English AT CORNELL

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Cornell University

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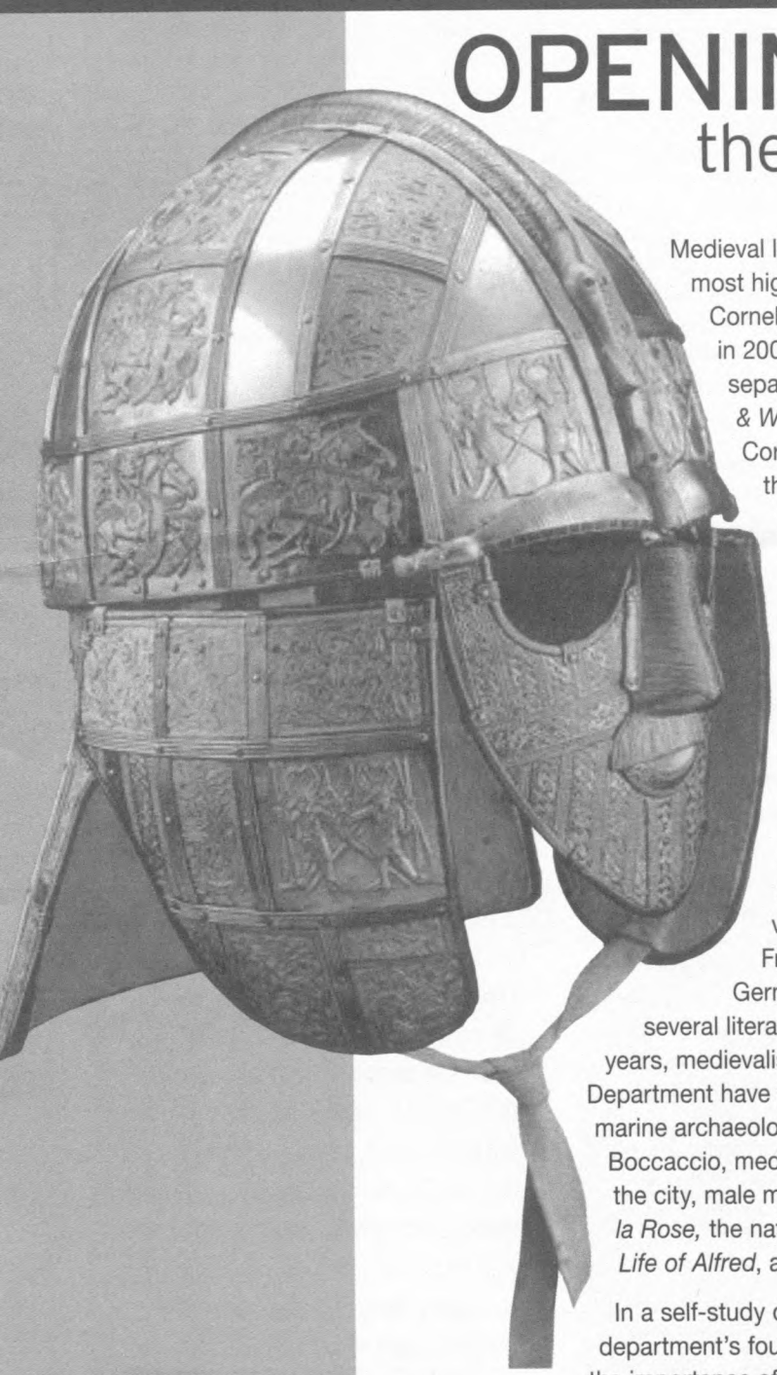
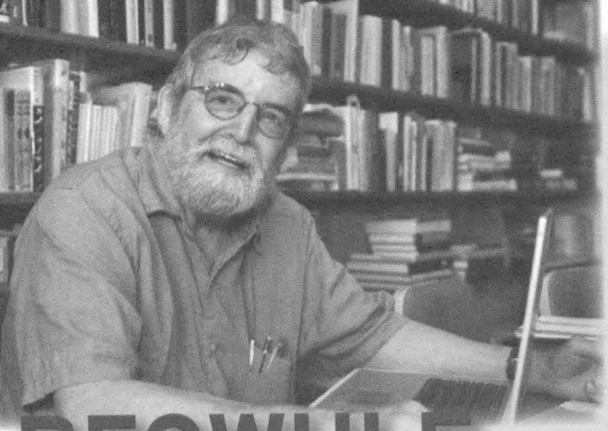
OPENING
the Middle Ages



Medieval literature is one of the most highly-regarded fields in the Cornell English Department; in 2001, the last year it gave a separate ranking, *U.S. News & World Report* placed the Cornell program fourth in the nation. In one sense the designation of "medieval" as a single field is misleading because of its sheer vastness. Even when restricted to the British Isles, "medieval studies" covers over 800 years of literary development and half a dozen languages—though most medievalists also know two or more continental vernaculars, such as Old French and Middle High German, and may work in several literatures at once. In recent years, medievalists in the Cornell English Department have written or taught on marine archaeology, Chaucer's reading of Boccaccio, medieval conceptions of the city, male mourning in the *Roman de la Rose,* the nature of kingship in Asser's *Life of Alfred*, and many other topics.

In a self-study document last year, the department's four medievalists stressed the importance of both traditional work like textual scholarship and the application of theoretical ideas to medieval subjects. Medieval studies has certainly been affected by the winds of theory, but the influence is better described as reciprocal. As the following remarks make clear, an imaginative study of medieval texts challenges a number of received ideas about literature, including commonplaces about authorship, literary tradition, the relationship of "high" and "low" culture, our ideas of selfhood and gender, and much else, including popular notions of the "medieval" itself.

This edition's lead article focuses on the work of three of the English Department's medievalists. **Thomas Hill** came to Cornell in 1967 as a graduate student working with the late Robert Kaske, who was in many ways the architect of the present medieval studies program. Though the section on Tom's work (page 2) focuses on the teaching of *Beowulf,* he has written about a range of topics in Anglo-Saxon and later periods, including the Scottish Renaissance, Old Norse sagas, and early medieval law. **Andy Galloway** (page 3) joined the department in 1991; his interests range too broadly to describe briefly, though some recent topics of teaching and research include historiography, the medieval city, drama, textual criticism, and *Piers Plowman*, the subject of a massive commentary that is now nearing completion. **Masha Raskolnikov**, the newest member of the field, works on problems of gender and the body in Middle English and Medieval French. Her section (page 4) is an interview that ranges from medieval debates between the mind and body to the Mel Gibson film *The Passion of the Christ*. The department's fourth medievalist is **Winthrop (Pete) Wetherbee**, the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities. Pete will contribute to a future issue of *English at Cornell*, though he appears in this issue, speaking with characteristic eloquence in memory of his late friend and colleague ***Robert Farrell*** (page 9).



Tom Hill: Exploring the continuity between oral tradition and popular literature.

BEOWULF

The Monsters and the Readers

by Paul Sawyer

The translation and publication of Anglo-Saxon texts in the nineteenth century marks one of the most significant episodes in the history of literary scholarship. Most Old English poetry, representing some 400 years of literary history, survives in only four manuscripts, almost all of them in a single version. The single manuscript of *Beowulf*—arguably the earliest great work of European literature to survive after the fall of Rome—was singed in a fire and nearly burned, while the Exeter Book was burned by a log and damaged by the mark of a drinking-cup. What has been lost is beyond conjecture; what has survived is immeasurably precious.

Ironically, for many students, Old English has come to stand for little more than an annoying requirement. In grad school I considered myself lucky to pass my required exam after only a few weeks' cramming; my minimal exposure to the literature "took," however, and many years later—this past Christmas, in fact—I found myself brushing up on the language, until for awhile I could read or think of little else. Luckily, Tom Hill was offering his *Beowulf* course in the spring, and he generously took me on as an auditor.

On the first day of class I expected a tiny group of specialists, so I was surprised to find a class of some 20 students, grads and undergrads, all of whom had passed Anglo-Saxon in the fall—a larger number than most 400-level seminars.

What makes such a seemingly arcane subject so popular among students? At its most accessible level *Beowulf* is, of course, about monsters—its plot is punctuated by three separate monstrous combats—which makes a ready link with contemporary popular culture. In discussion, students showed a detailed knowledge of *The Lord of the Rings* and other medievalizing film epics (though of the entire group, Tom seemed to be the most ardent devotee of the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a text which after all draws upon the medieval tradition of the vampire).

But the truest interest of the course was the challenge of reading a poem whose every line bears grammatical, historical, and social meaning at once. Each day, students translated 70 or so lines, out of which grew discussions on a range of topics: the nature of oral poetry; the function of Anglo-Saxon queens; the implications of the word *overmode*; how Beowulf could battle sea-monsters in a full suit of armor. The social world of the Anglo-Saxons was vastly unlike our own—essentially tribal, without centralized authority or law courts or medicine or science—yet in a work like *Beowulf*, that society came vividly to life for the class, speaking to itself, making meanings, and creating literary effects that are often elegantly beautiful and sophisticated.

