, and while this shift of attitude must be subtle, it must also be evident. Julian will grow to knowledge of it, will aid us though we will be aware of it before he is) (p. 151).

The popping champagne cork, as has the cracking sound made by Butler's opening one of the sheets earlier in the scene, prefigures the gunshot which shortly follows; it is also a time marker in that its release permits the flow of wine matured by time. As the time (wine) was literally and haphazardly running out in Act Two, so also is it now deliberately running out in Act Three. The subsequent gunshot wound and loss of blood make explicit the significance of the motifs of time, wine, and blood. The ritual of opening, pouring, and serving the champagne is in no way festive for Julian as a wedding celebration ought to be; and when he asks what the ceremony is, the Lawyer responds, "When the lights go on all over the world . . . the true world. The ceremony of Alice" (p. 125). The Lawyer's explanation is, in effect, the pronouncement of last rites in the secular realm as the Cardinal has just done in the religious realm. Just as Julian "accepted" the Cardinal's pronouncements in spite of his bewilderment, so also does he try to participate in what he construes as the spirit



of the Lawyer's declaration to the extent that he also proposes a toast:

To the wonders . . . which may befall a man . . . least where he is looking, least that he would have thought . . .
(ellipsis mine) To all that which we really want, until our guile and pride . . . betray us (p. 157).

To this ironic participation the Lawyer ventures "Amen?" to which Julian responds with finality, "Amen." The identical language is employed here, this time with Julian taking the Cardinal's lines but with still no greater edification of circumstance: the recitation of benediction, as it were, has also failed to provide the promised grace, for Julian is, in fact, about to get what he has claimed he really wants--a union with the abstraction--but, of course, he in no way realizes it.

It is interesting to note that this entire "Ceremony of Alice" is framed by two comments that seem not to pertain to the matter at hand in the text, but rather to something beyond the text, to matters directly engaging a reader. The first is Butler's as he busies himself with the champagne and is spoken to no one in particular:

(His back to them)
There's never as much in a champagne bottle as I expect there to be; I never learn. Or perhaps the glasses are larger than they seem (p. 152).

And the second is the Cardinal's, spoken as a delaying tactic when Julian, a few lines after the "Amens," suddenly realizes that the others are about to leave:

Well. This champagne glass seems smaller than one would have guessed; it has emptied itself . . . on one toast (p. 157).

Although these statements are several pages apart, the latter, textually compelling with its self-conscious use of the reflexive, seems an appropriate response to the former, and they both concern the issue of content (pronounced with first syllable stress, though there is ample semantic evidence to make a case here for second syllable stress as well). The "content" between the two statements has consisted of the language of the Ceremony of Alice which has really been a kind of chatter, illusion, to conceal the reality of Julian's imminent death. This use of language as diversion is immediately made explicit by the Lawyer's recollection of how as children fumbling with each other's "most private parts" they would "talk of other things . . . of (their) schoolwork, or where (they) would travel in the summer . . . (Laughs, points to the Cardinal) Like you! Chattering there on the model! Your mind on us and what is happening. Oh, the subterfuges" (p. 158). That Julian is as confused as he was at the beginning of the act--"What is . . . going on . . . here?" (p. 159) emphasizes the interim use of language as diversion from plot but also as self-referential ponderance.

Trying to explain the present situation to Julian, Miss Alice, not surprisingly, finds it difficult to clarify the idea of illusion and reality represented by herself and Alice:

Julian, I have tried to be . . . her. No; I have tried to be . . . what I thought she might, what might make you happy, what you might use as a . . . what?

BUTLER

Play God; go on.



MISS ALICE

We must . . . represent, draw pictures, reduce or enlarge to
 . . . to what we can understand (p. 161).

Butler's use of the expression, "Play God," further augments the very duality that Miss Alice is trying to explain; if we regard the word "play" as an adjective then it describes an illusionary, toy God; if we consider it to be a verb, then the phrase itself connotes Miss Alice's function in relation to Alice--she is Alice's surrogate, actress, who moves about presumably from one victim to another with her wigs and changes of costume.