At the end of the semester, Tom and I met in his office to talk about the course and his work. I was only mildly surprised to see a complete set of *Buffy* CDs on the table, but there was much more: rows of scholarly editions and monographs, including a complete grammar of Old Frisian; the bust of a crowned King Alfred that once commanded the first-floor hall of Goldwin Smith; and a busy printer, which at that moment was producing a scholarly essay on the folk-tale of the ugliest foot. (The Ugly Foot episode appeared first in an Icelandic saga and most recently in an Irish newspaper article from 1930. When a king tells a sleeping soldier that the man's right foot is the ugliest in the world, the soldier wagers he can find an uglier—and promptly produces his left foot.) Tom pointed out that a strong continuity exists between oral tradition and popular literature, like the story of the ugliest foot. The old debate over whether works like *Beowulf* were composed orally or on the page recedes in importance, according to Tom, when one recognizes how enormously sophisticated improvisational material can be—a pertinent analogy here is in the great jazz musicians of the twentieth century. By breaking down rigid separations between the serious and the popular, the oral and the literate, the spontaneous and the composed—in short, by comparing *Beowulf* to jazz, a TV series, and a popular romance as well as to "high art" forms like epic and saga—medievalists like Tom anticipate influential postmodernist critiques of precisely these distinctions.

The monsters, of course, do not exist in isolation, nor simply as tests of the hero's prowess, but as emblems in a system of social and cosmic meanings. As God put order into the created world and as the hall-chieftain Hrothgar put order into Heorot, so Grendel exists outside that order as the principle of anti-order. Similarly, the poem's third monster, the dragon, appears after a long digression on the disastrous wars that have occurred over the previous 50 years. As Tom elucidated for the class, the dragon embodies *draconitas*, "dragonness"—greed, hoarding, secrecy, as opposed to the gift-giving economy that underwrites the "good" human societies in the poem—a quality that is also responsible for the series of disastrous wars. Meaning, that is, lies in the seeming digressions as much as in the "main" action; as a recent critic has written, "There are no digressions in *Beowulf*."

In contrast to these perennially popular motifs, the hero that bears the name of the poem is a pattern of heroic virtue who for that reason may seem (in the irreverent phrase of one reader) like "dullsville." And yet, in an influential essay years ago, Bob Kaske showed convincingly that Beowulf exemplifies the classical trope of *sapientia et fortitudo*—the ideal ruler's combination of the wisdom of a counselor and the courage of the warrior. Beowulf therefore represents a fundamental issue in the ideology of a warrior culture; as Tom puts it, "how to contain and order violence is a non-trivial problem." Unlike the other texts he assigns his class—*The Saga of the Volsungs*, which is awash in violence, or "The Battle of Maldon," which carefully preserves the warrior ethic—*Beowulf* presents a magical solution to the problem of violence: a hero who is able to make peace and cement alliances among otherwise quarrelsome groups, not by killing other humans but by killing monsters; a hero who has as much in common with a Christian saint as he does with a warrior.

Clearly enough, *Beowulf* was written by a Christian, but most likely at a time when Christianity was still fairly early established among the once-pagan Anglo-Saxons. For the original audience, how did the idea of a saintly hero relate to a still-vital pagan tradition that celebrated, even glorified, violence? In a magisterial article first published in 1994 (reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition of the poem, alongside the Seamus Heaney translation), Tom describes the cultural contradiction this way:

> **I would submit that a young Anglo-Saxon warrior who was schooled in Germanic heroic legend, whose claim to aristocratic status extended far into the pagan past, whose law was the old law confirmed by his people since time immemorial, whose homeland had been won by pagan warriors, who bore on his person ancient pagan ornaments, who defended himself with an old sword purportedly made by [a legendary smith] and certainly made by pagan craftsmen, and whose landscape was dominated by magnificent burial mounds in which the great men (and women) of his race were**

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English AT CORNELL

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CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

Text, Culture, and History

by Amber Baird-Baidinger

Andy Galloway began his career intending to study Renaissance poetry, but he found himself too confined there, too hedged in; he wanted to "explore cultural expanses." When he talks about his two most recent scholarly projects, he seems to have found a way to do precisely that. Both books are variations on the theme of what he calls "concentric circles"—the myriad connections between a literary work and its world.

When Andy first read *Piers Plowman*—one of the texts that drew him to medieval studies—he found "the range of things it was doing and invoking" to be "scandalous." The great fourteenth-century vision-poem was obsessively revised, expanded, and re-imagined by its author, William Langland (about whom we know almost nothing, including whether the name was real). Andy's commentary on the first vision of the work, a painstaking effort that has taken ten years to complete, aims to "tear apart" every inch and every version of the poem. He argues that this poem, more than any text he knows, challenges the assumptions of literary history and the conventions of genre. It doesn't invoke an obvious tradition of literary works, and it offers combined literary accomplishments—allegory, obsessive exploration of single words, political commentary, religious history, and pervasive satire about the poet's inability to convey so much—whose appreciation requires a framework deeply alien from the elements of modern literary style, and even from the works of its great contemporary, Chaucer. It stubbornly remains, however, a great literary work itself, interested in an astonishing variety of questions and problems, from specific political and social debates to broad apocalyptic visions. Andy's aim in the commentary is to situate and appreciate the idiosyncrasy and greatness of *Piers Plowman*: by tracing connections in toward the poem from its immediate literary and intellectual context, and by moving from single lines or words outwards, he seeks to find culture on a broad and detailed scale as a set of horizons around this unique poem.

Andy will continue to navigate this balance between text and culture in his next project, the Blackwell *History of Middle English*. Part of the appeal of medieval studies for him is the opportunity to explore phenomena that don't fit into a teleology. His challenge in the Blackwell volume is to resist the temptations of easy narratives, like those about the English language moving towards greater and greater uniformity, or about religious and political authority becoming more and more codified. Most broadly, he aims to re-conceive medieval literary history in a way that challenges the conventional idea of a single, continuous chain of great authors moving in an arc of development. In fact, there was no central literary tradition in Middle English, since there were countless English dialects and also countless versions of any given text. As a result, medieval texts were local and particular. Texts written in London weren't necessarily readable to people in the north of England. If texts did circulate to wider communities of readers, they were probably reading widely different versions of those texts. Not only were medieval texts frequently revised by their authors, they were commonly adapted by their copyists who often saw themselves as interpreters or commentators and made liberal changes. In some cases, the divergences between manuscripts are so radical that different versions of one text can be classified as different genres. In other cases, the only surviving manuscript of a text is one that was altered or adapted by a copyist, undermining modern notions of authenticity and authorial property. Adding to the complexity of the medieval literary landscape is the fact that Latin and French were widely used languages in England during this time, and Welsh and Irish in the neighboring countries under English rule, so interactions and influences (as well as literary allusions and a sense of a literary canon) were not confined to texts written in English.

In the Blackwell history, therefore, Andy will abandon the practice of simply presenting a tradition of individual authors of self-contained texts, attempting instead to illuminate "textual communities of scribes and readers" and the "manifestly collaborative endeavors of the period, such as the many creative and fascinating compilations of sermons from the twelfth through the fifteen century, the collections of civic drama extant in cycles or fragments from the fifteenth century primarily, and the ever-present scattering of small poetry captured throughout this span with ink and parchment in corners and edges of manuscripts."

Andy's interest in the idea of literary history extends to his enthusiasm for the medieval historians. Post-medieval readers have too often dismissed the chroniclers as unimaginative compilers who were merely serving the ideological demands of their religious institutions. Andy, however, sees in the chronicles a wide range of literary genres, and a large body of vivid, intelligent, and often culturally significant writing. Our modern ideas about what constitute both authors and literary characters may draw much more from the chronicles than from more traditionally "literary" medieval texts. For example, writers such as William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century and Ranulph Higden in the fourteenth constructed in their works the trope of an author as a fascinating and witty figure. Andy also sees in the chroniclers an "anxiety of

On this page: Two illustrated ideas of medieval authorship. The image at top left shows the narrator of* Piers Plowman *as dreamer. The portrait above shows the author John Gower as a satirist aiming an arrow at the world; it will only stick, he says, to those "living evilly." (*Piers Plowman *illustration reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University. Gower portrait reproduced by permission of The Huntingdon Library, San Marino, California.)