Not at all convinced by their urging him to stay with the model and accept his "accomplishment: (his) marriage, (his) wife, (his) . . . special priesthood," (p. 160). Julian remains adamant: "There is nothing there! We are here. There is no one there!" (p. 163). At the Lawyer's insistence the Cardinal, too, participates in a way that attempts to exploit Julian's acceptance of faith: "Uh . . . yes, Julian, an . . . act of faith, indeed. It is . . . believed," (p. 165) his use of the passive here adding an ironic note. That the Lawyer is aware of the irony is suggested by the following comment:

LAWYER (Deadly serious but with a smile)

Yes, it is . . . believed. It is what we believe, therefore what we know. Is that not right? Faith is knowledge (p. 165).

The recasting in the active voice in the second sentence strikes the contrast between the conspirators and Julian; the passive not only suggests a vulnerability but also isolates in both instances by the visual array of the ellipsis separating the auxilliary and past participle. Because of Julian's equation of faith with sanity, the

isolated verb, "believed," suggests the precariousness with which he is balanced:

I . . . cannot be so mistaken, to have . . . I cannot have so misunderstood my life; I cannot have . . . was I sane then?
 Those years? My time in the asylum? WAS THAT WHEN I WAS
 RATIONAL? THEN? (pp. 168-169).

Julian's interrogatives are finally answered by a bullet to the stomach, the sub-text reading "(Julian does not cry out, but clutches his belly)" (p. 170). That the expected cry does not come focuses greater attention on his "belly." We can recall his mild uneasiness in Scene Three, Act Two that the "many bellies" of gluttony, luxury, ease, and content filled him to bursting. That Julian may indeed have lost sight of his function, as Miss Alice has charged, and over-indulged himself in his passivity (his inability to "improvise") (p. 169) perhaps accounts for his having been unnecessarily (p. 171) shot.²² Without the medical attention that the Lawyer refused to permit, Julian will bleed to death, a scene prefigured by the decaying and declining wine cellar with its great years "popping, dribbling away." That his death will have been needless is apparent in the tone of Butler's lament, "Oh, poor, Julian . . ." (p. 170), and iterated by Miss Alice, "Poor, Julian! (Goes to him; they create something of a Pieta) Rest back, lean on me" (p. 173).

Julian's unnecessary death is contrasted with the continuity of life signalled by the Cardinal's "repetition" in the religious world:

LAWYER

(Withdrawing his offer of the briefcase)

Perhaps your new secretary can pick it up. You will go on, won't you--red gown and amethyst, until the pelvic

cancer comes, or the coronary blacks it out, all of it?
The good with it, and the evil? (p. 174).

and the others' in the secular world:

MISS ALICE

(Looking up; sad irony)

Am I ready to go on with it, do you mean? To move to the city now before the train trip south? The private car? The house on the ocean, the . . . same mysteries, the evasions, the perfect plotting? The removed residence, the Rolls twice weekly into the shopping strip . . . all of it? . . . (ellipsis mine) The years of it . . . to go on? For how long?

LAWYER

Until we are replaced . . . (ellipsis mine) Or until everything is desert (Shrugs) . . . on the chance that it runs out before we do (pp. 177-178).

The juxtaposition and counterpoint, employed with effect throughout the play, occurs again in this final act, operating on several levels. While Miss Alice attends to poor Julian, trying to provide him with warmth and company but still losing him to shivering, loneliness, and the awesome dark of the "attic room," the Lawyer, reminded of school-days by the departing Cardinal, tells Butler about a sonnet described by his teachers as having the "grace of a walking crows."²³ Because the Lawyer recalls, he had neither seen nor could imagine how crows walked, he approached the teacher and was told that "crows don't walk much . . . if they can help it . . . if they can fly." Butler responds "(snapping open a cover) I could have told you that; surprised you didn't know it. Crows walk around a lot only when they're sick" (p. 176).

Minimum levels of maturity are an issue in both centers of action: Miss Alice tells Julian how like a "little boy" (p. 175)

he is in his desire to be held and in his fear of the dark; the story that the Lawyer relates took place when he was a schoolboy and "green in those years" (p. 175).