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THE MEDIEVAL "OTHER"

A Conversation with Masha Raskolnikov

Amber Baird-Baidinger: ***How did you first become interested in medieval studies?***

Masha Raskolnikov: I didn't begin graduate school as a medievalist; I initially defined myself as a literary theorist and as a feminist critic. The general problem that interested me was the nature of embodiment; but I wasn't sure where I was going to anchor my thinking or what, indeed, I was going to do with it. Late in my first year at Berkeley, when I was a teaching assistant for an undergraduate theory course, I asked a student a question about her other courses. She said she was taking a Chaucer class, with a groan that seemed to suggest "how boring." I remember that groan really galvanized me, and I couldn't help but begin to explain to her the entire critical theory class that I was teaching in terms of Chaucer. Afterwards I realized, "I really want to do this, I want to make this relevant for students so they don't think the past is dead and buried."

What also drove my research is the sense that a whole realm of knowledge is often distorted and transformed beyond recognition. I am told that some students sign up for classes on medieval English literature in part to avoid the difficulties and challenges of feminist criticism, queer studies, critical race studies, and postcolonial studies. After all, aren't the Middle Ages the time before colonization, before race and even nation, aren't they the time before "homosexuality" was invented? I enjoy upsetting the false expectations of a simple past, and my work thrives on the challenge posed by finding the voices of women and of queers and all of those coded as "Other" in the texts that lie at the very origin of European (particularly English) literature.

Has the study of medieval literature succeeded in anchoring your original interest in embodiment?

Yes. In my current book project, which is a revision of my dissertation, I focus on Middle English debates between the Body and the Soul. In these texts a person is depicted after their death as split into a Body and a Soul, who are, usually, squabbling about whose fault the person's sins had been. I remember how, in grad school, I would explain my dissertation with hand puppets: here's the Body, here's the Soul, and they're fighting among themselves, but aren't they really all one thing?

In reading these poems as a feminist critic, I couldn't help but notice that the self's internal hierarchies were often described in gendered terms. Now, English doesn't have noun gender. In pretty much every other European language, and in my first language, Russian, a table is either a girl or a boy. You have a certain kind of relationship—very implicit and profoundly unconscious—to the gender of the objects around you, a work of personification that goes on all the time. Thus, when the Body debates with the Soul in French, the Body is male and the Soul is female, and therefore the Body is courting the Soul like a knight courting a lady, and being accused of being a boor according to courtly tradition.

But in Middle English, where nouns are uninflected by gender, other, less "natural" hierarchies than those that exist between males and females of this period need to be established whenever hierarchy seems to be necessary (which, with medievals, is often). In the particular case of Body/Soul debates, the need to work around the lack of natural noun gender helps to produce a particularly interesting set of competing discourses, all trying to establish a hierarchy that is not based in sexual difference —one that refuses to either abject or idealize the feminine. The Middle English poems cannot seem to find a stable way to organize what should be the Soul's obvious superiority, and are left with presenting multiple options to describe the relationship between Soul and Body. In one poem, for example, the Soul suggests that the relationship it had with the Body when they were united as a self was one based on love, and resembled the love of brothers, one elder, one younger. The Body disagrees, suggesting that their relationship had been one of a pedagogy, with the Soul playing the role of an ineffectual teacher. They might be a squabbling married couple; but they aren't, and this is significant. In most general terms, I'm reading Mind-Body dialogues in order to trace the place of gender in the history of the pre-modern subject.

How does your work address the "Others" you mentioned earlier?

A big part of my book looks at the extent of *absence*, or how English poetry was able to exclude the feminine. A main question posed by my research is, What are the literary consequences of excluding women from discourse and presenting them exclusively as sexual or romantic objects? I recently explored this question in an article on the French allegorical poem, the *Roman de la Rose*. This poem has been famously read as the very origin of a literature of romantic love in the West; interestingly, the purported feminine object of the protagonist's desire never, ever speaks, and every speaker who discusses romantic love offers dire warnings about the untrustworthiness of women. Now the *Roman de la Rose* was begun by one author and continued by another after his death. In my article, I consider how that continuation discusses its status as a work of mourning, and argue that it offers a rhetoric of romantic attachment between men as an alternative to the fraught economy of male-female exchange. My reading of the poem is a case of queering the text, reading a little bit against the grain, conducted under the assumption that no medieval writer would reveal homosexual attachment explicitly.

So you arrived at a queering of the text by noticing the absence of the feminine?

Yes. But at the same time, I'm aware that my interest in a "queer" reading like this one can be in conflict with my interest as a feminist reader. Imagining the exchanges between medieval men as somehow "queer" can seem like or even be a positive gesture towards reclaiming gay history. And yet the utter exclusion of female voices from any number of literary works certainly troubles a feminist reader as a relentlessly negative fact of medieval culture.

You've observed that medievalists are feeling a new kind of cultural responsibility because of the current political climate. Can you explain what you mean by that?

I think medievalists are finding themselves with a new relationship to politics and to history. Since September 11 especially, we've seen a burgeoning interest in the history of the Crusades and in the relationship of medieval England to its Arab Others—and a different attitude to empire on the part of its cultural historians. There are many young scholars and new graduate students who are interested in this problem, a whole new field forming (with Geraldine Heng, a graduate of this department, as one of the principal players, as a matter of fact).

Another way I have responded to the dominant culture's version of the medieval has been through Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*, which has inspired just a huge amount of fervor and debate. It's hard to see this film as anything other than a medieval passion play flattened onto a

Masha Raskolnikov teaching a summer course at Telluride House entitled Pleasure and Danger: Bodies in Science, Technology,

two-dimensional screen, and it's hard to miss that this particular adaptation partakes of the worst aspects of that tradition without thinking through the implications of its staged violence.

I would argue that the medieval plays—in part, simply because they are plays, physical spectacles, staged in front of specific communities where it is possible that everyone knows one another—could not avoid having a far more sophisticated relationship to violence and embodiment than Gibson's film has. For instance, some of the plays portraying the Passion can be very humorous, and the audience might find themselves laughing and ultimately identifying with the "Christ-killers" before them. Watching the crucifixion on the stage and being forced to find it amusing by the details of these plays makes the audience bear some of the guilt for this death, a guilt of witnessing, and you end up with a much more nuanced understanding of responsibility. In *The Passion of the Christ*, though, I don't see the audience having to take on any guilt whatsoever.

It sounds like you're still interested in the problem of the excluded "Other"—in this case the Arab and the Jew. Was it partly* The Passion of the Christ *that inspired your upcoming first-year seminar, Jesus Christ Superstar?

Yes, I'm planning to teach *The Passion* alongside several other narratives of the gospels, including some apocryphal gospels that were influential without ending up canonical. We'll follow that up with medieval passion plays from several of the English towns that staged them, then look at *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (as a child of the 1970s, this still remains my reference point!), the film version of *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and the Mel Gibson film. I also taught an earlier class, called Writing and Rewriting the Trojan War. I wanted to talk about the devastation of war, particularly the effects of war on women, at a moment when the United States was going to war. We didn't really talk about the war, but to me, the fact that we spent a semester thinking about these questions resonated with what I was reading and watching in the news. In all these ways—in teaching and research—I've been fascinated by the transformative promise of letting the distant past become truly significant in an understanding of our own present.

Literature, and History.

Beowulf

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buried in pagan splendour, had much reason to respect the pagan heritage of his people no matter how pious he was and no matter how deeply he venerated the Church and the priests, the monks, and the nuns who served it. Such a young (or old) aristocrat faced a deep cultural conflict since the dominant authorities in the Church in this period . . . could not accept the claim that paganism was a legitimate mode of religious and cultural self-understanding. If paganism was legitimate, if pagans too could be saved, what was the point of Christian faith and Christian ascesis?

Tom argues that the *Beowulf* poet confronts this dilemma by constructing a society of virtuous pagan ancestors, whom he imagines as possessing an instinctive, non-doctrinaire monotheistic belief. This claim is bold because, as Tom points out, it means taking seriously the possibility that the *Beowulf*-poet challenged the anti-pagan teaching of prominent Christian authorities in his own time. "There are other Old English and Anglo-Latin texts which reflect the tension between a natural respect for traditional Germanic culture and the radical and exclusive claims of Christian faith," he writes, "but there are none which so clearly affirm the positive, admirable, spiritual dimension of Old Germanic culture as the *Beowulf*-poet does."

If this argument is correct, Tom has given us a fresh way of seeing how a great poet staged the Western European encounter between pagan tradition and Christian ethics, a literary claim that has broad implications for our understanding of eighth-century English society. But if this level of appreciation leaves *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* too far behind, I want to conclude with one other high point of Tom's class: the day he enacted the precise grip that, in his informed conjecture, Beowulf used to wrestle Grendel to his death. As J. R. R. Tolkien famously pointed out in his essay "The Monsters and the Critics," the monsters are centrally there—and so is the pleasure.