Consideration of the "nature" of a thing and that which it requires to maintain that nature is another issue in both realms: it is the "nature" of a crow to fly; that one would walk around signals sickness, a state of imbalance in its nature; by extrapolation we may view Julian's present condition as the consequence for actions not proper to his nature--his passivity. The play makes it abundantly clear that to maintain life it is necessary to act, to do, to function in accordance with one's nature in time.

The crow is employed as part of the bird motif in the play suggesting diminutiveness and vulnerability. In this scene the images merge; poor little Julian is at his most diminished and vulnerable; the Lawyer's youthful sonnet was vulnerable to the charges of his teacher. The particular line of the sonnet so vulnerable to attack was "Santayananian finesse" (p. 176). Miss Alice phrases well the fear of viewing one's life as wasted: "I dreaded once, when I was in my teens, that I would grow old, look back over the precipice, and discover that I had not lived my life" (p. 180).

Different levels of time are presented here as well. The Lawyer, during the portrayed time of the play, relates a story of time past to which Butler then responds as though the latter were occurring during the former, again focusing on the proper response to a given time. This "breach," so to speak, of time sequence brings



into relief Ingarden's delineation of the time sequence of the represented objectivities and that of the parts of the work. Their convolution in this exchange highlights the thematic import of time. It is interesting in this regard to recall that Julian's most animated and vivid use of language has been the recollections and fantasies of his past life which neither illuminate nor advance his present condition.

The intentional act is also a conscious aspect of this scene: the playwright has written about a young author's writing and the criticism of that writing. The sub-text draws further attention to the "texts" by its description of the Lawyer during this segment as "(fully aware of the counterpoint by now, aiding it)" (p. 175). The effect of this sort of self-referentiality is to invite specific attention to the levels of language in the play.

On a literal level, then, Miss Alice is trying here to provide comfort to Julian while the Lawyer relates a "story" to pass the time, so to speak. On an emotional level, the "story" functions to assuage the fears and gloom of the "attic" darkness with a bit of levity. On a connotative level the awkward sonnet strikes the keynote for immaturity and underdeveloped affection--Julian's state--and on a symbolic level the contrapuntal dialogues with their similar images focus on language as mimesis requiring the active participation of a reader.

Preparing to leave the castle, the Lawyer describes an environment of sterility, cold, and isolation: "Bed stripped, mothballs lying on it like hailstones; no sound, movement, nothing" (p. 183);

this is, in effect, Julian's tomb suggested further by the cadaver-like phrenological head on which the Lawyer places Miss Alice's wig designating it as a friend (p. 183) a companion for Julian.

Angrily dismissing Miss Alice, presumably recognizing her culpability and ultimate betrayal, and cursing the Lawyer as "Instrument!" (p. 185), Julian props himself against the model in an uneasy preparation for his death, whereupon Butler cushions his head and kisses him--the sub-text designates "(not a quick kiss)" (p. 185)--good-bye; it is the ultimate and ritualistic betrayal. The conspirators all exist leaving Julian alone, isolated, denied all possibilities of warmth.

Having called for and been denied help from the Lawyer, the Cardinal, Miss Alice, and Butler, Julian now calls out to God.

Oh . . . GOD! "I come to thee, in agony." (cry to the void)
 HELP . . . ME! (Pause) No help . . . (ellipsis mine) But
 to live again, be born once more, sure in the sight of . . .
 (Shouts again) THERE IS NO ONE! (Turns his head toward the
 closed doors, sadly) (pp. 186-187).

That there continues to be no response, no answer forthcoming augments his fear of death; he repeats that he had never dreamed of it, never imagined what it would be like:

I have--oh, yes--dwelt (Laughs at the word) . . . dwelt . . .
 on the fact of it, the . . . principle, but I have not
 imagined dying. Death . . . yes. Not being, but not the
 act of . . . dying? (p. 187).

Here the focus rests on language again both by Julian's use of so static a word as "dwelt" and by the sub-text's attention to the droll use of such a word. The issue of the active versus the passive is also again posited in the structure of the language--death vs. dying;

in large measure, Julian's fear is due to his unfamiliarity with "the active"--the "fact" of it, yes, for it requires mere faith; but the lived-through experience of it requires a participation precluded by passivity.