Concentric Circles

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influence," an antagonism between different authors or between translators and authors, that he doesn't find in the strictly literary works of the medieval canon. When he first encountered the chronicles as a graduate student, this sense of debate and rivalry, but also community-building and even nation-building, suggested to him that there was more at stake in the chronicles than patronage and propaganda. Even when the histories are ideological (as in some sense they often sought to be) they are great accomplishments as texts.

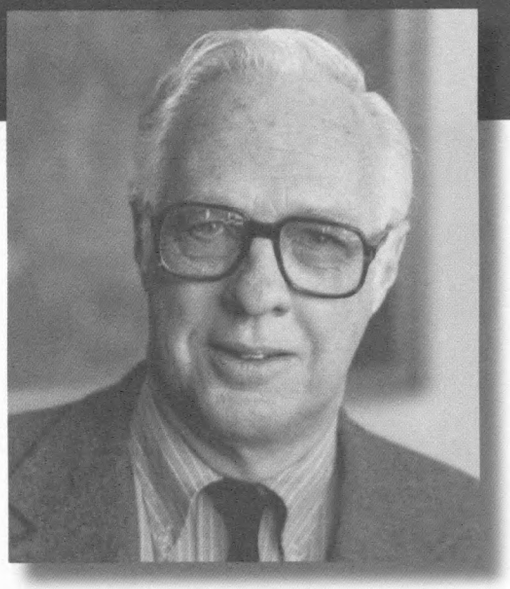
Just as Andy seeks to challenge the assumptions of literary genres by reading historical chronicles as literary works, his work and his courses on medieval drama have pushed the boundaries of what can be read as drama. "What can't be read as drama?" he asks, pointing out that liturgy and song cycles and poetry can all be seen as drama when they are performed or recited aloud. As an example of how he puts this observation into practice, he recalls the time he taught *Piers Plowman* as a drama and the class did a performance of the crucifixion scene from the poem. In his teaching Andy strives to create for his students the experience of "disconnected, simultaneous, and interacting traditions," rather than one central English literary tradition. In other words, medieval studies in English can look like comparative literature. Thus, in his undergraduate Chaucer course this fall, he will assign translations of French and Latin texts

Andy Galloway and son Aidan.

that are relevant for Chaucer and his world. And although it is still hard to acquire the necessary texts for a course on medieval historical writing, the recent appearance of affordable paperback editions of non-canonical medieval texts have made new innovations possible.

For Andy Galloway, medieval studies is a space of discovery and possibility. When he talks about archival research, something that the uninformed might assume to be dry and dusty, he describes the great pleasure of encountering the strange and surprising specificity of medieval artifacts. He observes, "Every single time you order up a manuscript [to examine in an archive] you discover something new." This responsiveness to the unexpected and unfamiliar is something he brings to his reading, teaching, and writing as well. "There are many undiscovered countries in medieval literature," he explains. Not the least of his numerous accomplishments is that he inspires others to want to discover them.

STEPHEN PARRISH
The Editor as Man of Letters



On March 19, 2004, the Yeats Society of New York sponsored "An Evening with Stephen Maxfield Parrish," on the occasion of his receiving the Society's M.L. Rosenthal Award. The award recognized Steve's role as general editor of the Cornell Yeats, the definitive edition of the poet's poems and plays, which now runs to seventeen volumes with some seventeen more projected. The Yeats edition follows the Cornell Wordsworth, which began publication in 1975 and will come to a pause later this year with The Excursion, *its twenty-first volume. This magisterial series, containing both photocopies and transcriptions, has become a landmark of modern scholarship.*

But Steve's work as editor represents only one phase or "role" in a career that has ranged between the apparent extremes of humanist and computer person. He is, of course, a distinguished critic, author of The Art of the Lyrical Ballads *(1973) and numerous essays on Romanticism and other subjects; he has also overseen publication of some 20 computer-generated concordances, mostly of poets but also including two five-volume concordances of the works of Freud in English and German. At present, some 60 volumes have been published under his general editorship. Nor has retirement slowed down the pace of his output. Yet another identity—wartime cryptographer—is mentioned in the following reminiscences, which range from not-so-trivial editorial "trivia" to philosophical speculations on authorial personality and intention and on the act of interpretation itself.*

When I left graduate school to come to Cornell, I was an Americanist. But before I got here I was drawn into partnership with one of my mentors at Harvard, who invited me to co-edit a little book, *Keats and the Bostonians*. Clearly that was not an opportunity one turns down, so I consented, and in due course the book appeared from Harvard University Press, identifying one editor as Professor Hyder Rollins, the distinguished editor of Keats's letters, and the other editor as a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy (I had been recalled to duty for the Korean War). The "Keats" in the title flagged me as a Romantic, so that when I was hired by Cornell after that war, I was immediately given the basic Romantic course to teach—a course centered on Wordsworth.

Naturally, these events obliged me to set myself a fast catch-up course on Wordsworth, which led me to an extraordinary collection at Cornell—the entire Wordsworth family archive at Dove Cottage on film. I cannot resist telling how this archive of films happened to find itself at Cornell. During the height of the Cold War, Helen Darbishire, co-editor of the Oxford Wordsworth, became convinced that should hostilities begin, Grasmere, where everybody knew the Wordsworth treasures rest, would be a primary target for Russian nuclear attack, and she resolved to deposit copies in a safe location. Having had the entire archive filmed, she drew out a map of Canada, and put her finger down right in the middle; it hit Winnipeg, and the films were duly deposited in a Winnipeg bank vault. But Cornell's golden-tongued librarian, George Healey, successfully persuaded Miss Darbishire that the cause of civilization would be much better served if the film archive could be deposited in a university, where it could be given professional care, made available to scholars and the like, and he made it clear that Ithaca, in the remote Finger Lakes of upstate New York, was just as secure a place as Winnipeg. (What Healey refrained from telling her is that Ithaca is 40 miles south of the major east-coast nuclear depot, and that nuclear control headquarters for the entire eastern U.S. is 50 miles away.)

The Cornell Editions

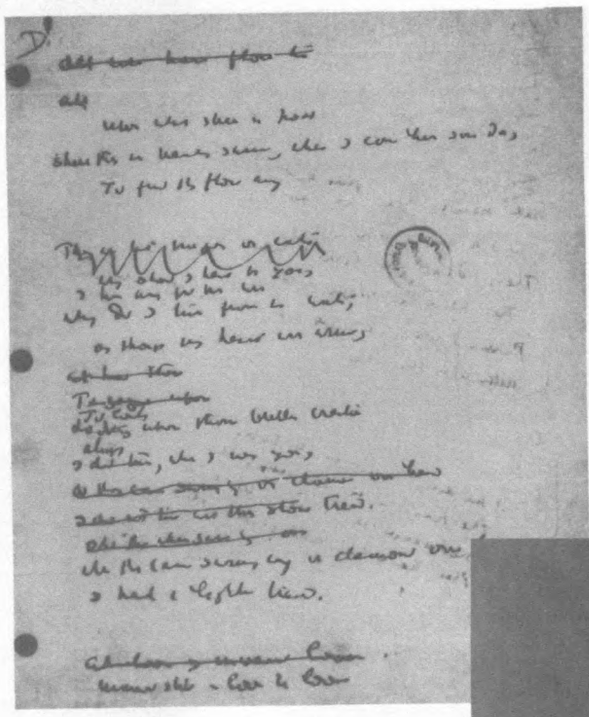
When I began to inspect the films, it became clear to me that the standard Oxford edition of Wordsworth had been based on the wrong texts, and that a complete new edition had to be undertaken. At about the same time, this extraordinary situation had been recognized and analyzed by Jonathan Wordsworth at Oxford, and his authoritative pronouncement on it rang loud and clear: "Most great poets are represented by the best version of their works; Wordsworth is almost exclusively represented by his worst." It became clear to me that there were two Wordsworths: the young Romantic Revolutionary, who wrote the most memorable verse, and the aging Tory humanist, the Victorian Wordsworth, whom the world has known today. The aging Wordsworth rewrote endlessly, burying some of his best work beneath masses of revision, and even leaving a lot of it in manuscript, including *The Prelude* (published after his death), which we now recognize as his greatest achievement. On the superiority of the Early Wordsworth, by the way, it is easy to find supporting opinions from such authorities as Coleridge and Yeats. Coleridge pronounced "The Ruined Cottage" (which remained buried in manuscript until less than 50 years ago) to be "the finest Poem [of similar length] in our Language," by implication dismissing the rest of *The Excursion*, in which the poem was embedded in 1814. Later he cuttingly attacked the sort of inflated diction Wordsworth was adopting for his translation of Virgil: "What would you have said at Allfoxden or in Grasmere cabin to giving vain *scope* to *trembling* hopes in a *bosom*?"