That Albee ends the play with such a lengthy and internalized soliloquy provides the occasion for the reader to live through the experience of dying, the experience of confronting the ultimate reality, with language as guide enhancing the content and enriching the texture of meaning potential. Calling ultimately, then, for Alice, "Hast thou? Alice? Hast thou forsaken me . . . with . . . all the others?" (p. 187). Julian observes a light in the chapel of the model go out. The sub-text instructs:

(We begin to hear it now, faintly at first, slowly growing, so faintly at first it is subliminal: the heartbeat . . . thump thump . . . thump thump . . . and the breathing . . . the intake taking one thump-thump, the exhaling the next. Julian neither senses nor hears it yet, however) (p. 188).

Fixing on the wigged phrenological head and sensing the nagging irony, Juling asks:

Thou art my bride? Thou? For thee have I done my life?
Grown to love, entered in, bent . . . accepted? For thee?
Is that the . . . awful humor? Art thou the true arms, when
the warm flesh I touched . . . rested against, was . . .
nothing? And she . . . was not real? Is thy stare the true
look? Unblinking, outward, through the same horizon? And
her eyes . . . warm, accepting, were they . . . not real?
Art thou my bride? (To the ceiling again) Ah God! Is that
the humor? The ABSTRACT? . . . REAL? The REST? . . .
FALSE? (To himself with terrible irony) It is what I
have wanted, have insisted on. Have nagged . . . for (Looking
about the room; raging) IS THIS MY PRIESTHOOD, THEN? THIS
WORLD? THEN COME AND SHOW THYSELF! BRIDE? GOD? (p. 118).

Demanding that Alice show herself, a startled Julian observes yet another light, the bedroom light, fade and move across the upper

story and down the stairs as the sound begins to grow louder. We recall here Ingarden's analogy of a beam of light illuminating a part of an area, the remainder of which, however, is present in its indeterminacy. Here at the end of Tiny Alice that which is indeterminate visibly increases until everything disappears in indeterminate "blackness." The sub-text directs that "(a great shadow, or darkening)"(p. 189) fill the stage. When the sounds are finally "deafening" Julian, "(smiling faintly, his arms resembling a crucifixion, almost--whispers loudly)" his ultimate acceptance: "I accept thee, Alice, for thou art come to me. God, Alice . . . I accept thy will" (p. 190). Thus Julian dies and the play ends with this sub-text:

(Sounds continue thusly: thrice after the death . . .
thump thump thump thump thump thump. Absolute silence
for two beats. The lights on Julian fade slowly to black.
Only when all is black, does the curtain slowly fall) (p. 190).

The "ticks" of the intentional gibbersih of the opening scene have become the life sound of the heartbeat in this closing scene; Julian himself has "intentioned" the sound, as it were, in his embrace of the ultimate illusion. Having received no satisfying response from Alice, and with time literally running out, Julian has occasioned his own response by personifying rather than demeaning the abstraction; that the sub-text specifies the cessation of the sounds in Julian's fossilized language ("dwelt," "thrice") suggest they have been of his creation.

That Julian has chosen not to do, to be faithfully and obediently passive, has occasioned his premature death. The hum of life continues in the repetition of the "do's" in the lives of the other



characters of the play. The engagement that this play expects, indeed exacts of a reader is perhaps alluded to in Albee's prefatory Note that "Tiny Alice is less opaque in reading than it would be in any single viewing," a note considered by at least one critic to be an unconscionable breach of the ethics of playwriting (p. 134).

To approach Tiny Alice on its own terms--its language--with the expectation of construing meaning is not only to celebrate its intrinsic value independent of ulterior considerations²⁴ but also to accept the readerly responsibility occasioned by a text which actively engages a reader in its thematic linguistic self-referentiality.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER IV

¹Richard Amacher, Edward Albee (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969), pp. 21-22.

²John W. Markson, "Tiny Alice: Edward Albee's Negative Oedipal Enigma," Annals of Iowa 23 (1966): 5.

³Ibid.