Anyway, I undertook to plan and launch a wholly new edition of a major poet, featuring not the final lifetime versions of the poems, but the earlier manuscript versions that underlay those printed versions. This design made it possible for the reader to follow the growth of a poem by tracing it from its origins, and most important, to *study the poet at work*.

As the volumes of the Wordsworth edition progressed, it began to attract attention, and one of my Cornell colleagues, Phil Marcus, a distinguished Yeatsian, expressed a desire to inaugurate a Yeats edition modeled on the Wordsworth. He formed a committee and the edition was launched with the help of a modest grant from a publication fund at Cornell.

As I assessed my new responsibility and my new challenges, I decided the first thing was to find out if there were, say, two Yeatses, like the two Wordsworths. How simple it would have been, had I been able to find them! But the more I searched, the more Yeatses I discovered, or so I thought, and the more confused I felt. At the outset, we discovered other hands than Yeats's on the manuscripts, running right over and behind the poet's—on the earliest manuscripts Lady Gregory seemed almost to

[NLI 13,587 (1), 2']

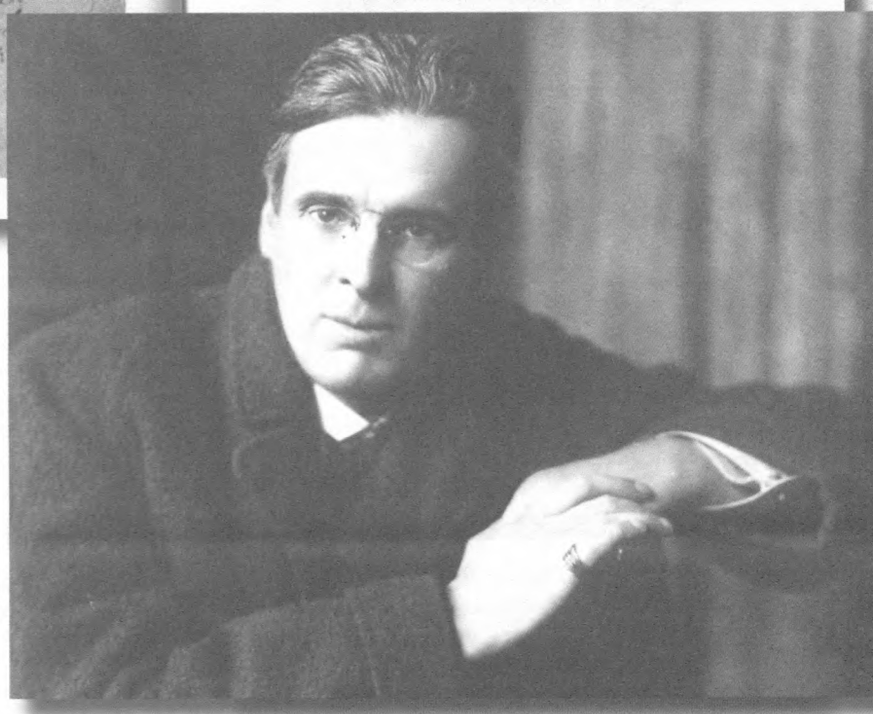


[NLI 13,587 (1), 2']

1 ~~All will have flown to~~
2 ~~All~~
3 Upon what stream or pool
4 Shall they in beauty swim, when I come here some day
5 To find them flown away

6 They are but images on water
7 Why should my heart be young
8 I turn away from the wat
9 Why do I turn from the water,
10 As though my heart were wrung
11 ~~At how those~~
12 ~~To gaze upon~~
To look
13 ~~Looking~~ upon those brilliant creatures
always
14 ~~I did turn~~, when I was young
15 ~~As they came swinging by or clamoured over head~~
16 ~~I did not turn with this slow~~ tread.
17 ~~When they when swung by or~~
18 When they came swinging by or clamoured over head
19 I had a lighter tread.

20 ~~And lover by unwearied lover~~
21 Unwearied still — lover by lover



A manuscript page and transcription from an early draft of Yeats's "The Wild Swans at Coole" (The Wild Swans at Coole: Manuscript Materials, ed. Stephen Parrish, Cornell University Press, 1994).

In the final printed version, the poem ends with these words: "But now they drift on the still water,/Mysterious, beautiful;/ Among what rushes will they build,/By what lake's edge or pool/Delight men's eyes when I awake some day/To find they have flown away?" But in the earliest printed edition, the famous conclusion appeared as the third stanza. Steve says of the change: "With this transposition, the other stanzas, all declarations, close flatly or with a drop, while the new final stanza lifts the swans into flight with a question and leaves the reader with a haunting uncertainty about the meaning of 'awake.' It is hard to think of a more teasing revelation of the importance of tracing Yeats's revisions, through manuscript drafts and into print."

deserve a typeface of her own. We had, to be sure, found a similar situation on the Wordsworth manuscripts, many of which were in the hands of the three women in his life (his wife Mary, sister Dorothy, and daughter Dora). But there was no automatic writing in the Wordsworth archive, no suggestion of supernatural voices or the like. The situation with Yeats was pointedly summed up by Laura O'Conner in a summary remark about Irish tradition, which she finds "constitutively collaborative, communal, and largely anonymous."

"Textual Ethics": Breaking the Code

The design of the Cornell Wordsworth generated many controversies. Lifting early discarded versions into prominence and reducing the final text to entries in an apparatus criticus have stirred vigorous opposition, much of it focused on Parrish as a *Textual Primitivist*. It became clear that some scholars feel that they have the right to look at a poet's discarded drafts, but not to put them into print so that other people could look at them, for that would *violate the wishes of the dead poet*. As a response I have learned to accuse my accusers of *Textual Whiggery*, a phrase I picked up from a brilliant little book published by Herbert Butterfield called *The Whig Interpretation of History*. Butterfield describes Whig historians as looking back over human events and finding them all moving in an ordered, coherent pattern by a process of "unfolding logic" toward completion of a great design. The Whig scholar, like the Whig historian, would follow the evolution of a poem as it approaches completion and look upon rejected drafts, discarded versions, as false starts, misjudgments, or lapses of taste on the part of the poet, all happily rectified as the work reaches final form—the form that represents the poet's *final intention*, and prevails over all previous partial or deviant forms.

Now you will recognize that the trouble with this formulation lies in the fact, well known by teachers of writing, that *language is prior to thought*, not the other way around, so that early versions have great value as revealing the poet's shifting intentions; revealing, that is, the poet's struggle to define or redefine and perhaps even to comprehend his own purposes. Against the Whig interpretation of a literary text, then, I would plead the autonomy and the validity of each steady state of the text as it changes in confused, unpredictable ways, through patterns, which the author may never have foreseen, let alone "intended."

One cannot, by the way, speak of Textual Ethics without mentioning the scholar Fredson Bowers. In Bowers' case, at least, I think I can identify the source of his fixed convictions about copy-text, authorial intention, and the other principles that have slowly been eroded in our generation. For four years Bowers and I were locked up together, with a number of other interesting and eccentric characters, most now dead, breaking the Japanese naval code. The British have long since spread out the story of Bletchly Park, where the German Enigma machine was broken, but we Americans, a more reticent people, have kept the seal on Mount Vernon Seminary (since re-named), where our wartime work once was. What we dealt with there was an enciphered code which had three levels of text: on the surface, sent over the air in five-digit groups was cipher text; what was enciphered by the use of tables of additives was code text; beneath the code text, drawn out of a code book, was plain text, containing the sender's message and

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The Editor as Man of Letters

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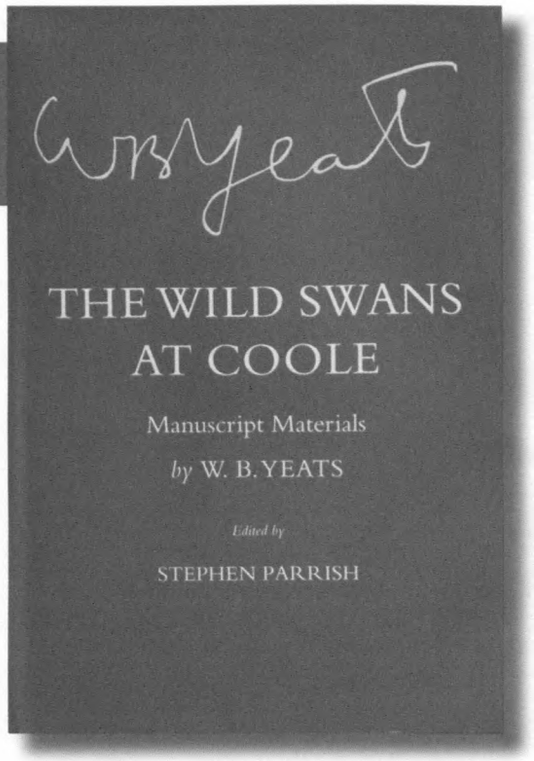

embodying the sender's intention. The plain text, for Bowers and the rest of us, took on powerful authority, rendering the other texts that got mixed in over it false and misleading, to be penetrated, deciphered, decoded, and discarded.