⁴As John Stark has said in "Camping Out: Tiny Alice and Susan Sontag," (1972), p. 166, any consideration of Tiny Alice must begin with the one point of agreement among the critics: that is is obscure. The critical postulations for that obscurity are varied indeed. Gordon Rogoff, "The Trouble with Alice," Reporter 32 (January 28, 1965): 53-54, wonders whether we have been given the proper clues or if the author is cheating a little; because as questions proliferate, answers recede further into the background. Rogoff, modifying the charge of obscurity, rather, decided that Tiny Alice is not quite there. Mary Elizabeth Campbell, "The Statement of Edward Albee's Tiny Alice," Papers on Language and Literature 4 (Winter 1968): 87, regards the play as allegory in the tradition of medieval morality plays. That the characters have such a multiplicity of facets makes either viewing or studying it for her impossible to conceive a structure to include all the "luxuriant multiplicity." Harold Clurman, Theatre, "Nation 209 (October 27, 1969): 451, finds the play insufferably tiresome and shallow both in theatrical devices and in text; he calls it Albee's most pretentious and weakest play, and is indignant that the play's actual proceedings fail to jibe with anyone's interpretation. Sharing Clurman's views, Jack Kroll in ACT in New York, "Newsweek 74 (October 13, 1969): 125, charges that the play tries to buy its way into meaning with very inflated metaphysical and rhetorical coin. Henry Hewes, "Theater Paprika, Saturday Review 52 (October 18, 1969): 20, prefers to ride with the emotional steam of the characters rather than try to clarify complexity; he allows that such clarification may be fine for the classroom but on the stage it reduces the richness of a play's texture. A psychiatrist, Edmond Lipton, M.D., "The Tiny Alice Enigma," 48 (February 20, 1965): 21, views the play within the framework of psychoanalysis and finds it rich, perceptive and "woven on many levels." John McCarten, "Mystical Manipulations," New Yorker 40 (January 9, 1965): 84, feels himself led by Albee into an allegorical maze only to have Albee's sense of direction fail

leaving his followers bewildered. In 1969 a revival of the play prompted such comments as, "Tiny Alice can't be revived since it was never alive," a no-by line note in Time 85 (October 17, 1969): 72. And another no-by line, "Tinny Allegory," Time 85 (January 8, 1965): 32, claimed the play to be preaching mystery and practicing mystification. Stanley Kauffmann, "Stanley Kauffmann on Theater," New Republic 161 (November 1, 1969): 22, found the original stage version a "piece of arrogant pseudo-literary pretentiousness" and finds that five years later it seems worse. Robert Brustein, "Three Plays and a Protest," New Republic 152 (January 23, 1965): 33-34, considers that some of the obscurity is sham profundity or pure playfulness designed to coax the spectator into looking for non-existent meaning. Paulette Martin, "A Theater of Mystery: From the Absurd to the Religious," Commonweal 84 (September 6, 1966): 584, sees mystification as an essential component of the success of the theater of which Tiny Alice is a part; she feels that Albee is intentionally eluding any attempt to give the play coherent meaning. And C. W. E. Bigsby, "Tiny Alice," Edward Albee (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1975), although fascinated by much of the play finds the atmosphere too "rarefied" to be convincing. It is clear that the criticism of Tiny Alice is as much concerned with what isn't apparent as with what is.

⁵Markson, "Tiny Alice," p. 6.

⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁷Ruby Cohn, Dialogues In American Drama (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 137. Cohn's consideration of Edward Albee as one of America's leading playwrights is well founded. She finds his use of dialogue, in Aristotelian terms, to further plot and reveal character worthy of considerable attention with its distinct American flavor and cadence. She regards Albee as a master of language. Roman Ingarden, The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), discusses the structure of the work of art and the responsibility of a perceiver to bring the work to appearance only in a multiplicity of successive aspects. Cohn's attention to dialogue and Ingarden's phenomenological focus on structure and a reader's experience of concretization suggested the direction of study for this chapter.

⁸Edward Albee, Tiny Alice (New York: Atheneum, 1965), Author's Note. Hereafter references to this work will appear as page numbers in parentheses within the text itself.

⁹Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), p. 13.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹Richard Macksey, "The Consciousness of the Critic: George Poulet and the Reader's Share," in Velocities of Change, ed. Richard Macksey (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 304 and 308.

¹²Amacher, Edward Albee, p. 23. Albee has called Berlin his second home because in 1959 Zoo Story has its first production there. Information such as this is surely extrinsic, surely anathema to phenomenological studies; however, it appeals to me at the linguistic level. That Albee spent time in Berlin and heard the cadences of the language suggests, with his ear for linguistic utterance as evidenced in his dialogues, that there was probably conscious attention to language to an extent that might permit the potential for such interlanguage punning.

¹³Cohn, Dialogues In American Drama, p. 4. Cohn mentions Samuel Beckett's play called Play and Witold Gombrowicz's operetta called Operetta both representative of the improvisation and experimentation toward a "unique theatrical event."

¹⁴Roman Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 391.

¹⁵Ruby Cohn, Edward Albee (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 33.

¹⁶C. W. E. Bigsby, "Tiny Alice," in Edward Albee ed. C. W. E. Bigsby (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall), p. 125. Bigsby makes the point that in Albee the individual craves spiritual distraction as much as he craves a carnal one.

¹⁷Nelvin Vos, Eugène Ionesco and Edward Albee (n.p.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), p. 39. Vos' discussion of the use of game and ritual in absurdist drama encouraged my taking a closer look at the syntax of the dialogues and side text accompanying these games.

¹⁸E. Fred Carlisle, "Literature, Science, and Language: A Study of Similarity and Difference," Pre/Text 1 (1981): 46. Carlisle's discussion here of Edie's phenomenological theory of reference not only encouraged a closer study of Edie's major work but also provided a crucial and elucidating perspective for my consideration of the intrinsic phenomenon of intentionality in language.

¹⁹Paulette Martin, "A Theater of Mystery: From the Absurd to the Religious," Commonweal 84 (September 6, 1966): 584.

²⁰Mary Elizabeth Campbell, "The Statement of Edward Albee's Tiny Alice," Papers on Language and Literature 4 (Winter 1968): 93.

²¹James M. Edie, Speaking and Meaning (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 154-158.

²²Miss Alice indicates here that the Lawyer didn't have to shoot Julian because she could have made him stay.

²³Cited previously in the discussion of the bird motif.

²⁴Louise M. Rosenblatt, l'Idée de l'art pour l'art dans la littérature anglaise pendant la période victorienne (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1936), p. 304. Paraphrasing A. C. Bradley, 1901 "Poetry for Poetry's Sake" she says: Il affirme dans son discours que, bien que la poésie puisse avoir une valeur ultérieure comme moyen pour la culture et la religion et bien que la poésie ait au lien "souterrain" avec la vie, puisqu'elle sort de la vie elle-même, cependant la poésie "a une valeur intrinsèque" indépendant de ces considérations ultérieures. Le professeur Bradley accentue de façon typique la nature spéciale de l'expérience imaginative et émotionnelle produite par l'oeuvre d'art.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After having determined the need for a model of reading which provides a basis and criteria to accommodate the evaluation of a variety of literary styles and genres in Chapter I, I have presented in Chapter II, a brief exegesis of Ingarden's ontological theories of the nature of the literary work, a description of its strata and phases, and a definition of the role of the reader in this model. Chapters III and IV were analyses which have investigated the structural and thematic place of "indeterminacy" in Axel and Tiny Alice.

Both plays are dramatic culminations of the denial of life. In Axel, Sara and Axel renounce religious life, secular life, ascetic life, and passionate life for the transcendent life in death, the ultimate means of preserving illusion. In Tiny Alice, Brother Julian opts for a life of obedient servitude while secretly yearning for the imagined joys of martyrdom, the ultimate giving of self to substance, as he sees it. The epistemological relationship between time and action is presented, dramatized, and judged. In both plays the how of existence is predicated on the necessity to act, to do. Thus the mode of denial in Axel is active--Sara and Axel commit suicide as their ultimate rite of passage; and in Tiny Alice the mode is passive--Brother Julian is murdered in the name of dedication to "getting on

with it" when, in his passivity, he had failed to participate in an appropriate manner. The plays also explore the nature of illusion and reality or, more specifically in Tiny Alice, symbol and substance.