Now as I look back on these distant events, half a century ago, I can take a view of them that Bowers would have considered subversive. The point now seems clear that since all three texts were embodied *in* the cipher text, the author's meaning lay in that text; it simply needed to be found there, and drawn out, or teased out, as the cipher text was first deciphered, then decoded—in short, deconstructed. Bowers and I and the others were the earliest deconstructionists—proto-deconstructionists, crypto-deconstructionists!

The Computer Concordances

"Yeats on an IBM machine," cried a humanist friend of mine on a postcard, so that my departmental colleagues could share his outrage. "You commit greater ironies than you discover." To a certain kind of sensibility poetry and electronics seem incompatible, and to put lines of verse into a computer seems grotesque—something like putting neckties into a Waring blender. It would, I imagine, be painful to this sort of sensibility to watch a book of poems being manufactured—the messy inks, coarse rolls of paper, heavy, laboring presses, the sweaty, brutish printers. The same sort of pain and disquiet must have been felt by people who thought of poetry in terms of illuminated letters on parchment, when they watched the arrival of Gutenberg with his clumsy blocks of movable type.

These widely-held humanist misgivings about technology are what help to make my identity crisis seem, from time to time, acute. I am, of course, neither a computer man, nor a lexicographer (disarmingly defined by Samuel Johnson in his own great dictionary as a "harmless drudge"), but a critic of literature. Yet there are a number of ways a humanist, and specifically a critic of literature, can use any concordance. I'll give some examples from our work on Yeats and Freud.

A concordance is in the first instance and fundamentally a finding-list. It makes it possible to locate everything a writer said about a given topic—love, fate, God, guilt, or Jung—hence to make categorical statements which would otherwise be impossible, statements on the order of "Freud never used the term guilt before 1900" or "Freud always talked of Rank in terms of approval." (I don't think, by the way, that either of these statements is true.)

Before doing the Yeats concordance, I was able to offer a naïve version of Yeats's world of symbols: his landscape world of images was something like a forest of trees (each with a mask hanging on the trunk), their branches alive with birds. The birds that beat, wheel, cry, hover, and keen through his poems in fact warble outrageously through all English poetry, seeming in some way to express the national genius. I resolved to make a full inventory of this Irish poet's birds, and the inventory overwhelmed the mind. I counted eight hawks, 21 owls, six bats, two kites, six falcons, 15 eagles, eight ospreys, and five kingfishers—all birds of prey—as well as two robins, two partridges, two gannets, nine swallows, three water-hens, two water-fowls, four moor-hens, two peahens, three moorfowl, ten herons, 12 curlews, three bitterns, six gulls, two seagulls, one sea-mew, ten doves, one ringdove, four pigeons, one crane, two nightingales, five sparrows, four parrots, two crows, 11 cocks, four hens, 13 peacocks, one daw, two rooks, one stare, one nightjar, two lapwings, one jay, one cormorant, one grouse, two ducks, 16 swans, six ravens, two woodpeckers, three flamingos, four linnets, two snipes, four peewits, eight geese, one barnacle-goose, one turkey, and six cuckoos—not to speak of the halcyon (three), the phoenix (eight), or the bird that Grecian goldsmiths make. The symbolic importance of these birds has long been recognized by critics, but I wonder whether (save for the rough beast that slouches toward Bethlehem) the animals that thickly populate the landscape of his poems have aroused the interest they deserve. As the concordance reveals, animals of every sort—wild and domestic, large and small, four-legged and aquatic—throng the poems, giving new force to Yeats's complaint of desertion at the waning of his inventive power: "I must be satisfied with my heart, although/ Winter and summer till old age began/ My circus animals were all on show."

The concordance offers another advantage simply in its listing of frequencies. The higher range of frequencies tend to tell us things we have already learned if we have read attentively. For example, it will not surprise anyone to know that "dream" is an exceptionally high-frequency word in Freud, and that he used "father" a lot more than "mother." (On the other hand, the highest-frequency adjective in Yeats's vocabulary, to the surprise of hardened Yeatsians, turned out to be the word "old.") In general, words in the middle and lower ranges of frequency are the most useful for the literary critic—and here I turn to metaphor.

Freud's Female Mind

A concordance makes possible the systematic study and analysis of metaphor, for in it one can look up all the various synonymous terms that can be used to build or develop the basic metaphor. The critic of literature needs to be sensitive to metaphor not just because it is "artistic" or decorative, but because it is informative: a metaphor communicates meaning, generally above or behind the level of literal statement.

I once pulled together Yeats's metaphors of the mind by the simple device of printing out all occurrences of the lowly word "of" in his verse, with contexts. I had become aware that he liked to link what we call tenor and vehicle—that is, the two things being compared in a metaphor—with the word "of": the wick of youth, the waters of sleep, the horses of disaster, the foul rag and bone shop of the heart, this "pragmatical preposterous pig of a world." With a writer like Freud, our interest shifts a little, from the metaphor that reveals a particular predilection, to the metaphor that gives meaning to an abstract concept or an experience. In particular, to grasp and assess his abstract ideas you have to examine his metaphors, for metaphors are what bridge the gap that separates one thinking mind from another. Reading back, you start with the metaphor and draw inferences about the abstraction behind it. An analogy presents itself, once again, from cryptography—you start with enciphered text and endeavor to recover the plain-text meaning behind.

It is hard to think of any concept more fundamental to Freud than the concept of the mind. As a physiologist and anatomist, it was natural for Freud to think of mapping the mind, providing something like a topographical diagram, with the Id at the bottom, and the Super-ego at the top and the Ego somewhere in the middle, occupying a buffer zone. The mind as a physical place is thus one of the predominant images in Freud, and there are clearly two distinct kinds of place that took precedence in his imagination.

The first kind of place was a territory, a landscape. Its shape altered from essay to essay, but one of its recurrent features was the presence of water under pressure or in motion. This image may possibly have grown out of a parent image, that of electric current passing through a conductor, though I think it might well have been the other way around. At any rate, the metaphor has some meaningful implications. Reclaiming territory for the Ego is, we remember, a matter of draining marshy ground, the swamp that makes up the Id.

The second persistent image of the mind in Freud is, of course, the image of a structure. This may look at times like an outdoor structure, perhaps built on a landscape, perhaps delineated by walls

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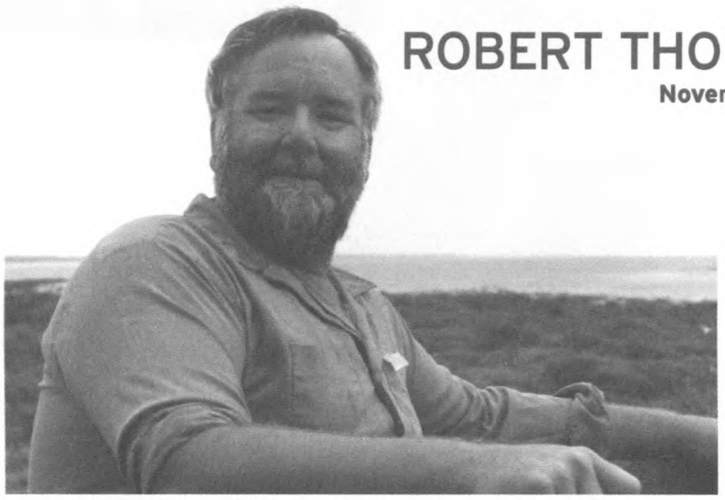


ROBERT THOMAS FARRELL

November 16, 1938–July 31, 2003

The following remarks by his friend and colleague Pete Wetherbee were delivered at Bob Farrell's memorial service in Sage Chapel.

Bob Farrell was an amazing man, somebody his friends have always found themselves talking about, marveling at, cherishing. After 35 years as a colleague and friend I am still trying to take in all that Bob was and meant to me.

I remember our first meeting vividly. It was my second day in Ithaca, Bob's first, in the summer of 1967. I crept into the department office, still very much in awe of my surroundings, and was introduced to a very large, imposing man in a three-piece suit, who spoke flawless Oxford English. He was at work, I learned, on an edition of an Anglo-Saxon text, commissioned by the editors of a very prestigious series. He seemed utterly sure of himself, and much older than his actual age of 28, and left me feeling as if I were perhaps 12.

It is a summer evening a few years later. The same imposing figure, in the same three-piece suit, stands in the middle of West Buffalo Street, shouting instructions to a slighter, more anxious figure in work clothes (your humble servant) who is on an aluminum ladder, ascending the roof of the recently vacated home of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Our objective was a magnificent weather vane, which had been left behind. It was in the shape of Colonel Sanders in white linen suit, indicating with his cane the direction of the wind. We planned to display this trophy for a few days on the lawns of selected friends, then donate it to the American folklore collection in Cooperstown. But alas, the ladder was too short.

Both of these people were Bob Farrell, and he, with his Gatsby-like sense of possibility, effortlessly became both of them. For Bob, to take up a role or an activity was to realize its essence. It was the secret of his best teaching: "He *speaks* like Chaucer!" his students wrote, "He *is* Chaucer!" "He not only taught us Anglo-Saxon, he immersed us in it," with powerful recitations of the great poems, Anglo-Saxon feasts, slides which enabled him to dwell in loving detail on the wonders of Anglo-Saxon jewelry and stone work. And the same imaginative energy informed his scholarship.

Much of Bob's scholarly work is largely unknown in America, grounded as it was in on-site work in Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia. He was an instrumental organizer and networker, perhaps most of all as leader of extensive and significantly innovative underwater projects in Ireland. His work is held in very high esteem among European archeologists, and I was very glad to learn recently that a volume of studies in his honor (which will now have to be a memorial volume) is in progress.

The same genius for innovation informed his work as an administrator, which centered on the teaching of writing. Bob was the first person I ever heard mention word-processors, years before I actually saw one. His insight into what these machines might accomplish pedagogically grew into an interest in the teaching of writing generally, and eventually led to his laying the foundations of what is now one of the best undergraduate writing programs in the country. Like many people, I learned a good deal of what I know about teaching writing from my involvement with the summer institutes Bob organized and ran.

But enough of pious chronicling. What I would rather revel in is the memory of Bob's generosity. Most of us have known the unstinting bounty of his hospitality, his love of feasting in all its aspects, and all the care and energy he put into providing feasts for his friends and his students. That same generosity went out to family—his aunts, uncles, cousins, his brother and his family—a number of whom went through hard times. Bob was always available to them, had rich, often hilarious, redeeming memories of them, and gave them the kind of warmth that he himself had not known after his mother's death.

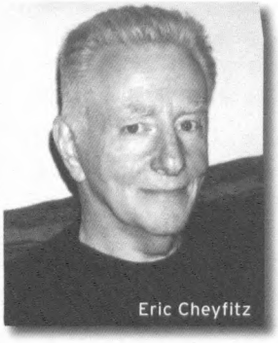
Students knew Bob's generosity in many ways—class parties, of course, and countless informal sessions of noshing and conversation in his wonderfully open office, but also mentoring of a special kind. Some of Bob's closest relationships were with students whom he saw to be lonely, isolated, adrift in the sea of Cornell. They would become family, free to make Bob's house theirs, and to socialize on an equal footing with his friends and colleagues. Several times, too, I have been jolted to attention by Bob and found myself helping him deal with students who had been lured into deep water by drugs, alcohol, or emotional problems, but whose problems somehow seemed to be the official responsibility of no college office. I know at least two students whose lives would have been permanently damaged if Bob's compassion had not extended itself to them. He never forgot his own early exposure to loneliness, poverty, and family alcoholism, and his own chronic physical disabilities. The same courage that permitted him to overcome these things, and to preserve his sense of humor right up to the end, also enabled him to sense and respond to other people's trouble with an unflinching directness and sympathy such as I have seen in very few people.

And Bob did preserve his sense of humor, with magnificent courage in the face of constant pain, right to the end. From the enormous reclining chair in which he spent his last weeks—a chair-and-a-half, he observed, was the proper throne for a man with an arse-and-a-half—he continued to entertain, keep in touch with people he loved, cherish the loving care of his wonderful wife Shari. I am sad and happy both as I think about those last days, but most of all happy to have shared in them.

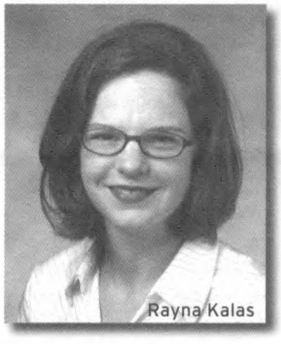
And now I can only think again, as I have a hundred times over the last few months, of Dr. Johnson's great expression of loving inadequacy: "Inimitable Falstaff," he asked, "how shall I describe thee?" And so it is for me with the memory of Bob.

NEW FACULTY Members

Eric Cheyfitz came to Cornell last fall on a joint appointment to the English Department, the American Indian Program, the American Studies Program, and the Law School. He received his graduate degrees from the Johns Hopkins University, and was the Clara M. Clendenen Term Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. In July 2004 Eric was elected Ernest I. White Professor of American Studies and Humane Letters at Cornell. He is the author of two books, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from "The Tempest" to "Tarzan"* and *The Trans-Parent: Sexual Politics in the Language of Emerson*, in addition to a number of articles that address American literature, culture, politics, and law. Eric is currently finishing work on *The Columbia History of American Indian Literatures of the United States, 1945–2000*, and serves as a guest columnist for *Indian Country Today*, the leading Native news source in the U.S. This fall he will offer courses on early American literatures and contemporary U.S. American Indian fiction and in the spring, a seminar on law and literature. He will also be administrator of the Mays-Mellon Minority Fellowship Program.


Eric Cheyfitz

Rayna Kalas joined the department last fall as an assistant professor of English. She graduated from the University of Chicago in 1990 and received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000. Before coming to Cornell, she taught at Portland State University in Oregon. Her area of expertise is the poetry and prose of the Renaissance, with a special emphasis on "poesy" as both imaginative and material craft. Her teaching has included classes on Milton, on satire and utopia, on dialectic in literature and philosophy, and on Renaissance verse and drama. Assisted by a fellowship from the NEH, she spent a year at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., where she conducted research for a book titled *Frame, Glass, and Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention*. This book studies the integration of technical and figurative invention in early modern English writing by reading specific poetic images in concert with material innovations in frames and glass. This spring, Rayna taught an honors seminar on Shakespearean tragicomedy, a course that reflects a more recent set of interests. Her new project will focus on non-dramatic texts that used the genre of tragicomedy to measure writing and intellectual service against other newly mobile forms of labor in England and in the American colonies.


Rayna Kalas

STEPHEN PARRISH

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and barriers, but more commonly a dwelling, a house, with portals, rooms, thresholds, and passages. Forces that arise in the mind—libidinal forces, for example—are obliged to pass through this structure, or to attempt a passage, being frequently blocked or diverted at one portal or another, or sometimes (obeying the laws of fluid mechanics) spilling over a threshold or flowing down diversionary channels. Every attentive reader of Freud will have become aware of these two dominant images of the mind. I would suppose, too, that readers will have observed that these images are classed by Freud as female symbols.

I do not know whether we shall be able to judge whether these metaphors were used consciously or whether unconsciously, fascinating as that would be. What I do know is that the concordances provide us with a chance to trace these, and other symbols, systematically, to make definitive and categorical statements about them, and hence to reach a deeper understanding of the mind that fashioned them. Those results should be of interest to humanist and analyst alike.

Retiring

Joel Porte agrees with Norman Podhoretz that "one of the longest journeys in the world is the one from Brooklyn to Manhattan." At a young age, though, he seemed to intuit that his skill and pleasure in the nuances of language would be his ticket out of Brooklyn. An early interest in ham radio and a facility for Morse code led him to study electrical engineering at the Brooklyn Technical School and later CCNY, but he eventually realized that it was language and communication, rather than technology, that had drawn him to radio. As a result he changed his major to English and classics and began to study French, Latin, Greek, and Italian. Because CCNY did not charge tuition at the time, Joel was able to live on his own in Manhattan, where he rented a cold water flat heated by a kerosene stove for $14.95 a month.

After graduating from CCNY, he went on to spend 30 years at Harvard, first as a graduate student, then as instructor, professor, and eventually chair of the English Department. Life as an academic was wholly different from life as a graduate student. He attended evening seminars held at his adviser Perry Miller's house that functioned like a "men's club," since Miller wouldn't permit women to join his seminars because he wanted to be free to "drink and curse" at the meetings. He reports that he felt "wealthy" with his $2,500 first-year graduate fellowship. On a $1,000 summer travel grant, he and his friends were able to travel lavishly all over Europe. Literary highlights of their Grand Tour included running with the bulls at Pamplona and having tea with Ezra Pound at his daughter's castle in Italy.

After joining the Cornell faculty in 1987, Joel taught courses on the American Renaissance, American modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, American literature between the wars, and Jewish-American writing. He also taught a seminar in the Society for the Humanities on "cereal boxes" (it was officially titled The Culture of Prepared Food). The course explored the connections between food and religion, politics, health, sexuality, advertising, and aesthetics. He developed a popular lecture with slides based on the readings from this course, which he delivered all around the country.