While it is Axel that is considered the progenitor of Symbolist drama, both plays are self-conscious in their approximation of the indefinite, the indeterminate, achieved both by juxtaposing real and imagined (or represented and ideal) images and by their self-referentiality to the "fact" of indeterminacy in their represented objectivities. The risk of such internal reflection on such private and subjective responses is, of course, that the reader is denied access to or at best must beg entry to the text, to meaning potential.

It is in the examination of works that celebrate the subjective response, the communication of uniquely personal feelings, that a phenomenological approach can be most effective; in its fidelity to and insistence on description rather than explanation can the meaning units find expression in the concretization of unique moments characteristic of the entire work, which, as Ingarden says, appears in its polyphony.

One of Ingarden's major contributions to reading theory is his identification of the concept of indeterminacy as not only a part of the structure of the literary work, but intrinsic to it in that the distinction between represented and real objectivities is that the former are not precisely determined.

Although this phenomenological focus has revealed a familiar metaphysical terrain in Axel and Tiny Alice, it does accommodate, indeed, exact, a more explicit examination of the topography and its ontic base. Ingarden's original question--what are the essential properties of that mode of being which the literary work of art possesses?--answered with descriptive phenomenological fidelity to the work itself has provided a richly textured model of reading celebrating the reader no less than the author and text.

Ronald Bruzina draws attention to two particular terms in Husserlian phenomenology--Besinnung (cognitive realization or "prise de conscience") and Erlebnis (experience-in-the-living-of-it) and combines them--"Besinnung der Erlebnis: cognitive realization of (what) lived consciousness (is)"¹--to define phenomenology in a way that makes readily apparent its potential fullness for literary criticism as well as its appropriateness to the recent Goodman model of reading that samples, predicts, tests, and confirms.²

To be invited, nay, seduced by the structure of the work itself, to attend to its language--its sonority, tempo, visual display, syntax, semantics (literal, connotative, emotional, and symbolic), stress, juncture, and measured silences--and within its constraints to satisfy one's sense of closure, that is, to negotiate meaning, is to fully participate in the lived through experience of a work of art.³ Up to this point I have not provided a full definition of the literary work (of art) in part because it has not been essential to do so before an "attitude" or approach to a "work" had been expressed,

and also in part because of a probable question of semantics: had Ingarden referred to the literary work as "text" (a less honorific and far more neutral term) as does Rosenblatt, the issue of the locus of meaning in the transaction between reader and text might have been more readily tenable.

A comparison of Rosenblatt's and Ingarden's definitions of a work of art makes explicit the essential criteria of "work of art:" Rosenblatt's transactional view accepts "all readings in which the reader attends to the lived-through experience engendered by the text;"⁴ Ingarden describes it as

a purely intentional object which has its basis of being in the creative acts of consciousness of its author. Its determining qualities are not immanent in it in a strict sense but are lent and attributed to it intentionally by appropriate conscious acts of the author. As soon as it is fixed in an existing intersubjective language in any kind of physical material . . . it is in theory cognitively accessible, as a pre-given object, to any reader who has a command of the language; but it must be read and reconstructed during the reading.⁵

Both Rosenblatt and Ingarden assume active readers temporally engaged and adapted to the spirit of the work, that is, concretizing in the aesthetic attitude "under the influence of the previously read parts of the work."⁶

One of the most intriguing facets of Ingarden's concept of strata is its inclusion of the concept of place of indeterminacy subsumed in at least one stratum as part of the structure of the work itself. These indeterminacies require reader attention, sometimes to fill them out, other times to leave them indeterminate letting our