Joel Porte is the author of *Representative Man*, a study of Emerson. He has also collaborated on two books on Emerson with his former student Saundra Morris, a Cornell Ph.D. currently teaching at Bucknell University. The latter was chosen as a text for the French *Agrégation*, or national exam. His most recent book is a collection of essays from Yale, entitled *Consciousness and Culture: Emerson and Thoreau Reviewed*.

Joel and his wife currently divide their time between Ithaca and a home in northern Vermont. His retirement will provide him with time to pursue his interests in electronics, classical music, and cooking, and he has hinted that his future projects may include an American literature cookbook with recipes from favorite fictions and writers.

–Amber Baird-Baidinger

Faculty NOTES

James Eli Adams has edited the four-volume *Encyclopedia of the Victorian Era* (Grolier, 2004).

Mary Pat Brady was awarded the 2003 MLA Prize for the Best Work of Latina and Latino, Chicano and Chicana Literary and Cultural Criticism for her book, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (Duke University Press 2002).

Jonathan Culler has edited (with English graduate student Kevin Lamb) a volume of essays titled *Just Being Difficult? Academic Writing in the Public Arena* (Stanford University Press, 2003). Jonathan has also edited (with Pheng Cheah) *Grounds of Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson* (Routledge, 2003).

Hearing by Jael, **Lydia Fakundiny's** second collaborative novel with Joyce Elbrecht, is forthcoming from the University of Wisconsin's Library of American Fiction series.

Alice Fulton's *Cascade Experiment: Selected Poems* was published in May by W. W. Norton.

Andy Galloway has contributed the Latin translations to Volumes 2 and 3 of *Gower's Confessio Amantis*, new and forthcoming from Medieval Institute Publications.

Roger Gilbert has edited (with David Burak) *Consider the Radiance: Essays on A. R. Ammons* (forthcoming from W. W. Norton, 2005).

Wendy Jones' *Consensual Fictions: Women, Liberalism, and the English Novel* is forthcoming from University of Toronto Press (2004).

Michael Koch has won the Cornell College of Arts and Sciences' Robert A. and Donna B. Paul Award for Excellence in Advising for his outstanding work as an advisor and mentor of undergraduates.

Ken McClane and **Alice Fulton** were guest lecturers at President Jeffrey Lehman's inauguration on October 16, 2003.

Maureen McCoy's novel *Junebug* was published by Leapfrog Press in June 2004.

Dorothy Mermin was interviewed for MLA/Public Radio on the subject of the Brownings' love letters.

Satya Mohanty has introduced and co-translated (with R. S. Mishra, J. Nayak, and Paul St. Pierre) the major realist novel in Indian literature, *Six Acres and a Third* by Fakir Mohan Senapati (forthcoming from University of California Press).

Robert Morgan's *Brave Enemies: A Novel of the American Revolution* was published in 2003 by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. Bob's *The Strange Attractor: New and Selected Poems* appeared in 2004 from Louisiana State University Press.

Timothy Murray's *Digital Intensities: Electronic Art, Baroque Vision, and Cultural Memory* is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press.

Shirley Samuels has edited the *Companion to American Fiction, 1780–1865* (forthcoming from Blackwell).

Dan Schwarz's *Reading the Modern British and Irish Novel: 1890–1950* is forthcoming from Blackwell.

Cushing Strout won the Heilbron Prize for excellence in book reviewing from the *Sewanee Review*.

Special Edition of *Epoch* Focuses on A.R. Ammons

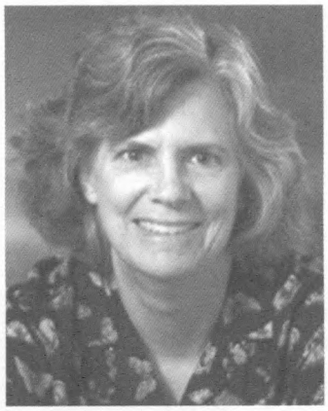
This Is Just a Place is a special, 450-page issue of *Epoch* magazine, edited by **Roger Gilbert** and devoted to the life and work of **A. R. Ammons**. The focus is on unpublished work: 30 new poems, 16 watercolors in a four-color portfolio, an essay on the defense of poetry, four children's stories, and an early wartime diary. *Poetry Magazine* calls the issue "terrific . . . a model of inventive, diligent, and scrupulous editing."

"While Archie liked to portray himself as a reclusive and even misanthropic figure, many of these writings show him to be gregariously engaged with friends, colleagues, and students both at Cornell and in the literary world at large," Roger writes in his introduction. Appropriately, the issue includes exchanges with friends and colleagues, a collaborative notebook, brief critical comments, and a final section of reminiscences of Ammons at Cornell. The collection constitutes a unique group portrait of both a poet and his intimate community—a poet whose distinctive voice echoes on the page and in the memory of his friends in ways that reflect what Roger calls his central contradiction between "intensity and ordinariness."

Roger received invaluable help from **Michael Koch**, the editor of *Epoch*, with whom he consulted on every detail, and from **Heidi Marshner**, who was responsible for the design. *This Is Just a Place* is available for $12.95. Send check or money order payable to *Epoch* Magazine, 251 Goldwin Smith, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

***Self-Portrait* (1978), reproduced by courtesy of Emily Herring Wilson.**

Letter FROM THE CHAIR



This newsletter gives us an annual opportunity not only to keep our alumni and friends aware of recent developments in the English Department at Cornell, but also to recommend new books from our faculty, which we are sure many of you will enjoy reading. We begin with *Epoch* magazine's special issue devoted to the life and work of A. R. Ammons, entitled *This is Just a Place*, edited by Roger Gilbert (Guest Editor) with assistance from Michael Koch (Editor). This major book-length collection includes new poems, early writings, paintings, music, letters, and journal entries by Cornell's beloved Archie Ammons, widely recognized as one of the major American poets of the twentieth century. Three other faculty members from Cornell's Creative Writing Program have published books this year. Maureen McCoy's *Junebug*, just published by Leapfrog Press, tells the story of a unique, tempestuous mother-daughter relationship. Robert Morgan's new novel from Algonquin Books, *Brave Enemies: A Novel of the American Revolution*, describes the struggles of a 16-year-old girl as she makes her way through revolutionary battlefields disguised as a man. And Alice Fulton has published a volume of selected poems with W. W. Norton entitled *Cascade Experiment*, which juxtaposes works from her five books of poetry.

Among our literary critics, as well, we've seen several exciting new studies from diverse perspectives. For those of you interested in American literature and culture, Joel Porte's *Consciousness and Culture: Emerson and Thoreau Reviewed* and Shirley Samuel's *Facing America: Iconography and the Civil War* provide fascinating perspectives on the American nineteenth century. Meanwhile, in a different century, Daniel Schwarz's *Broadway Boogie Woogie: Damon Runyon and the Making of New York City Culture* explores the colorful underworld characters created by the writer most responsible for documenting the gritty history of the city between 1910 and 1946. Biodun Jeyifo has published *Wole Soyinka: Politics, Poetics and Postcolonialism*, the seminal study of the dramatist Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in literature. Jonathan Culler has coedited two new books, *Just Being Difficult? Academic Writing in the Public Arena* and *Grounds of Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson*. And Katherine Gottschalk is the coauthor of *The Elements of Teaching Writing: A Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines*.

As you can see, our faculty has been much in the public eye this year. The wide variety of books that have come out just in the last few months gives some indication of the diversity of our department and its many different approaches to the teaching of English literature in the twenty-first century.

We believe our students find that rich range of approaches and materials a strong attraction. Last May we graduated the largest class of English majors in over a decade: 150 seniors picked up their diplomas at the English Department commencement celebration, 30 of those graduating with honors in English. We have been excited and pleased to be teaching more majors each year, and we are seeking to meet this challenge by developing a core "gateway" curriculum of introductory courses that will guide students into the major and toward the particular literary concentration that suits their interests. These gateway courses range widely as well, from the English Literary Tradition and the Introduction to American Literatures sequences to Introductions to World Literatures in English, Modern Poetry, Novels and Other Narratives, and Cultural Studies. We're pleased that these gateway courses provide so many avenues by which students may develop the expertise to move toward their own areas of specialization, in seminars like Gender, Memory, and History in U.S. Fiction, Sondheim and Musical Theatre, American Violence, Chaucer, Melville, or Imagining the Holocaust.

The challenge we face, in the Cornell English Department as well as in the humanities today, is precisely this stimulating task of mapping the many roads that our discipline has taken, and is taking, so that each student and scholar can find their own most productive direction and their best destination.

Best wishes,

Laura Brown

Laura Brown

John Wendell Anderson Professor of English and Chair of the English Department

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