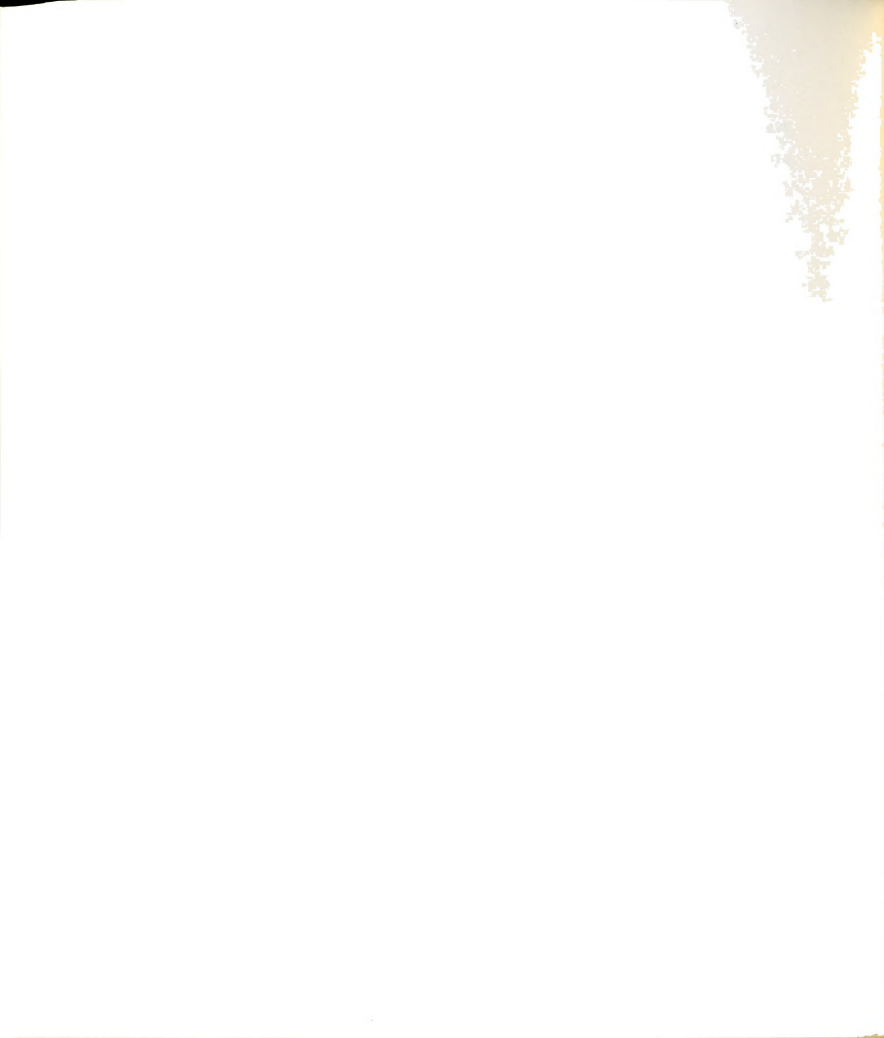
awareness of their "sojourn in the darkness of the periphery"⁷ augment our apperceptions of the artist's intended work.

The "interior" focus of Axel and Tiny Alice--the former idealizing the renunciation of the experience of the external world in favor of the experience of the imagination, and the latter projecting multiple reflexive states of affairs with its model-within-a-model--necessitates an approach or a critical method that, while firm and encompassing in its scope, permits a delicacy and nuance appropriately and comprehensively elucidating to the works. In addition to language as linguistic utterance, expressions of meaning "are also to be found in more basic and inchoate experiences, such as moods, affections, sentiments, and levels of experience"⁸ making it incumbent upon the critic to exercise sound and valid methodological judgment.

Where might we go from here? I suspect there is a relationship between the concept of intentionality with its attendant tensional balance between objects in the real world and objects represented, and number and type of indeterminacies present in a work; and while it would be orderly to have the ratio of indeterminacies increase in direct proportion to the "distance" between objects in the real world and objects represented, the relationship quite probably has more to do with altered reader expectations and metaphorical juxtaposition. Empirical studies to determine strategies employed for assimilating apperceptions might be undertaken to elucidate the phenomenon.⁹ Further, a vigorous relationship between phenomenological methodology and literary scholarship may well enhance preaesthetic



evaluations of literary work by strengthening its metaphysical underpinnings.



FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER V

¹Kenneth S. Goodman, "Psycholinguistic Universals in the Reading Process," in Psycholinguistics and Reading, ed. Frank Smith (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 23.

²Ronald Bruzina, Logos and Eidos (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), p. 45.

³Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 137.

⁴Louise M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 155.

⁵Roman Ingarden, The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 335.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁸Zygmunt Adamczewski, "Being and Sense," in Phenomenology in America, ed.: James Edie (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), pp. 13, 63, 65.

⁹E. B. Huey, The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968, first published 1908), p. 83.

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